Planning and preparing for first-time accreditation can seem like a daunting task at the outset. For Platte Land Trust, an all-volunteer land trust located in Kansas City, Missouri, their decision to apply was years in the making.

We caught up with the volunteers of Platte Land Trust to talk about their experience applying for first-time accreditation.

About Platte Land Trust

Platte Land trust protects and conserves land in the four-corners area of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa. They focus on lands and habitats that are critical to important plant and animal species -- woods and forest along rivers and stream corridors; native grasslands; upland savannahs and woods. They also protect farm and ranch lands as well as places of historical importance. They work with their community to eradicate invasive plant species and to promote the use of native plants, whenever they can. Learn more about Platte Land Trust.

Q: What was the decision making process like for deciding to apply for first-time accreditation?

A: Platte Land Trust considered accreditation around 2013. The Board of Directors thought it was an important credential, one we should pursue. Accreditation also became a requirement with state and federal conservation agencies in Missouri for funding and partnering on land projects. Therefore, accreditation was vital to grow our organization and fulfill the mission in the long-term. As an all-volunteer land trust, the Board supported this goal to grow and strengthen our organization.

Q: What surprised you about going through the first-time process?

A: The time needed to prepare and complete the application. We started accreditation preparations in 2016 and filed our application in 2022. The on-line application process was easy to navigate.

Q: What resources were most helpful as your organization prepared for or was in the first-time process?

A: We started accreditation preparations at Rally 2016, learning as much as possible. Alliance and Commission resources, training and encouragement from Midwest staff helped us prepare for the accreditation process. Through a grant with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Alliance Midwest staff led three land trust through the accreditation manual, organization assessment, and the application steps. This Missouri Circuit Rider training was very helpful. In addition, experienced advisors were critical to help us organize, stay focused, and pace the application work.
Q: What has been the biggest success that you attribute to being accredited?

A: We attribute a successful application to the persistence and organization skills of our Accreditation Team; our financial ability to hire a consultant to help us; and the attention of the board to policies. As a small, all-volunteer land trust, achieving accreditation enhances our credibility and reputation. It conveys professionalism, trust, and longevity to landowners, supporters, and benefactors.

Q: Anything else you would like to share?

A: The encouragement and inspiration from our land trust colleagues kept us going through the entire process. We are grateful for their support that led to a successful application.

*Photo credit in order of appearance:*

1. **Family Time Outdoors -- pond exploration at Charlotte Sawyers Nature Area.** Platte County, Missouri. Photo by Carla Dods.

2. **Frank Adams Farm -- a view of Missouri Century Farm along the Little Blue River.** Northeastern Jackson County, Missouri. Photo by Carla Dods.

3. **Charlotte Sawyers Nature Area Savannah -- wildflowers and oak trees in the savannah area of Charlotte Sawyers Nature Area.** Platte County, Missouri. Photo by Tom Jacobs.

Thank you to Platte Land Trust for sharing their accreditation story. Are you interested in sharing your story with the land trust community? Please contact us at info@landtrustaccreditation.org.