

**Saratoga Springs, New York** (February 26, 2020) - Land trusts continue to commit to excellence, trust and permanence and are investing in strengthening the land trust movement through first-time accreditation and renewal of accreditation.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a program promoting national quality standards for ensuring permanence in the conservation of American lands, announced that 443 land trusts have now earned the national accreditation mark of distinction with the addition of five newly accredited organizations. Accredited land trusts span the country and are based in 46 states and one territory.

An additional 31 land trusts, the largest renewal class to date, have successfully navigated the rigorous renewal process and continue to be recognized with the seal of accreditation. Among these are 19 land trusts that achieved their first renewal and 12 land trust that achieved their second renewal.

With 79% of all conserved land and easements being held by accredited land trusts, accreditation helps ensure that these organizations practice the highest level of standards to protect land in perpetuity. A 2018 independent evaluation report by Bloomingdale Management Advisors found that accredited land trusts have significantly larger budgets, more staff and volunteers, and eight times more money invested to steward and defend their conservation lands than their peers of similar size; they also save three times more land.

Renewal of accreditation is voluntary. With 98% of accredited land trusts seeking renewal, it is apparent that accreditation is valued in the land trust community.

“In my 10 years with the Commission, I have been deeply impressed by how the land trust community and individual land trusts transform and strengthen through the accreditation process. Even for those land trusts applying for second renewal, the accreditation process helps identify areas of risk and helps land trusts identify ways to improve to ensure they continue to meet the national standards set by the land trust community,” said Melissa Kalvestrand, newly appointed executive director of the Commission.

Land Trust Alliance President and CEO Andrew Bowman welcomed Kalvestrand, a familiar face in the land trust community, to her new role. “I am confident that Melissa will advance the Commission’s work to inspire excellence, promote public trust and ensure permanence in the conservation of lands by recognizing land trust organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and that strive for continuous improvement,” he said.

The Commission looks forward to celebrating the next class of land trusts achieving first-time accreditation with the arrival of the new paperless first-time applications in summer 2020. A lottery for 2021 first-time applications is expected in June 2020.

The five land trusts achieving first-time accreditation now include 7 Lakes Alliance (Maine), Alabama Forest Resources Center (Alabama), Golden State Land Conservancy (California), Great Rivers Land Trust (Illinois) and Middlebury Land Trust (Connecticut).

The 31 land trusts achieving renewed accreditation now include Androscoggin Land Trust (Maine); Buzzards Bay Coalition and its affiliate, Acushnet River Reserve (Massachusetts); Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (Maine); Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (Massachusetts); Deschutes Land Trust (Oregon); Dutchess Land Conservancy (New York); Eagle Valley Land Trust (Colorado); Greenbelt Land Trust (Oregon); Groton Conservation Trust (Massachusetts); Hill Country Conservancy (Texas); Hunterdon Land Trust (New Jersey); Lake George Land Conservancy (New York); Lancaster Farmland Trust (Pennsylvania); Land Trust of Virginia (Virginia); Leelanau Conservancy (Michigan); Lemhi Regional Land Trust (Idaho); Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia (Georgia); Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (Virginia); Open Space Institute and its affiliate, Open Space Institute Land Trust (New York); Orange County Land Trust (New York); Pines and Prairies Land Trust (Texas); Santa Fe Conservation Trust (New Mexico); Sharon Land Trust (Connecticut); Sierra Foothill Conservancy (California); Six Rivers Land Conservancy (Michigan); Southeast Alaska Land Trust (Alaska); Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy (Florida); Tejon Ranch Conservancy (California); The Conservation Fund and its affiliate, Sustainable Conservation (Virginia); Three Rivers Land Trust (North Carolina) and Upstate Forever (South Carolina).

## 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.

# 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 on its website.](#)