The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction, and being accredited helps your land trust to stand out, to say to landowners, funders and other supporters: “Invest in us. We have proven we are a strong, effective organization you can trust to conserve your land forever.”

See the 2018 report on the impact of ten years of the accreditation program, including a feature article on the report in the Winter 2019 Saving Land magazine.

WHAT ACCREDITATION MEANS TO LAND TRUSTS

100% of surveyed respondents report that accreditation strengthened their organization, and their organizational and transaction records.

First-time accreditation makes land trusts STRONGER.

WHAT ACCREDITATION MEANS TO LAND TRUSTS, DONORS, GOVERNMENT, AND THE PUBLIC

In recent surveys of accredited and renewed land trusts, 100% report accreditation helps the land trust community maintain the trust of Congress, the Internal Revenue Service, and the public.

Once your land trust achieves accreditation you can proudly display the accreditation seal on your accredited land trust’s publications and website. Being accredited also provides your land trust with a number of tangible benefits; see our Benefits of Accreditation fact sheet.

Federal, state, and county benefits to accredited land trusts from across the nation:

- Option for recognition as a “certified entity” for the USDA Agricultural Land Easement Program when certain criteria are met
- Funding from project proponents seeking LEED certification using the credit for protecting or restoring habitat certification element
- Automatic eligibility to hold easements with California’s Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program (supported by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) Expedited certification in Louisiana where land trusts must be certified to hold and conserve certain mineral interests
- Expedited certification in Louisiana where land trusts must be certified to hold and conserve certain mineral interests
- Expedited certification in Colorado when working with landowners desiring a state tax credit for a conservation easement donation
- Exclusive access to funding when leveraging the Buffer Lands Program in Texas for projects near or adjacent to Texas state parks
- Exclusive access to easement funding when leveraging the Marin County, CA, farmland protection program
- Automatic eligibility to apply for funding in Chester County, PA, for its Brandywine Headwaters Preservation Program
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service released new internal guidance on mitigation that includes consideration of accredited land trusts. Read more

Private funding incentives:

- The 1772 Foundation considers a number of factors when evaluating grant applicants, including whether a land trust has prioritized accreditation.
- Doris Duke Charitable Foundation provides funds through Open Space Institute for its resilient landscapes initiative. Extra points are awarded to accredited land trusts or land trusts that are committed to becoming accredited.
- The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation provides land trusts that have already received support from the foundation with unsolicited grants of $10,000 each when they earn accreditation.

“ Without a doubt, the land trust accreditation process made us a much stronger organization that created a strong pathway to our sustainability. It was a rigorous and extensive process, and we commend the Accreditation Commission for its professionalism in its review and guidance throughout our application.”

- Bob Bugert, Executive Director, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (WA)

“Not all of our donors care if we are accredited, but some definitely do. They want to be associated with high-
functioning non-profits that deliver results. Yes, accreditation is a huge investment in time and effort, but it is an investment that pays back on many levels.

- Doug Sensenig, Executive Director, Coastal Mountains Land Trust (ME)