

If your land trust is considering applying for first-time accreditation, now is the best time to start planning. In our "Be Prepared" series, we're exploring how land trusts can ensure they are eligible to apply and have strategies to show they are meeting the requirements. In this fourth edition we're looking at the importance of including the date your land trust completes monitoring and inspection reports in the report.



Need a refresher on what resources all land trusts considering accreditation should have on hand? Read and review:

- [Is my Land Trust Ready to Apply for First-Time Accreditation](#)
- [Part I, Be Prepared: Review Your Policies](#)
- [Part II, Be Prepared: The Importance of Annual Monitoring and Inspections](#)
- [Part III, Be Prepared: Recordkeeping](#)
- [Part IV, Be Prepared: Don't Forget the Date](#)
- [Part V, Be Prepared: Annual Financial Evaluations](#)

We commonly refer to requirements from the Commission's *Requirements Manual* and *Land Trust Standards and Practices* published by the Alliance. Remember, accreditation uses indicator elements from the Standards as the basis for the requirements. It's helpful to have a copy of the [Requirements Manual](#) handy and to log into your [Alliance Resource Center](#) account before clicking the links below.

In 2021 the Commission added a new requirement to the Stewardship section.

I. 1 Monitoring or inspection reports include the following:

f. Date report completed

This requirement went into effect starting in 2022. As we explored in [Part II, The Importance of Annual Monitoring and Inspections](#), when applying for first-time accreditation, your land trust must be able to show it has monitored its conservation easements and inspected its fee properties once per calendar year for the last three years prior to submitting the pre-application. After each monitoring or inspection visit, your land trust is required to complete a monitoring or inspection report. All reports must include:

- Inspection date
- Property inspected
- Name of inspector
- Observations related to the property's condition and conservation values
- Observations related to any potential conservation easement violations or conservation property ownership challenges
- **Date report is completed**

Now is the perfect time to review your inspection and monitoring report templates to ensure you have updated it to include the date it was completed.

- [See a sample monitoring report template on the Alliance's Resource Center](#)
- [See a sample inspection report template on the Alliance's Resource Center](#)

Why is having the report completion date so important?

- Having the report completion date helps land trusts document that reports are completed promptly after the visit, which will aid in reports being admissible as evidence in court. In order to meet the business records exception to the rules against hearsay, the record must be made at or near the time of the event.
- The date of report completion also helps the Commission verify compliance with the requirement that monitoring and inspection reports are completed generally within three months of the monitoring or inspection date.

Since this requirement went into effect in 2022, older inspection and monitoring reports are not required to have a report completion date (meaning you should not retroactively add a date). However, a land trust's current reports should now include a "date report completed" field or include a dated signature of the report preparer. (*Note: Having the preparer sign the*

report is not required for accreditation but is an approach used by some land trusts.) Taking action now will allow the Commission to be able to confirm the land trust is meeting the requirements in its recent work.