The Commission is governed by a diverse board of 19 volunteer commissioners involved in land conservation around the country. Commissioners share their expertise in land protection, stewardship and nonprofit management with the land trust community, collectively donating nearly 4,000 hours of service a year. Commissioners are united by three core values for the accreditation program: integrity, accountability, and service. Read more >>

Have you ever thought about serving as a member of the Commission or do you know someone who you think would be a good commissioner? Serving on the Commission is a great opportunity to work with a dedicated group of volunteer conservation leaders from around the country and be part of a national program that fosters excellence, trust and permanence in land conservation. Read more >>

Current Commissioners (effective January 2021)

Andrew Dana is an attorney with Conservation Law Associates in Bozeman, Montana, and represents land trusts, primarily in Montana and the Northern Rockies, including the Montana Association of Land Trusts. He has consulted nationally with the Land Trust Alliance and other organizations about a broad range of conservation easement matters, including easement transactions, drafting, interpretation, enforcement, amendment and termination, and tax policy. Andy was a founding member of the Land Trust Alliance’s Conservation Defense Advisory Council, and he helped launch the coordinated conservation easement defense insurance ideas that ultimately gave rise to TerraFirma. He received his law degree from Stanford Law School, and also holds degrees in geography from the University of Washington and Middlebury College. With his brothers, he also owns a working ranch on the Yellowstone River that is protected by a conservation easement, which fortunately allows fly fishing.

Secretary: Karen Ferrell-Ingram is a co-founder and former executive director of Eastern Sierra Land Trust based in Bishop, California. As a founding board member, projects coordinator, lands director and executive director, Karen worked on a variety of organizational, outreach, fundraising and conservation projects including accreditation in 2011. Bringing land trust tools to a region where the concept was unfamiliar presented special challenges but many private landowners in the region have ultimately embraced these conservation solutions. Focusing on the protection of wildlife habitats and working landscapes, Karen worked with her community, as well as state, federal and private foundation partners to preserve thousands of high priority acres. Karen has also worked as a native plant propagation and restoration specialist with a continuing special interest group working in sustainable land management. She and her husband live on a donated conservation easement property in the scenic Eastern Sierra Nevada where Karen was raised.

Jamie Brown has been the executive director of the Lake George Land Conservancy (LGLC) in Bolton Landing, New York since 2015. Prior to working at LGLC, Jamie was the director of land protection at Ducks Unlimited (DU) overseeing all aspects of the organization’s national land protection program including the acquisition and stewardship of easements and fee-title holdings. Jamie also guided the organization through the accreditation process and in 2011, DU became the first accredited land trust working nationwide. Jamie also spent five years working in land protection for The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and Frenchman Bay Conservancy in Maine. During that time, he learned a great deal about the technical aspects of land protection, transaction funding, and stewardship. Jamie has sat at many kitchen tables drinking coffee with landowners and learning about the true importance of conserving land and feels being connected to the community is a priority. Jamie has also served on local planning boards and worked with local elected officials on land protection projects.

Ellen Gass is the Conservation Director at Texas Land Conservancy, a state-wide
Ellen Gass is the Conservation Director at Texas Land Conservancy, a state-wide accredited land trust based in Austin, Texas. Her career has focused on stewardship, land protection, outdoor education, volunteer management, and trail construction and has included positions in Texas, South Carolina, New Mexico and up and down the Appalachian Trail. Ellen holds a master's degree in Geography from Texas A&M University. An enthusiastic and avid backpacker, Ellen thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail following graduate school. She still enjoys backpacking and hiking as much as she can and, living in the city, enjoys time outdoors long-distance running and biking.

Ann Johnston currently works for Sonoma Land Trust (SLT) in California as their land acquisition program manager. She is responsible for creating a land and water conservation strategy for the Russian River watershed that supports an ecosystem-based approach to protecting natural processes while meeting social and economic needs. Prior to working with SLT, Ann served for more than a decade as the executive director of the Crested Butte Land Trust in Colorado. While there, a central part of her work focused on creating strategic, investment and conservation plans. She also developed a comprehensive approach to communications and fundraising. Her projects include the protection of wildlife habitat, working lands, hiking and biking trails, and several award-winning river restoration efforts. Prior to her work in Crested Butte, Ann and her husband owned and operated Latitude 34 Restaurant in North Carolina. Ann holds a master's degree in natural resources and a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Heather Jobst has a deep connection with nature. Her love began on her family's farm and learning in her middle school science class (taught by the famous Chris Adkins) and searching wooded trails for spring ephemerals. At Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), Heather oversees the full gamut of INHF's land protection work including purchasing land for protection, restoring land through stewardship, and working with private landowners on conservation easements. Working in conservation in her home state is meaningful to Heather because she sees Iowa as a state that needs the work the most. When not in the office or traveling throughout the state, you can find her in the garden.

