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Thirty-Three Land Trusts Achieve Initial or Renewed Accreditation

(February 26, 2014 | Saratoga Springs, NY) – Sixteen accredited land trusts successfully demonstrated their continued commitment to land trust excellence and voluntary accreditation and were recently awarded renewed land trust accreditation. Seventeen additional land trusts were awarded accreditation for the first time, bringing the total number of accredited land trusts to 254. The awards were announced today by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.



Photo courtesy of North Branch Land Trust

“Accredited land trusts now account for 54% of the 20,645,165 acres currently owned in fee or protected by a conservation easement held by a land trust,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. “Accreditation provides the public with the assurance that accredited land trusts meet high standards for quality and that the results of their conservation work are permanent. Accreditation renewal, which must be completed every five years, confirms that all land trusts continue to national quality standards.”

“The seal of accreditation is a way to prove to their communities that land trusts are worthy of the significant public and private investment in land conservation,” noted Land Trust Alliance President Rand Wentworth. “Accreditation renewal is an affirmation that these organizations have made an ongoing commitment to excellence.”

“Permanent land conservation is a complex process. Each transaction has its own unique twists and turns, rocks and rubble, talus and scree,” said Mary Banken, executive director of Estes Valley Land Trust, whose accreditation was renewed. “We look to the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* as trail markers for our journey, showing us the way that is secure, appropriate and effective. This accreditation renewal is a confirmation that we are following the right path and have reached another milestone in our quest for conservation excellence...a quest that requires commitment by every board, staff and volunteer member of EVLT.

“Applying for and receiving first-time accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission has been a rewarding endeavor for the Southeast Alaska Land (SEAL) Trust,” said Executive Director Frank Rue. “We found that meeting the standards for accreditation has helped SEAL Trust become a much stronger and more sustainable organization. We highly recommend it to other land trusts.”

Each accredited land trust submits extensive documentation and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of the accreditation process. “Scenic Hudson appreciated the guidance provided by the Commission staff as we worked to complete our application for accreditation renewal,” stated Steve Rosenberg, senior vice-president for Scenic Hudson and the executive director of the Scenic Hudson Land Trust.

Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form more than 1,700 land trusts to save the places they love. Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about, including land transferred to public agencies and protected via other means. Conserving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water, safe food, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat and places for people to connect with nature.

Accredited land trusts span the country from Puerto Rico to Alaska and Hawaii to Maine. Two of the newly

accredited land trusts, Norfolk Land Trust (CT) and Tiverton Land Trust (RI), have joined the growing ranks of accredited, volunteer-led land trusts. The Louisville/Jefferson County Environmental Trust (KY) is the first quasi-governmental land trust to pursue and achieve accreditation. Van Ryn concluded, "What all accredited land trusts have in common is a proven commitment to meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that their conservation efforts are permanent. We are happy to celebrate their success."

Land Trusts Accredited February 2014

The Commission recently announced the first-time accreditation of 17 land trusts and the renewed accreditation of 16 previously accredited land trusts. These groups bring the total number of accredited land trusts to 254, accounting for 54% of all privately conserved land. See the complete list of accredited land trusts.

First Time Awards

[Alabama Land Trust \(AL\)](#)
[American Chestnut Land Trust \(MD\)](#)
[Chattahoochee Valley Land Trust \(GA\)](#)
[Chattowah Open Land Trust \(AL\)](#)
[Eastern Shore Land Conservancy \(MD\)](#)
[French Creek Valley Conservancy \(PA\)](#)
[Georgia Land Trust \(GA\)](#)
[Ice Age Trail Alliance \(WI\)](#)
[Kennebec Estuary Land Trust \(ME\)](#)
[Louisville and Jefferson County Environmental Trust \(KY\)](#)
[Michigan Nature Association \(MI\)](#)
[Monmouth Conservation Foundation \(NJ\)](#)
[Norfolk Land Trust \(CT\)](#)
[North Shore Land Alliance \(NY\)](#)
[Southeast Alaska Land Trust \(AK\)](#)
[Tiverton Land Trust \(RI\)](#)
[Vital Ground Foundation \(MT\)](#)

Renewal Awards

[Aspen Valley Land Trust \(CO\)](#)
[Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art \(PA\)](#)
[Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy \(NC\)](#)
[Central Valley Farmland Trust \(CA\)](#)
[Chikaming Open Lands \(MI\)](#)
[Colorado Open Lands \(CO\)](#)
[Countryside Conservancy \(PA\)](#)
[Estes Valley Land Trust \(CO\)](#)
[Five Valleys Land Trust \(MT\)](#)
[Gallatin Valley Land Trust \(MT\)](#)
[Heritage Conservancy \(PA\)](#)
[Hudson Highlands Land Trust \(NY\)](#)

[Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia \(GA\)](#)

[North Branch Land Trust \(PA\)](#)

[Placer Land Trust \(CA\)](#)

[Scenic Hudson and its affiliate Scenic Hudson Land Trust \(NY\)](#)

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. More information on the accreditation program is available on the Commission's website.

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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Land Trust Accreditation Commission
36 Phila St, Suite 2 | Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 587-3143
info@landtrustaccreditation.org

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