



# BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

## WHAT IT MEANS TO LAND TRUSTS, DONORS, GOVERNMENT, AND THE PUBLIC

The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction among the more than 1,200 Alliance-member land trusts across America. Being accredited helps your land trust to stand out, to say to landowners, funders and other supporters: "Invest in us. We have proven we are a strong, effective organization you can trust to conserve your land forever."



100% of applicants report their organization is stronger and more efficient after the process

The public is increasingly demanding accountability from government and nonprofit organizations, including land trusts. Independent accreditation provides third-party assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation that the public and donors look for, and publicly recognizes your land trust's ability to protect important natural places and working lands forever.



66% of renewal applicants reported the process improved the ability to preserve and/or steward land or conservation easements.

Applying for accreditation affords land trusts the opportunity to review and implement policies and procedures that help streamline operations and lead to more effective land conservation. Renewing accreditation fosters continuous improvement and enables organizations to confirm they are consistently following national standards and meeting current requirements.



67% of first-time applicants reported the process increased engagement of their board.

*"There are numerous benefits to being an accredited. For one, when we talk with landowners about how their land will be cared for in the future, we always talk about how we are nationally accredited, how we must live up to the dozens of standards and practices and how we can be trusted with their land. The accreditation seal is a symbol of that trust. Secondly, we have specifically asked funders if the national accreditation means anything to them. Every funder indicated they would prefer to provide their funding to an accredited land trust over a non-accredited trust."*

**— CHRISTOPHER BEICHNER, president and CEO  
Allegheny Land Trust (PA),  
accredited in 2011; renewed in 2016**

Once your organization achieves accreditation you can proudly display the accreditation seal on your accredited land trust's publications and website. Being accredited also provides your land trust with some of the following tangible benefits.

### Conservation Defense Insurance

Accredited land trusts are automatically eligible for an annual premium discount of \$11 per insured unit when they enroll in the conservation defense insurance program offered by TerraFirma Risk Retention Group LLC.

### Directors & Officers Insurance

Chubb Group of Insurance Companies has instituted a new Directors & Officers liability insurance policy rating structure designed especially for Land Trust Alliance member land trusts\*. Accredited land trusts who are Alliance members will receive an additional 7% renewal premium credit (subject to the applicable rates filed in each jurisdiction) in addition to the preferred rates already enjoyed by those with standard membership status.

**LAND TRUST**   
**ACCREDITATION**  
**COMMISSION**

An independent program  
of the Land Trust Alliance

The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

[www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org)



## GuideStar®

Accredited land trusts receive an external review with a five-star rating from the Commission.

### Examples of State Incentives

- 🌿 Colorado: Landowners desiring a state tax credit for a conservation easement donation in Colorado must work with a holder certified by the state. There is an expedited certification process for accredited land trusts.
- 🌿 Louisiana: Land trusts must be certified to hold and conserve certain mineral interests; documentation of land trust accreditation expedites the certification requirement.

### Examples of Public and Private Funding Incentives

- 🌿 Doris Duke Charitable Foundation provides funds through Open Space Institute for its resilient landscapes initiative. Extra points are awarded to accredited land trusts or land trusts that are committed to becoming accredited.
- 🌿 Chester County, PA includes land trust accreditation in its eligibility criteria for funding for its Brandywine Headwaters Preservation Program.
- 🌿 The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation provides land trusts that have already received support from the foundation with unsolicited grants of \$10,000 each when they earn accreditation.
- 🌿 The 1772 Foundation considers a number of factors when evaluating grant applicants, including whether a land trust has prioritized accreditation.
- 🌿 A new program in Texas requires land trusts to be accredited to receive matching funds for projects near or adjacent to Texas state parks.
- 🌿 When seeking to become LEED-certified, a project proponent may opt to provide financial support to an accredited land trust to obtain credit for the “protecting or restoring habitat” certification element.

## Accreditation Accolades

- 🌿 “Land trust accreditation is a powerful tool to strengthen land trust operations, foster public trust, and ensure the permanence of land conservation. The Kresge Foundation awarded a challenge grant to the Land Trust Alliance to help build an endowment for the accreditation program so that the costs of the program will remain affordable for land trusts. We viewed this investment in the accreditation program as a logical complement to our historic support for land acquisition by land trusts. It also was a good fit with Kresge’s values of advancing environmental stewardship and institutional transformation.”

*LOIS R. DEBACKER, Managing Director, The Kresge Foundation*

- 🌿 “I interviewed several land trusts to work with me on my conservation easement for the family ranch, and I chose the Texas Land Conservancy. Now that they have the accreditation seal—just two months after I completed my easement—I’m really pleased that I chose them because that really validates that it is a solid organization.”

*JOYCE LUCAS, Landowner, Birk-Sommerfeld Heritage Ranch, Texas Land Conservancy, accredited in 2011, renewed 2016*

- 🌿 “The world our land trusts function in doesn’t stand still, and neither can we. As we all grow and change, it’s critical to the credibility of the land trust movement and to our own organization that we maintain the highest standards and practices through the renewal of accreditation process.”

*STEVE ROSENBERG, Executive Director, Scenic Hudson (NY), accredited in 2008; renewed in 2014*

- 🌿 “Accreditation is a remarkably detailed process that leaves no stone unturned. Whether you are an established land trust with many properties, or younger and growing like ours, it is a huge learning process that provides you the opportunity to examine your work with a talented team of experts. There is no better way to ensure the collective strength of the land trust movement.”

*TERRI LANE, Executive Director, Northwest Arkansas Land Trust (AR), accredited in 2015*

