Land trusts across the country permanently protect more than 40 million acres of farms, forests, parks and natural areas that are vital to healthy, vibrant communities. Accreditation advances excellence among land trusts, and provides the public, landowners, and donors with the confidence that these important conserved lands will be protected forever.

Voluntary accreditation provides independent verification that land trusts meet the high standards for land conservation, stewardship and nonprofit management in the nationally-recognized Land Trust Standards and Practices. Accredited land trusts now conserve almost 80% of all land under conservation easement or owned in fee by land trusts, ensuring the promise of perpetuity.

- Why Land Trust Accreditation
- Defining Accreditation

How Accreditation Works

Land trusts seeking to achieve or renew accreditation submit detailed documentation to the Commission. Professional accreditation staff and volunteer commissioners from the land trust community review each renewal application to confirm that accredited land trusts adhered to Land Trust Standards and Practices and accreditation requirements over their accredited term.

Accreditation is not a one-time action; it fosters continuous improvement as land trusts maintain their accredited status by applying for renewal every five years. By renewing accreditation, each accredited land trust affirms its commitment to a network of organizations united by strong ethical practices. This trusted network of land trusts has demonstrated fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions and lasting stewardship of the lands they conserve.

“For Joshua’s Trust, accreditation is the clearest evidence we have to show our members, our donors and our communities that we’re doing the best we can to protect our land in perpetuity,” said Doug Hughes, board president. “Our commitment to following these rigorous standards makes our organization stronger, and much better able to meet whatever challenges the future will bring.”

Get to Know the Commission

The Commission’s mission is to inspire excellence, promote public trust and ensure permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing land trust organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and that strive for continuous improvement.

- History, Goals and Objectives
- Commissioners and Staff
- Notice of Accreditation Decisions
- List of Accredited Land Trusts
- Annual Reports
- Start the Conversation
- Success Stories

“The success of every charity depends on public trust, and this is especially important for the land conservation groups that handle billions each year in tax incentives, public funds, and charitable gifts. The new land trust accreditation program gives land trusts, like universities, hospitals, and museums, the opportunity to be publicly recognized for their excellence and ethics.”

— Diana Aviv, President and CEO, Independent Sector (2006)