

The Commission considers a variety of information sources when making its decisions.Â Relying on multiple sources of information helps ensure credible decisions that maintain the integrity of the accreditation program.Â The majority of the information evaluated by the Commission will be provided by the applicant or accredited land trust, some information may be provided by the public and still other information may be the result of research conducted by the Commission. Â

In the course of performing their duties to the accreditation program, representatives of the Commission may engage in research relative to an applicant or accredited land trust.Â This research may include Web or print searches, interviews with individuals knowledgeable about the land trust's activities, informal visits to conservation properties and/or review of other data. Â

The Commission is well aware that not all news accounts, websites or other reports are accurate or complete.Â Affirmative disclosure and explanation will assist the Commission in its work.Â If a land trust is aware of information that is likely to come to the attention of the Commission, it should consider providing the Commission with an explanation of the facts and circumstances relating to the matter.Â An early explanation is likely to reduce the time the Commission will spend investigating the issue. Â

Research conducted by representatives of the Commission that is used to evaluate whether the land trust is in compliance with Land Trust Standards and Practices and program requirements that is not obtained from a public source will generally be documented in writing.Â In the event that such research suggests the land trust is not in compliance with *Land Trust Standards and Practices* or program requirements, the land trust will have an opportunity to respond to the information.Â The Commission adopted this approach because it cannot ignore information that is publicly available or reported to the Commission by a credible source, but it also cannot permit such information to influence an accreditation decision without providing the land trust an opportunity to respond to the information.