

Land trusts merge, affiliate, or combine with other organizations for many reasons. Mergers and affiliations may reduce administrative costs and help organizations effectively conserve more land. Read on for more information about how mergers and affiliations intersect with accreditation.

- Did your organization merge or affiliate? Mergers, affiliations or other “corporate combinations” where corporate assets are brought together in a formal agreement are covered by a Commission [policy](#). See below for a quick overview of next steps.
- Did your organization take on land or conservation easements from another organization? If your land trust accepted fee properties or conservation easements from another organization but did not formally merge or combine, [click here](#) for more information.

Step 1: Contact the Commission

We look at each merger/combination individually to learn more about the specific facts and circumstances, it starts when you contact us.

Already Accredited?

Accredited land trusts need to [notify the Commission](#) if they merge, affiliate or have other major changes in their structure or operation. This enables the Commission to ensure that all accredited land trusts continue to meet Land Trust Standards and Practices and program requirements.

Not Yet Accredited?

- If your organization has not yet applied for accreditation and completed a merger within five years of applying for accreditation, contact Commission staff before you apply.
 - If the merger did not change the governance or operations of your land trust, you likely have all the information you need to apply.
 - If the merger was recent and there were major changes, you may want to wait a year or two to develop documentation of how new policies and procedures are working.

Step 2: Preliminary Information

We will generally request some preliminary information to determine the scope of the merger/combination. This helps us counsel first-time applicants and determine whether accredited land trusts need to provide more information now or when they apply for renewal. Here is what we commonly ask for.

- A brief description of the merger/combination including:
 - A description of the purpose of the combination/merger.
 - The current status of the entities (for example, did Greenacres Land Trust fully merge into Bluewater Land Trust, did it dissolve, or does it continue to exist).
 - The number of conservation easements and/or fee properties transferred to the accredited land trust or the applicant.
 - The dollar amount of any financial assets transferred from one land trust to the other and any restrictions or limitations on the use of the funds.
- The merger/combination agreement, if any.
- Revised bylaws, if changes were made.

Examples of Combinations with Accredited Land Trusts

Two Accredited Land Trusts Merge or Affiliate

The Commission reviews the preliminary information to determine if the listing on roster of accredited land trusts needs to change and what the renewal schedule for the organizations will be.

Accredited Land Trust Merges with Non-Accredited Land Trust

The Commission reviews the preliminary information to evaluate the scope of the merger.

- If a small organization that is not accredited is wholly absorbed by a larger accredited land trusts and there are no governance changes, any additional details would likely be part of the renewal application.
- If the merger results in significant governance changes in the accredited land trust or would make it challenging for it to continue to meet the accreditation requirements, more information may be requested via the [Compliance Confirmation](#) process. (This might include more information about the board, new policies, etc.)

Accredited Land Trust Affiliates with Non-Accredited Land Trust

If an accredited land trust formally affiliates with a non-accredited land trust that would be eligible for accreditation, the affiliate may need to apply for accreditation as outlined in the Commission's [policy on multiple corporations](#).