

Land Trust Accreditation Commission

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

In my 10 years with the Commission, I have been deeply impressed by how the land trust community and individual land trusts transform and strengthen through the accreditation process. This strength was tested as land trusts and the communities they serve were faced with unprecedented challenges during 2020. Commitment to land conservation excellence continued to be paramount even during these times.

Resiliency and community trust in permanence—which accreditation strives to assure—stood strong through this past year. Land trusts invested in accreditation to help fortify their resiliency and to ensure their promise of protecting lands forever. These protected lands helped build healthy communities, across the country, in a time where nature is proving to be more important than ever.

It is a pleasure to work with land trusts and the Commission on this journey to advance excellence, trust and permanent conservation through accreditation, and I continue to be inspired by all of their vital work, every day.

Melissa Kalvestrand

Melissa Kalvestrand
Executive Director

2020 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



95 organizations
successfully achieved
accreditation renewal



6 organizations
achieved first-time
accreditation



Commissioners and staff read **85**
applications in 2020

We are continually amazed at the conservation outcomes resulting from Cornell Land Trust Grant Awards, and the creativity and ingenuity brought to the table by land trusts who strive to attain such commendable stewardship goals. The projects put forth by accredited land trusts have helped us engage donors to significantly scale the grant program and ultimately provide more funding for land trusts who wish to incorporate birds and bird conservation into their land conservation mission.

— Sarah E. Barker,
Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative Program Leader,
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

*The Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative Program
awarded \$120,000 to accredited land trusts in 2020.*

A MEASURABLE IMPACT

The Land Trust Accreditation Ten-Year Impact Evaluation showed that accredited land trusts:



Have 8x more money invested to steward and defend their conservation lands.



85% of public agencies and foundations say accreditation increases their confidence in land trusts and 83% of landowners feel the same way.



Save 3x more land than their peers of similar size.

Accreditation Statistics through 2020

443 Accredited Land Trusts



...protect 79% of land and easements held by **all** land trusts



...which is
19,711,032 acres.
Roughly the size of
Vermont,
New Hampshire,
Massachusetts
& Rhode Island
COMBINED!

We saw it [accreditation] as a roadmap for growing our organization in the right way. The ways in which we have made our community a better place to live now and in the future, I—and I know my whole board—feel very proud. Accreditation played a very strong role in making that possible.

— Angela Twitchell
Executive Director
Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (ME)



UPDATED DIGITAL PROCESS
completely digital application process using updated Accreditation Management System (AMS)



NEW RESOURCES
AMS e-signature and sharing capabilities, updated video tutorials, published *Requirements Guidance* in the time of COVID-19



MORE TIME EFFICIENT

230 average amount of hours to complete the renewal process (from registration to accreditation) which is 24% less time

275 average amount of hours to complete the first-time application (from registration to submission) which is 51% less time

FIRST-TIME



87%

of pre-applicants achieved accreditation

only 9% of accredited land trusts were tabled at first-time accreditation

FIRST RENEWAL



98%

of first-time renewal applicants achieved accreditation

only 24% of renewal applicants were conditionally renewed to address specific issues in a timely manner

SECOND RENEWAL



100%

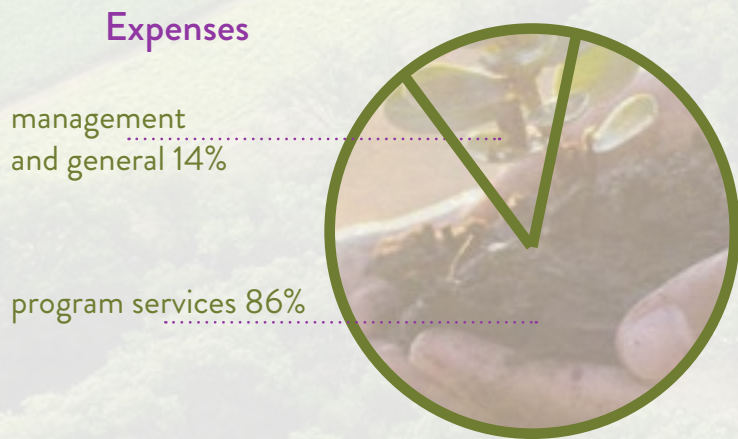
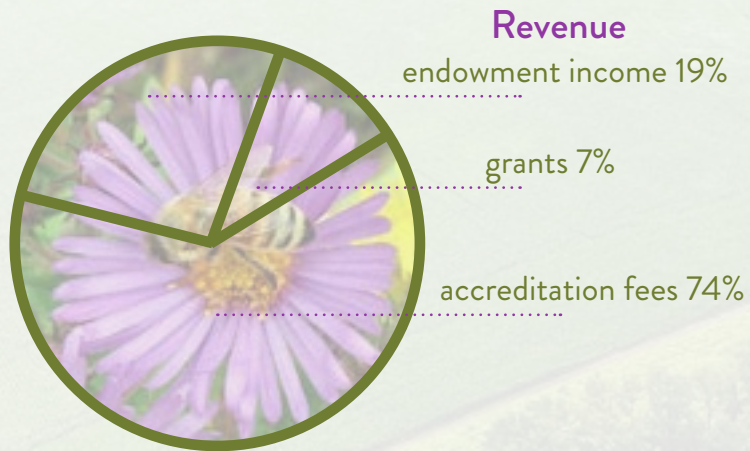
of second-time renewal applicants achieved accreditation

only ONE land trust did not pursue second renewal

These statistics represent the lifetime of the accreditation program

Photo credit: Dave Masuda, Cashmere Canyons, 2017
Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Cashmere Canyons, Washington

2020 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT



ABOUT THE COMMISSIONERS

Land trust accreditation is only possible through the dedicated volunteers who make up the Commission. Eighteen commissioners—from across the country and with expertise in various areas of conservation—volunteer thousands of hours annually, governing and serving as peer reviewers. All agree that this is a great opportunity to work with a dedicated group of conservation leaders on an effective and important program.

To learn more about becoming a commissioner visit:

www.landtrustaccreditation.org/volunteer

COMMISSIONERS ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST VOLUNTEERS



5,400 hours

cumulative number of hours commissioners volunteer each year

2020 COMMISSIONERS

Bruce Runnels, Chair,
Fort Collins, Colorado
Catherine Rawson, Vice-Chair,
Kent, Connecticut
Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Secretary,
Bishop, California
Michael Pope, Treasurer,
Corvallis, Oregon

Jamie Brown,
Lake George, New York
Andrew Dana,
Bozeman, Montana
Molly Doran,
Mount Vernon, Washington
Heather Jobst,
Des Moines, Iowa
Ann Johnston,
Crested Butte, Colorado
Andrew Kota,
Morganton, North Carolina
Anne Lowe,
Breckenridge, Colorado
Clint Miller,
Rochester, Minnesota
Tom Reed,
Toledo, Ohio
Andrea Reese,
Fairfax Station, Virginia
Katharine Roser,
Durango, Colorado
Kay Sohl,
Portland, Oregon
Chris Vaughn,
Charleston, South Carolina
Shane Wellendorf,
Tallahassee, Florida

Current Commissioner Emeritus,
Aimee Rutledge,
Sacramento, California

LAND TRUST 
ACCREDITATION
COMMISSION

An independent program
of the Land Trust Alliance

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