

The Commission appreciates land trusts' efforts to ensure that every conserved fee property and conservation easement has an active and responsible organization to steward it. We know that projects done by another organization and eventually accepted by your land trust may not have been completed the same way you would have done them. The Commission, therefore, focuses its review on the risk assessment you do before accepting these projects and your documentation for and ability to steward and defend these properties and easements.

## Application Guidance

In evaluating fee properties and conservation easements (projects) accepted from another organization, the Commission looks for the following in the application. For more information on how the Commission evaluates these practices, see the [Requirements Manual](#). If the projects were transferred as part of a merger, [click here](#) for more information.

- **Land Conservation Project List (LCPL):** Use the "Notes" field to identify projects that were accepted from another organization; this information will be used during the project selection process.
- **Board Approval of Land Transactions:** If a project accepted from another organization is chosen for project documentation, provide materials showing how your board reviewed the risks and benefits of accepting the project (or group of projects) along with evidence of board approval of the project.
- **Title Investigation:** If a project accepted from another organization is chosen for project documentation, you will need to show how you investigated title. If you are an accredited land trust and you did not complete a full title investigation for each project accepted during your accredited term from another organization, provide a statement about how you did assess and address title risks (such as by evaluating title information from the prior owner/holder, conducting additional title investigation, etc.).
- **Funding Easement and Fee Land Stewardship and Defense:** The Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds must show that your land trust meets the defense funding requirements for all conservation properties and easements it holds. If it does not yet meet the stewardship funding requirements for properties accepted from another organization, it must submit a plan for how it will raise the required stewardship funds.
- **Baseline Document Report:** Each conservation easement must have a baseline documentation report that meets the requirements. You may be able to rely on the baseline prepared by the prior holder. If one does not exist or it does not meet the requirements, you will need to create a current conditions report signed by the time you acquire the easement. (If you are unable to obtain the landowner's signature, you should keep documentation of your attempt to secure the signature.) The baseline date is shown on the LCPL; the baseline itself is part of project documentation.
- **Easement Monitoring:** The LCPL must show that each easement was monitored annually after your organization accepted it.
- **Land Management Plans:** If a management plan meeting the minimum requirements did not exist for a fee property before you accepted it, you will need to have the management plan in place within one year of the transfer of the property. The management plan date is shown on the LCPL.
- **Inspecting Conservation Fee Properties:** The LCPL must show that each fee property was inspected annually after your organization accepted it.