The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a program promoting public trust and ensuring permanence in the conservation of American lands, announced today the first-time or renewed accreditation of 17 land trusts. There are now 285 land trusts across the United States that have successfully demonstrated their continued commitment to land trust excellence and voluntary accreditation.

Accreditation is the highest national mark of distinction a land trust can achieve and must be renewed every five years,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Commission. “We congratulate these 17 land trusts and celebrate not only their newest achievement, but all they have done and will continue to do for their communities. Their work helps ensure our children’s children will benefit from the same healthy and beautiful lands we enjoy today.

Land trusts achieving first-time accreditation are Blue Mountain Land Trust (Walla Walla, Washington), Boothbay Region Land Trust (Boothbay Harbor, Maine), Georges River Land Trust (Rockland, Maine), Hilltown Land Trust (an affiliate of The Trustees of Reservations, Ashfield, Massachusetts), Lyme Land Conservation Trust (Lyme, Connecticut) and Saratoga P.L.A.N. (Saratoga Springs, New York).

Land trusts achieving renewed accreditation are Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy (Bedminster, Pennsylvania), Central Savannah River Land Trust (Augusta, Georgia), Forest Society of Maine (Bangor, Maine), Forterra (Seattle, Washington), Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (Traverse City, Michigan), Land Trust for Santa Barbara County (Santa Barbara, California), Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain (Biloxi, Mississippi), Legacy Land Conservancy (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Thousand Islands Land Trust (Clayton, New York), Westchester Land Trust (Bedford Hills, New York) and Willistown Conservation Trust (Malvern, Pennsylvania).

The Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization working to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. Rand Wentworth, the Alliance’s president, applauded today’s announcement.

“Accredited land trusts meet high standards for quality, demonstrating their conservation work is permanent. These organizations are conservation champions, performing excellent community work that warrants significant investment and support.”

Each accredited land trust meets extensive documentation requirements and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation or renewal application. The process is detailed and thorough, and while success is not guaranteed to applicants, the process helps transform land trusts. More information about the process and benefits are detailed at http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

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About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission
The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, based in Saratoga Springs, NY, 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. See the complete list of accredited land trusts.

About The Land Trust Alliance
The Land Trust Alliance is a national conservation group that works to save the places people love by strengthening conservation throughout America. It works to increase the pace and quality of conservation by advocating favorable tax policies, training land trusts in best practices and working to ensure the permanence of conservation in the face of continuing threats. The Alliance publishes Land Trust Standards and Practices and provides financial and administrative support to the Commission. It has established an endowment to help ensure the success of the accreditation program and keep it affordable for land trusts of all sizes to participate in accreditation. More information can be found at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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