Andrew Kota is the executive director of Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina. Andrew joined Foothills Conservancy in 2005 as an AmeriCorps Project Conserve member. He has more than fifteen years of experience in resource protection and ecological research. In the role of executive director, Andrew combines his years of experience with Foothills Conservancy, passion for conservation, and aptitude for leadership, working closely with the conservancy's board of directors, staff, and new and established donors to guide the organization in its mission for conservation. Andrew is a resident of Morganton, NC, with his wife, two sons, two hound dogs, a shepherd, two horses, and a cat. He enjoys outdoor recreation with his family and his work is inspired by the possibility of making the world a better place for his children by preserving some of North Carolina's most important natural and cultural features. Andrew holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Guilford College, a master's degree in forestry from Utah State University, a master's degree in business administration in sustainable business from Appalachian State University, a certificate of nonprofit management from Duke University, and is licensed in real estate in North Carolina.

Clint Miller joined The Conservation Fund in 2008 and serves as the Midwest Project Director. He works throughout ten Midwestern states including the Dakotas, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Iowa. He is the Fund’s lead on implementation of the Midwest Habitat Mitigation Project, a $22 million compensatory mitigation program for a 600-mile oil pipeline running across four states. Clint is a seasoned conservation professional who has worked since 1988 in land conservation and wildlife management from Alaska and Florida to the Great Plains. He is a recognized expert negotiator and facilitator, working with federal, state and local agencies, corporations and families on complex real estate transactions, conservation easements, mitigation, public and private funding and
finance. He previously worked as a regional director for the Minnesota Land Trust and led a community-based conservation program for The Nature Conservancy in the Dakotas. Clint spent 12 years as a wildlife biologist and land manager.

**Treasurer: Michael Pope** has been the executive director of the Greenbelt Land Trust, an accredited land trust in the mid-Willamette Valley of Oregon, for eight years. He was president and secretary of the board for the Oregon Coalition of Land Trusts. He has worked for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as the coordinator of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and managed the agency's wildlife mitigation program. Michael was a faculty research associate at Oregon State University conducting research on greater sage-grouse, mountain quail and blue and ruffed grouse. He also worked as a professional boatbuilder in Washington, Maine, Maryland, and Alaska from 1976-1987. Michael holds a B.A. in history from the University of North Carolina and a B.S., M.S. and PH.D. in wildlife science from Oregon State University.

**Vice-Chair: Catherine Rawson** is the executive director of Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, chair of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, council member of the Land Trust Alliance Conservation Defense Advisory Council, and a Litchfield Hills Greenprint Steering Committee member. A graduate of Bates College and Vermont Law School, where she studied environmental law, Catherine also has a master's degree in environmental management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Prior to joining Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, she served as an assistant attorney general for the State of Connecticut.

**Tom Reed** has served for fifteen years as a board member of the Black Swamp Conservancy in Pemberville, Ohio, including terms as treasurer and president. He joined the Accreditation Commission in 2016. As a CPA, Tom spent 10 years at Ernst & Young as an auditor and 10 years as the vice president for finance at the Public Broadcasting Foundation of NW Ohio. He also has 25 years of tenure as the chief financial officer of a closely held investment company specializing in venture capital and real estate. He has also served on the boards of the Toledo Ballet Association, Alliance Francaise de Toledo, Torch Club of Toledo and is the Toledo Chapter officer of La Chaine des Rotisseurs and Les Chavaliers du Tastevin. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and an MBA in finance, Master of Taxation from the University of Toledo. He enjoys bicycling through the countryside, hiking and puttering around his lake home.

**Andrea M. Reese** works in land acquisition, management, and grant revenue for NOVA Parks, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. She was previously the conservation director at Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and her career in land conservation has included stewardship fieldwork in Virginia’s Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley, battlefield preservation throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, and farmland preservation in Connecticut. Andrea holds two master’s degrees in public policy and environmental management from Duke University and a bachelor’s degree in politics from Pomona College. She was raised in the Palouse region of Idaho. Andrea, her husband, and their young son share a love of hiking and observing nature.

**Katharine Roser** founded La Plata Open Space Conservancy, a land trust in
Durango, Colorado. As its executive director, she completed more than 200 conservation projects and successfully guided them through the accreditation process. She was one of the founders of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts and served as its president for several years, as well as served on the Land Trust Alliance’s National Land Trust Council in the 1990s.

