

S A V I N G land

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SPRING . 2016
www.landtrustalliance.org VOL. 35 NO. 2

CONSERVATION TAX *Incentive Victory!*

 Land Trust Alliance
Together, conserving the places you love

**Honoring Rand Wentworth
Profiles in Stewardship
What Is Community Conservation?**

SAVING land

SPRING 2016
www.landtrustalliance.org VOL. 35 NO. 2



DJ GLISSON, II/FIREFLY IMAGEWORKS

14 COVER STORY ▶

Bold and Transformative Leadership: The Story of Rand Wentworth

By Kathy Westra

For 14 years Rand Wentworth led the Land Trust Alliance with a visionary, inclusive and collaborative leadership style, transforming the organization and catalyzing change in the land trust community.



COURTESY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

ON THE COVER:

The Maas Family Nature Preserve offers stunning displays of purple lupine in the spring to visitors. Protected by the accredited Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the preserve is home to a remnant oak-pine barrens ecosystem, a unique community that supports the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

DJ GLISSON, II/FIREFLY IMAGEWORKS



TETON REGIONAL LAND TRUST

← FEATURE **18**

Stewardship: The Nitty Gritty of Forever

By Christina Soto

Meet land trust stewardship staff on the front lines of land conservation—monitoring, managing and deeply caring about the land we all love.



PIERSON HILL

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Aiding an Amazing Forest

Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy collaborates with agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, to keep the Apalachicola National Forest healthy, and the public educated about this treasure in their midst.



D.J. GLUSSON, II

← FEATURE **24**

More Conservation for More People

By Rob Aldrich

Two years into the program, Alliance Community Conservation Director Rob Aldrich helps land trusts understand what community conservation is and what it isn't, and why it's so important to the future of land conservation.

OUR MISSION ▶ To save the places people love
by strengthening land conservation
across America.

THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE REPRESENTS MORE THAN 1,700 LAND TRUSTS AND PROMOTES VOLUNTARY LAND CONSERVATION TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES THROUGH CLEAN AIR AND WATER, FRESH LOCAL FOOD, NATURAL HABITATS AND PLACES TO REFRESH OUR MINDS AND BODIES.



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A Historic Win

**WELCOME
LAND TRUST ALLIANCE
PRESIDENT**

Andrew Bowman

A new president at the helm of the Alliance is poised to work with land trusts to address the challenges of land conservation into the 21st century.

YOUR SUPPORT will empower the Alliance to strengthen our partnership with our members to create thriving, resilient communities.

WE WELCOME our new Alliance president Andrew Bowman and your support for tomorrow.

Visit us at donate.lta.org



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Together, Thinking About Tomorrow

Land trusts excel at thinking about tomorrow. Whether it's planning for perpetuity, joining TerraFirma to safeguard their work or committing to standards and practices that ensure organizational stability over the long term, land trusts appreciate the value of forethought.

I share this appreciation for planning and I have always sought to set “stretch goals” in my personal and professional life. And that’s why, as the Land Trust Alliance’s new president, I’m excited to join with land trusts as we collectively think about tomorrow and set our sights high for the future.

I truly believe in private land conservation and stand in awe of how land trusts have permanently conserved 50 million acres. At the same time, I ask how we can build on our achievements and boldly take on the challenges we now face. What pace of annual land conservation should we consider sufficient and how do we achieve that rate? How can we make land conservation more relevant to people’s lives? How do we define our role in addressing such topics as climate change and creating thriving, resilient communities?

We know the Alliance helps facilitate land trust success. Through our recent triumphs—securing permanency for a key tax incentive (see pg. 10) and completing a resoundingly successful campaign (see pg. 12)—the Alliance has positioned land trusts and their 5 million supporters for an even greater tomorrow.

But how should the Alliance evolve to best serve our dynamic community? What are the best and highest uses of the Alliance’s resources and capabilities? How do we help land trusts thoughtfully and strategically pursue the tremendous challenges and opportunities we have before us?

