Accredited land trusts are a strong network of partners that help funders, landowners, public agencies, and others achieve their conservation goals.

Public Trust Yields Results

Accreditation has increased the public’s trust in land conservation.

- Increased confidence in land trusts has helped win support for federal, state and local conservation funding measures
- Increased Congressional trust made possible the passage of the permanent federal tax incentive in 2015

The accredited land trust network conserves 78% of all land trust conservation holdings and has the verified ability to protect millions of acres forever.

- 12.9 million acres under conservation easement
- 6.4 million acres of conservation properties

Learn more about the benefits of accreditation for land trusts

If you have any questions about how accreditation can help your screening process or your program, please contact us.

Examples of State Incentives

Colorado: Landowners desiring a state tax credit for a conservation easement donation in Colorado must work with a holder certified by the state. There is an expedited certification process for accredited land trusts.

Louisiana: Land trusts must be certified to hold and conserve certain mineral interests; documentation of land trust accreditation expedites the certification requirement.

“I have always felt strongly about safeguarding our environment for future generations. As a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Caucus, I’m working to find ways to wisely and effectively protect the environment. That means streamlining processes, increasing accountability and collaborating with folks outside of government who have an understanding of the obstacles we’re facing. To that end, members of the land trust community that have attained the distinction of accreditation have been strong partners.”

- Rep. Rob Wittman (VA), US House of Representatives

Examples of Public and Private Funding Incentives

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.

Chester County, PA includes land trust accreditation in its eligibility criteria for funding for its Brandywine Headwaters Preservation Program.

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.

The 1772 Foundation considers a number of factors when evaluating grant applicants, including whether a land trust has prioritized accreditation.

“The 1772 Foundation considers a number of factors when evaluating grant applicants, including whether a land trust has prioritized the highest level of professional commitment to land protection by undergoing accreditation. Knowing the accreditation process is comprehensive and reliable gives us confidence that a land trust applicant is a good long-term investment.”

- Mary Anthony, Executive Director, The 1772 Foundation

A new program in Texas requires land trusts to be accredited to receive matching funds for projects near or adjacent to Texas state parks.

“I interviewed several land trusts to work with me on my conservation easement for the family ranch, and I chose the Texas Land Conservancy. Now that they have the accreditation seal just two months after I completed my easement I’m really pleased that I chose them because that really validates that it is a solid organization.”
When seeking to become LEED-certified, a project proponent may opt to provide financial support to an accredited land trust to obtain credit for the “protecting or restoring habitat” certification element.