Chair: Bruce Runnels practiced law for 10 years in Indiana, then worked 34 years for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), retiring in 2019. During his tenure with TNC, Bruce served as New Jersey State Director, Eastern, Midwestern and Western Region Directors, Chief Conservation Officer, and Chief Risk Officer; and, he led several organization-wide initiatives, including efforts to re-frame TNC’s conservation approach, codify TNC’s Core Values, and secure first-time accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Bruce currently lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, with his wife, Katherine.

Commissioner Emeritus: Aimee Rutledge is proud to work with two accredited land trusts. Aimee has been executive director of the Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC), an accredited land trust serving the Sacramento region, since October 1996. At the conservancy, Aimee has completed over 30 conservation real estate transactions and built the organization from a $10K annual budget to a $500K annual budget. Since 2009, Aimee has additionally worked as California program manager for The Wilderness Land Trust (also an accredited land trust). Previously, Aimee helped found the Friends of the Sacramento River Greenway, worked with the American Institute of Architects, California Council as director of governmental relations, and ran her own consulting firm. She holds a bachelor’s in history from Pomona College. Aimee spends her spare time with her family in the Sierras or on the coast, enjoying California’s open spaces. More about Aimee »

Kay Sohl has provided training and consultation for Executive Directors, CFOs, and Boards of Directors of over 7,500 nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Kay focuses her work on organizational assessment and capacity building strategies, financial sustainability, Board financial oversight, and the challenges of nonprofit accounting and financial reporting.

Kay has worked extensively with land trusts and is co-author of the Land Trust Alliance standards and practices curriculum, Financial Management of Land Trusts. She worked with LTA to develop guidance and resources to support the implementation of LTA’s revised Standards and Practices. Kay worked closely with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission on the development of the 2018 Finance Indicator Elements and Requirements. She serves as lead finance trainer/consultant for the annual Wentworth Leadership Program and is a frequent LTA webinar presenter.

Kay founded and lead TACS (Technical Assistance for Community Services) now known as the Oregon licensed Public Accountant, active in the Oregon Society of CPAs, and an active nonprofit Board member and volunteer.
Chris Vaughn serves as Executive Director for Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust located in Charleston, South Carolina. Prior to joining the Trust, Chris enjoyed a variety of staff assignments in land conservation including Director of Field Operations with Lowcountry Land Trust, Lowcountry Program manager with Ducks Unlimited and Land Protection Specialist with The Nature Conservancy. Chris holds a master's degree in forestry from Clemson University which complements his hands-on experience in stewardship and land protection. He resides in Charleston with his wife Kathryn and their two young children, Will and Emma.

Shane Wellendorf is the conservation coordinator with Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, an accredited land trust working throughout north Florida and south Georgia. Since 2011, he has worked on land conservation projects and stewardship of existing conservation easements. Prior to joining the land conservancy, he worked as a research biologist with Tall Timbers. Shane holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University and a Master of Science Degree in Wildlife Science from North Carolina State University and is a Certified Wildlife Biologist with the Wildlife Society. He enjoys exploring the Red Hills Region and beyond with his wife, 2 daughters, and 3 bird hunting dogs.

Mark Weston has been an independent real estate appraiser since 1986, specializing in valuation of conservation easements encumbering private land. After a stint as the State of Colorado’s first Director of the Division of Conservation, he retired in September 2019. Today, he consults on matters related to qualified appraisals, qualified appraisers, and conservation of land & water rights. Mark co-authored the Alliance’s Tax Benefits & Appraisals of Conservation Projects, 2007. He is a contributing author to the Water Rights Handbook for Colorado Conservation Professionals, Colorado Water Trust, 2011, and Appraising Easements: Guidelines for Valuation of Land Conservation and Historic Preservation Easements, 3rd ed., Land Trust Alliance & National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1999. Weston was an appraisal instructor for the International Right of Way Association from 1991 - 2016. He assisted in development of and was an instructor of the five-day conservation easement valuation seminar developed by the American Society of Farm Mangers and Rural Appraisers, and the Appraisal Institute in 2006. Mark was an Appraisal Qualifications Board Certified USPAP Instructor from 2004-2020. Weston volunteered as a member of the Colorado Board of Real Estate Appraisers (1999 - 2005), the Colorado Conservation Easement Oversight Commission (2008 â€“ 2011), and the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority (2001 - 2008). In the early 1990s, he worked on the citizen-initiated campaign to institute a sales and use tax in Douglas County, Colorado that has now protected over 63,000 acres in one of the nation's fastest-growing counties. He graduated from The Colorado College in 1974 and obtained a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Denver in 1978.