I welcome the chance for us—you and me—to explore these topics together. In my first months as the Alliance’s president, I’ll visit my home state of California, plus Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania and other states to connect with many of our community’s leaders and supporters. It’s an ambitious journey that I can’t wait to begin. I’m eager to get to know, learn from and partner with our country’s land trust champions.

Because the more we think about and plan for tomorrow together, the more we’ll continue to conserve the places we all love.



Andrew Bowman



DI GLISSION, II

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Watch Andrew online at www.lta.org/blog/introducing-andrew-bowman.

BY Rose Jenkins



NATIONAL BARN ALLIANCE

Model barn raising in Richmond, Virginia

Today's Lesson — Barn Raising!

Historically, rural Americans drew on engineering, ingenuity and community to raise huge, sturdy barns. Today elementary and middle school students tap into this heritage as they construct quarter-scale models of traditional American barns through a program called Teamwork and Timbers, sponsored by the National Barn Alliance.

The organization brings two deconstructed model barns to primarily inner-city schools across the country, where the students put them together. One model is based on the Dutch Barn style that originated in the Hudson River Valley. The other is a Midwest Barn based on a barn built in Illinois in 1842. Both models use timber-frame construction, relying on fitted wooden joints connected by dowels. As students build the barns, they learn about math, science, history, agriculture, architecture and especially teamwork. No one can raise a barn alone!

“It’s a three-dimensional puzzle that excites all ages,” says program director Charles Leik. “It’s a short-term project with a tangible result and the students love the experience.” The National Barn Alliance aims to expand the program, working with partners who will bring model barn raisings to more schools. Teamwork and Timbers is part of the National Barn Alliance’s work to promote preservation of America’s historic barns and rural heritage.

See <http://barnalliance.org/teamworks-timbers-barn-education-program>. •

100,000 Acres Protected in One Virginia County

Fauquier County, Virginia, is less than 50 miles from Washington, D.C., which puts it squarely in the path of sprawl. But landowners there have embraced conservation easements as a way to protect the countryside. Recently, Fauquier reached a conservation milestone, with over 100,000 acres—almost a quarter of the county—protected by conservation easements. Thousands more acres of parks and public lands are also protected.

Fauquier reached the 100,000-acre mark when the Burton family protected a third-generation working dairy farm through the local purchase of development rights (PDR) program. Part owner Harold Burton says, “We wanted to conserve the land to keep development away from it and keep it farmland.” According to the accredited Piedmont Environmental Council, which is headquartered in Fauquier County, conservation easements protect approximately 50,000 acres of prime farmland, 40,000 acres of forestland and 10,000 acres of Civil War battlefields. •



PAULA COMBS

Rachel Burton, daughter of Wainbur Farm owner Harold Burton, holds one of her dairy cows that she shows at county fairs throughout the summer.

Gulf Coast Under Pressure

As the Gulf Coast faces unsettling changes, what wild communities are most vulnerable? And what are the most important places to protect?

To dive into the first question, check out the recent *Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment*. This report by government and conservation partners identifies potential threats, including hypoxia (low oxygen levels in water), urbanization, sea level rise, wetland loss, altered freshwater flows and invasive species. It evaluates the vulnerability of four ecosystem types: mangroves, tidal emergent marshes, oyster reefs and barrier islands. And it assesses the vulnerability of 11 wildlife species, including roseate spoonbills, blue crabs and sea turtles. Ten out of the 11 species studied were found to be at moderate to very high risk throughout all or most of their range along the Gulf of Mexico in five U.S. states.

To address the second question, the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation has laid out an ambitious conservation plan for the region. The partnership, a coalition organized by the Land Trust Alliance, released *A Land Conservation Vision for the Gulf of Mexico Region* (<http://gulfpartnership.org>), calling for voluntary, cooperative land conservation to revive the region's ecosystems and economies.

Elizabeth Barber, a leader in the partnership, says that the vulnerability report “drives home the synergistic effect of climate change, sea level rise and urbanization on our fragile coastal ecosystem. It points to those places where we need to increase our conservation efforts. It is something we will rely on as we implement the Vision.”

