

We are pleased to announce Melissa Kalvestrand as the next Executive Director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Melissa is already a familiar face in the land trust community, serving many roles at the Commission over the past 10 years. As Deputy Director, she oversaw the accreditation review process and facilitated the accreditation decisions for over 100 land trusts each year. She partnered in developing, interpreting, reviewing and revising the accreditation requirements and maintaining the Requirements Manual. She also co-facilitated the 2017 revisions to Land Trust Standards and Practices.

"The Commissioners are thrilled to welcome Melissa in this new role. The Executive Director search was an extensive and thorough process, welcoming applicants from across the country. Melissa's passion for our work and vision for the future combined with her depth of experience made her an outstanding candidate. As the newly elected Commission Chair I am looking forward to working closely with Melissa as we work with the Alliance to ensure the vital work of land conservation," said Bruce Runnels.

Melissa's experience makes her uniquely poised to guide the Commission in its efforts to inspire excellence, promote public trust and ensure permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing land trust organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and that strive for continuous improvement.

"Over my past 10 years at the Commission, I have seen the land trust community fundamentally be strengthened by the accreditation process. I look forward to building on the successes of the program and of accredited land trusts to continue to grow the program and realize the next phase of the Commission's work. Over the next decade, the Commission will engage with accredited land trusts in new ways to improve their return on investment."

Melissa has a master's degree in biodiversity, conservation and policy from the University at Albany and a bachelor's degree in biology from Cornell University. She volunteers with the Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network and a local stream-protection non-profit. Melissa's passion for the great outdoors has fueled a life filled with exploring and traveling. She makes sure to stop at every National Park she comes across. So far, she's visited 16 out the 62, which she sees an opportunity for more adventure!

Melissa became executive director effective January 29, 2020.

