

Saratoga Springs, New York (August 6, 2019) “Summer is the time to get outside. Are you ready to explore new places? Check out the preserves and parks held by your local accredited land trust or by the land trust where you vacation.

“There are now 437 accredited land trusts conserving land for their communities in almost every corner of the country,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Commission announced today that 15 additional organizations recently earned this mark of distinction for the first time. “The diversity of lands these community groups have conserved is amazing,” said Van Ryn. From plains and prairies to urban gardens, and coastal islands to majestic forests, accredited land trusts have protected more than 20 million acres of land “an area larger than Yosemite, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Everglades and Denali national parks combined. Many of these nonprofit groups encourage exploration of their properties and offer recreational trails and outdoor education programs.

Van Ryn noted, “The accountability provided by the accreditation seal helps increase public confidence in land trusts.” By displaying the accreditation seal awarded by the Commission, these groups proudly announce they demonstrate sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance and lasting stewardship of the lands they protect.

Accredited land trusts must renew every five years to confirm their compliance with the national quality standards. A group of 25 land trusts were recently awarded renewed accreditation, including 12 that achieved their second renewal by demonstrating they upheld the standards for more than a decade. With 437 accredited land trusts in 46 states and one U.S. Territory, find one near you and start exploring!

The 15 land trusts recently achieving first-time accreditation include Branford Land Trust (CT), Capital Region Land Conservancy (VA), Catskill Center for Conservation and Development (NY), Essex Land Trust (CT), Friends of the Columbia Gorge and its affiliate, Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust (OR), Northern Waters Land Trust (MN), Ocmulgee Land Trust (GA), Peconic Land Trust and its affiliate, South Fork Land Foundation (NY), Scenic Rivers Land Trust (MD), The Conservation Foundation (IL), The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (IL), Valley Conservation Council (VA), Western Reserve Land Conservancy (OH), Wild Rivers Land Trust (OR) and Wyndham Land Trust (CT).

The 25 land trusts recently achieving renewed accreditation include Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art (PA), California Farmland Trust (CA), Capitol Land Trust (WA), Chikaming Open Lands (MI), Colorado Open Lands (CO), Conserving Carolina (NC), Countryside Conservancy (PA), Five Valleys Land Trust (MT), Frenchman Bay Conservancy (ME), Gates Mills Land Conservancy (OH), Heritage Conservancy (PA), Housatonic Valley Association (CT), Hudson Highlands Land Trust (NY), Kansas Land Trust (KS), Kestrel Land Trust (MA), Land Trust of Napa County (CA), North Branch Land Trust (PA), PCC Farmland Trust (WA), Placer Land Trust (CA), Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy (NY), Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust (ID), Scenic Hudson and its affiliate, Scenic Hudson Land Trust (NY), Sequoia Riverlands Trust (CA), Sonoma Land Trust (CA) and Wareham Land Trust (MA).

About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, based in Saratoga Springs, New York, inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing land trust organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and that strive for continuous improvement. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. More information about the Commission and the full list of accredited land trusts is available at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

About the Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents 1,000 member land trusts supported by more than 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operates several regional offices. More information about the Alliance is available at www.landtrustalliance.org.