See the assessment at http://gulfcostprairie/cc.org/media/28949/gcva_executivesummary_final.pdf. •

Restoring a Sacred Grain



CHERYL KATZ, COURTESY OF YALE ENVIRONMENT 360

Sean Thompson, natural resource technician for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, looks out over restored wild rice on the reservation's Perch Lake near Cloquet, Minnesota.

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is working to restore the aquatic grass they call *manoomin*, or “food that grows on the water,” to their homeland in Minnesota. Known as wild rice, this grain is a traditional staple of the Chippewa people—but the vast grassy wetlands where it once grew have been impaired by damming, logging and other disruptions, according to a

Yale Environment 360 article by Cheryl Katz. Now, the tribe is restoring *manoomin* to lakes on their reservation. It's also working with conservation partners to restore wild rice in the St. Louis River Estuary bordering Duluth.

For a century, this estuary was a dumping ground for industrial pollution and untreated wastewater, but conservationists are pursuing a vision for it as a healthy waterway where people can swim, fish and gather food. The ambitious St. Louis River Restoration Initiative includes dredging contaminated debris, removing pilings from an abandoned railway and bringing back wild rice.

In 2015, the accredited Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the 1854 Treaty Authority and the Fond du Lac Band began the restoration by seeding 121 acres of the estuary with wild rice—an acreage that may eventually expand ten-fold. This work is supported by the land trust's members, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Wild rice supports not only human communities, but many wildlife species, including migrating wildfowl. In a video titled *Manoomin: Food that Grows on the Water* (<http://theways.org/story/manoomin>), Fred Ackley, Jr., a member of the Sokaogon Chippewa of Mole Lake, explains, “It's the Creator's food and the Mother Earth, she gives it to us to use.” •

Prescriptions for Parks



Last fall Sherry Sayer got a new prescription for her diabetes: go to the park and walk. Her practitioner wrote it out for her, detailing how many minutes to walk, how many days each week and which local parks offered trails at her level. The practitioner even organized a walking group, called the Seriously Sassy Strutters. Sayer, who is 66, has improved to the point that she no longer needs to take insulin.

“We’re meant to move. You will not realize how beneficial being out here is until you do it,” Sayer says in an article by Peter Hicks on the Kaniksu Land Trust’s website (<http://kaniksulandtrust.org/sassy-strutters-by-peter-hicks>).

Sayer is one of 135 participants in the Prescription Park Pilot program organized by the accredited Kaniksu Land Trust, which serves northern Idaho and northwest Montana. Similar programs are under way across the country to find out what happens when outdoor activity is prescribed as treatment for disease. This approach is in line with a recent report called “Step It Up! The Surgeon General’s Call to Action for Walking and Walkable Communities,” which states that an average of 22 minutes of walking each day can help prevent or treat many chronic diseases, including diabetes, cancer, stroke, heart disease and depression.

The Kaniksu Land Trust coordinated the program because, even in this stunning Rocky Mountain landscape, over half of the population doesn’t get outdoors—and hosting a bird walk wasn’t going to reach those people, says Suzanne Engel, director of community outreach. The land trust has gone on to advocate for increased walkability in communities that lack parks, trails and sidewalks. “As land trusts, we can change the nation,” Engel says. “If we can change 50% of our population’s experience, that spreads health and prosperity and recommitment to the land in a big way.” •

“Multisolving” Motivates Climate Action

When world leaders agreed to targets to reduce climate-changing emissions at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, they weren’t just focused on the climate. Analysis by Climate Interactive (www.climateinteractive.org) finds that “The majority of the commitments to reduce emissions in Paris were motivated by multisolving, the search for climate solutions that produce immediate, local benefits. Climate strategists should take note.”

