

Saratoga Springs, New York (Aug. 19, 2021) - Thirty land trusts across the country have successfully completed the accreditation process, growing the list of accredited land trusts to 453. As the role of nature in healthy communities becomes more apparent, with the Outdoor Industry Association reporting 7.1 million more Americans participated in outdoor recreation in 2020 than in the year prior, accredited land trusts are vital organizations who are protecting and conserving the lands we love.

Accreditation involves a rigorous evaluation which ensures applicants are operating at the highest conservation standards. Through the pandemic and environmental crises of the past year, land trusts continue to invest their time and resources in the accreditation process. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the program promoting national quality standards for ensuring permanence in the conservation of American lands, knows land trusts have dealt with wildfires, storms and other natural disasters as well as have navigated the unique challenges of the pandemic.

Executive Director Melissa Kalvestrand said, "We've heard from many accredited land trusts that they are experiencing more use of their public lands and more interest in programming and volunteering. Accredited land trusts are resilient and have policies and procedures in place to help them through challenging times. Accredited land trusts have been instrumental in their communities; offering respites in nature and outdoor educational opportunities, holding food and water drives for local wildfire responders and victims of natural disasters, or helping with storm clean-up efforts. Saving and protecting land is the key that makes those efforts possible. Their commitment to accreditation helps assure that these organizations will continue to be pillars of conservation and stewardship in their communities well into the future."

Achieving first-time accreditation (9 total): Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust (California), California Waterfowl Association (California), Grassroots Gardens of Western New York (New York), Guadalupe Blanco River Trust (Texas), Tewksbury Land Trust (New Jersey), The Escondido Creek Conservancy (California), The Goshen Land Trust (Connecticut), Trust for Virgin Islands Lands (Virgin Islands), Western Wildlife Corridor (Ohio).

Achieving first renewal of accreditation (20 total): Beaufort County Open Land Trust (South Carolina), Central Colorado Conservancy (Colorado), Champlain Area Trails (New York), Finger Lakes Land Trust (New York), French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (Pennsylvania), Kaniksu Land Trust (Idaho), Kentucky Natural Lands Trust (Kentucky), Licking Land Trust (Ohio), North Salem Open Land Foundation (New York), Otsego Land Trust (New York), Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust (Maine), RiverLink (North Carolina), San Diego Habitat Conservancy (California), Save Mount Diablo (California), South Kingstown Land Trust (Rhode Island), Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (New Hampshire), Wallkill Valley Land Trust (New York), Wallowa Land Trust (Oregon), Western New York Land Conservancy (New York), Western Rivers Conservancy (Oregon).

Achieving second renewal of accreditation (1 total): Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (Colorado).

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 nearly 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.](#)