The group, which provides interactive tools that empower people to understand climate solutions, found that 60% of the pledges made in Paris last December came from countries that framed the issue in terms of cobenefits, such as public health or economic opportunity. In addition, cities represented at the

summit took a bold stand. In the Paris City Hall Declaration, local leaders pledged to reduce greenhouse gases equivalent to India’s emissions. These local leaders stated, “An effective, global response to climate change presents one of the greatest economic opportunities of the 21st century, will protect public health and strengthen sustainable development mindful of human rights and women’s empowerment.” As Charlie Hale, the mayor of Portland, Oregon, puts it, “We see climate action as an economic strategy for success, not a burden that we have to shoulder.”

Climate Interactive points to several examples of multisolving. Bike infrastructure encourages exercise; solar power improves air quality and grows local economies; energy efficiency creates jobs and lowers energy bills—all while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. •

In California, Wolves Are Back

After nearly a century, gray wolves have returned to California. In the summer of 2015, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife released photos of two adults and five pups, taken by a motion-triggered camera near Mt. Shasta—the first confirmed sighting of a gray wolf pack in California since wolves were extirpated in the 1920s. This family of wolves is currently denning in southern Oregon in a stretch of habitat that extends into California.

The collapse and recovery of wolf populations in other parts of the West has called attention to their significance as a keystone species—one that powerfully impacts whole ecosystems. In Yellowstone National Park, scientists observed cascading effects as reintroduced wolves limited browsing by elk. Vegetation regenerated, allowing multiple species to flourish. The increased plant life reduced erosion and runoff, which led to healthier streams and rivers.

The accredited Pacific Forest Trust celebrated the wolves' return, noting that wolf reintroduction has proven compatible with working lands management in other parts of the West. "Their return demonstrates the benefits of our work to conserve whole forests at the landscape level, connecting public and private land for wildlife in the Klamath-Cascade region," said President Laurie Wayburn.

The land trust leads the Klamath-Cascade Initiative, which seeks to conserve a largely forested 12-million-acre region surrounding the volcanic peaks of Mt. Shasta and Mt. Lassen in California and Oregon. The World Wildlife Fund has recognized this region for its globally outstanding biodiversity—and now, it's one species richer. •

Guess Who's Not Endangered?

Two wildlife species have avoided the Endangered Species List—thanks to voluntary conservation on working forests, farms and ranches. Last September, the U.S. Department of the Interior ruled that the greater sage grouse and the New England cottontail do not require protection under the Endangered Species Act. These are two of seven species targeted by the federal Working Lands for Wildlife program (part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service). This program provides technical and financial assistance to landowners who want to improve habitat on their land. When the decision was made not to list the cottontail, Jason Weller, NRCS chief, said it shows that "wildlife and working lands cannot just coexist, but thrive, in harmony."

See www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs. •

Winning Weasel

A weasel charmed its way to a win in Mass Audubon's sixth annual "Picture This: Your Great Outdoors" photo contest. The statewide contest drew images in seven categories—People in Nature, Birds, Mammals, Other Animals, Plants and Fungi, Landscapes and Travel—with prizes for youth and adult photographers. Steve Flint took the grand prize with a shot of a short-tailed weasel that peeked out from a stone wall to look straight at the camera at Mass Audubon's Stony Brook Wildlife Sanctuary. Mass Audubon, accredited in 2015, displays winning photos in a traveling exhibition at its wildlife sanctuaries. It also features images from the contest in its publications, website and social media.

Many land trusts find photo contests a great way to engage their communities and gather compelling images of the resources they protect. A helpful tip: If you plan to publish images from the contest, make sure to get permission as part of the contest terms. Does your land trust hold a photo contest? The Alliance is always looking for good photos. Email *Saving Land* editor Chris Soto at csoto@lta.org.

See www.massaudubon.org/news-events/photo-contest. 🍷



STEVE FLINT

BY Sean Robertson

A VICTORY TWO DECADES IN THE MAKING

On December 18, 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law a permanent enhanced tax incentive for donations of conservation easements. This is a great victory for the Land Trust Alliance and its members and represents the most significant land conservation legislation in many years.

The journey to this victory began nearly two decades ago. On the morning of March 10, 1999, Rock Ringling and Bill Long of Montana Land Reliance* visited the Neal family to discuss conserving their family ranch. Despite new estate tax incentives that the Alliance helped to enact in 1997, the family could not deduct enough of their limited income over six years for the easement donation to make financial sense. On the drive home, Ringling and Long resolved to enlist Sen. Max Baucus in creating a new tax credit for farmers and ranchers who conserve their land.

The idea caught fire, and soon land trusts from across the country were reaching out to policymakers to share their concern that the existing tax incentives for conservation just didn't work for farmers, ranchers and forest owners of modest means.

In the years that followed, the Alliance mobilized hundreds of land trust leaders, coalition partners and public officials to do something about it. This timeline barely scratches the surface of those who deserve credit for this victory, but it offers a glimpse into the legislative campaign that will help land trusts conserve millions of additional acres in years to come. 🌱



▲ September
At the behest of the Alliance, Rep. Nancy Johnson introduces a bill providing an unlimited carryforward for easement deductions. Alliance President Jean Hocker (pictured) testifies in support.

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June

Montana Land Reliance retains lobbyists, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust* mobilizes the ranching community and the Alliance makes the tax incentive a priority, leading to a Senate Finance Committee hearing and a new bill by Sens. Baucus and Charles Grassley.

August

With the leadership of Baucus, Congress enacts the conservation incentive for two years. The Alliance launches a landowner outreach campaign.

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November

Rock Ringling (at right) and Bill Long of Montana Land Reliance ask Sen. Max Baucus (center) to introduce a tax credit bill. He steers them toward eliminating the limit on easement deductions to a percentage of one's income.



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05

June

After the Joint Committee on Taxation recommends eliminating all easement deductions, Alliance President Rand Wentworth testifies before the Senate Finance Committee and mobilizes land trust advocates.



◀ August

Michigan's Leelanau Conservancy* invites Rep. Dave Camp (pictured) to a "friends picnic." They and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy* build close relationships with Camp—who later becomes chair of the House tax committee—and Sen. Debbie Stabenow. Camp and Stabenow become champions of the tax incentive.

February

The House votes 277 – 130 to make the incentive permanent as part of the America Gives More Act, the first of three such votes over the next year.



December

The Alliance launches the "Campaign for Permanence" with other charities, culminating in Chairman Camp seeking in a vote to make the incentive permanent that falls just eight votes short of the required two-thirds majority. Pictured: In partnership with Feeding America, the Alliance delivers apples from a conserved orchard to every senator, including Sen. Chris Murphy (right).

May

Thanks to the efforts of Sens. Baucus and Stabenow, Congress renews the easement incentive for another two years as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus co-chair (and future Speaker) Paul Ryan (pictured with Russ Shay) hosts a congressional briefing and sends a letter urging caucus members to cosponsor the incentive.



April

The Alliance hosts the first annual Land Trust Advocacy Day. Over the next four years nearly 400 land trust leaders come to Washington to lobby in more than 700 meetings, greatly broadening support for the incentive.

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08

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February

President George W. Bush seeks to make the new conservation tax incentive permanent in his FY 2008 Budget request because of the work of David Anderson and James Connaughton of the President's Council on Environmental Quality.

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10



April

President Barack Obama hosts the first White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors. Three dozen land trusts participate, and the president later includes a permanent incentive in his budget proposal.

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13

July

Reps. Mike Thompson (at podium) and Jim Gerlach host a press conference announcing reintroduction of their easement incentive bill, which secured an impressive 311 House co-sponsors in the preceding Congress—majorities of both parties.



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February

Ways and Means Chair Ryan makes the America Gives More Act his committee's first vote of the year. It passes the house with a 279 – 137 super-majority. Sens. Stabenow and Dean Heller lead the charge in the Senate.

December

The permanent conservation tax incentive is enacted by Congress as part of year-end tax and spending legislation. Come celebrate with us at the 2016 Land Trust Alliance Advocacy Days in April!

September

The Alliance launches the Advocacy Ambassadors initiative at Rally 2013. The first Ambassadors Award honors Rock Ringling for his work championing the incentive over the past decade.

*Accredited land trust



TOGETHER: A CAMPAIGN FOR THE LAND

It was a risky proposition: try to raise \$35 million to fund the programs that land trusts need and want, with a loyal but limited base of existing individual donors, and without deviating a penny of philanthropic support that would otherwise go to an individual land trust. But my fellow Land Trust Alliance board members are a courageous and committed group, and in 2010 launched *Together: A Campaign for the Land*.

In retrospect, we really had no choice. The Alliance had just completed a national consultation process and strategic plan. It was clear what land trusts wanted from their Alliance: to continue our Washington-based policy work on their behalf; to launch a national easement enforcement insurance program; to stabilize and improve accreditation; to expand leadership training and other national services; and to launch a new initiative to help each land trust on the journey to inclusiveness and community focus. When we looked at the cost of implementing the new strategic plan it was staggering: millions in philanthropic

Fred Rich, co-chair of the Alliance's *Together: A Campaign for the Land*

DJ GLISSON, II

capital for TerraFirma and accreditation, and many millions more in annual costs for the other work. This was money that the Alliance didn't have and that regular annual fundraising couldn't provide.

And so *Together: A Campaign for the Land* was born. The Alliance board, National Council and existing donors were predictably generous, and a network of regional committees set about trying to introduce the Alliance to other donors around the country. Dozens of land trust executive directors took our team to meet their own donors, to talk about how the work of the Alliance enables and empowers the local work their donors care so much about. This turned out to be a great investment of time for local leaders, as almost \$18 million of the \$40 million ultimately raised was immediately redirected to investments to strengthen local land trusts.

A national campaign is a tremendous amount of work, a five-year marathon that required great personal sacrifice from our president, Rand Wentworth, and the rest of his team. As a result of their travel to all corners of the country, not only did the Alliance meet and make hundreds of new friends, but conservationists nationwide now have a greater understanding of the role the movement's national architecture plays in the success of their local land trust.

Of course it makes me proud that we raised over \$40 million for our movement, but what matters most is what we've done with that money (see opposite page). This election year we are hearing lots of rhetoric about what divides us as a nation. But Americans of all political stripes are deeply invested in saving land, and the Alliance is all about what we can do together. So it should be no surprise that the reason this campaign succeeded is the same: We did it together. 🍀

FRED RICH IS VICE CHAIR OF THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND WAS CO-CHAIR FOR THE ALLIANCE'S CAMPAIGN (SEE WWW.LTA.ORG/BLOG/TOGETHER). HE IS THE AUTHOR OF TWO BOOKS. THE LATEST, *GETTING TO GREEN, SAVING NATURE: A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION*, WILL BE RELEASED BY W.W. NORTON IN APRIL.

together

A Campaign for the Land

Over the past five years this campaign has funded the transformation of the entire land trust community and enabled significant accomplishments for land conservation.

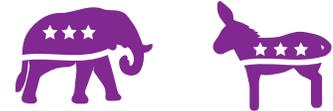


INCREASE the pace of land conservation



\$700 million+

over 10 years for the purchase of easements on farm and ranch lands in the 2014 Farm Bill



383 bipartisan votes

in Congress to make the tax incentive for easement donations permanent

IMPROVE the quality of land conservation

342

accredited
land trusts



Nearly
5,000
land trust leaders strengthened by trainings,
coaching and other resources in 2015

Over
75%

of conserved land now held
by accredited land trusts

ENSURE the permanence of land conservation



90% of acres

under conservation easement now either
held by TerraFirma members or organizations
capable of self-insuring



100%

success rate in court for TerraFirma

*** TOGETHER, OUR SUCCESS ***

\$40.1 million*
raised

* As of January 2016



\$17.7 million

invested in strengthening land trusts



50 million acres

of land conserved by land trusts

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BOLD AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Story of Rand Wentworth

BY KATHY WESTRA

After 14 years of service to the land trust community, Rand Wentworth announced last year that he would retire as president of the Land Trust Alliance in early 2016. As land trust leaders reflected on the news, they expressed gratitude and recognition of how much the land trust community had changed under his leadership, citing his ability to bring people together, encourage bold action and inspire hope. “The evolution of our collective work under Rand’s leadership is stunning,” says Robert Ayres, Texas rancher, conservationist and Alliance board member. “His leadership style is visionary, yet inclusive and collaborative.”

During Wentworth’s term as president, the land trust community transformed the quality of its work and doubled the pace of conservation. The Alliance budget grew from \$7.1 million to \$18.6 million, individual giving grew four-fold and the Alliance staff doubled in size, dramatically expanding the organization’s capacity to serve land trusts.

“Rand is an incredibly effective leader. His extraordinary drive, his passion to conserve our nation’s natural heritage and his seemingly inexhaustible energy have propelled the land conservation movement to undreamed of levels of professionalism, cohesion and impact,” says Michael Dowling, immediate past chair of the board and co-chair of the Alliance’s *Together: A Campaign for the Land*.

“I first laid eyes on Rand in Gretchen Long’s living room on Park Avenue,” says Alliance Vice Chair Fred Rich. “He started his speech with a story—of course. I can’t remember the story, but I do remember that it was the first time I truly understood that my land trust was part of a national movement. Here, I thought, is a leader who deserves my support. In all the years that followed, he never proved me wrong.”

Listening and Building Friendships

Wentworth first worked at a land trust in 1970 as an intern for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (accredited). After studying at Yale and Cornell, Wentworth began his career in commercial real estate—a surprising start for an environmentalist but a great way to learn the management, real estate, legal and political skills required in land conservation. In 1990 he became the founding director of the Atlanta office of the Trust for Public Land, where he led a \$145 million capital campaign to acquire 70 miles along the Chattahoochee River in metro Atlanta. He also worked closely with community leaders to triple the size of the national park honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

After 12 years with the Trust for Public Land, the Alliance chose Wentworth to succeed Jean Hocker when she retired as president of the Alliance in 2001. It would be his goal to facilitate a transformation of the impact of land conservation in America, and he was confident that land trusts had the potential to double the pace of conservation and immeasurably enrich the communities in which they work. “I once heard Harvard professor Mark Roberts define leadership in the simplest of



“Fourteen years ago I saw this young, energetic, passionate visionary, and I thought: ‘This is one of the great ones.’”

Gretchen Long, former Alliance board member and current National Council member

DJ GLISSON, II

terms,” says Wentworth. *“Leadership is taking responsibility for what actually happens in the world.”*

Wentworth spent his first year on the job listening and building friendships with land trusts, conservation leaders, government officials and donors throughout the United States. By 2003 those conversations had helped shape an ambitious plan to increase the pace, quality and permanence of conservation throughout the country. The Alliance focused on those three strategic goals for over a decade and was successful in accomplishing each one of them.

Turning Crisis into Opportunity

Shortly after Wentworth’s arrival at the Alliance, Congress threatened to eliminate the tax incentives for conservation easements and impose harsh regulations on land trusts. Wentworth led the land trust community in fighting back. He testified before Congress three times and called on land trusts to build relationships with members of Congress—an approach that evolved into the Advocacy Ambassadors initiative. According to Peter Szabo of Bloomingdale Management Consultants, “The courage Rand showed



Rand commends the extraordinary people on the Alliance board (some current and past members pictured above). “Whenever people thank me, I tell them that the Alliance’s success is the work of many hands.”

BOLD AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP



DI GELISSON, II



KIM SEESE

To make the conservation tax incentive permanent, the Land Trust Alliance went on the offense, building strong support in Congress. In July Rand attended a press conference with Reps. Jim Gerlach (left) and Mike Thompson in a show of bipartisan support for the incentive.

in the dark days of the Senate Finance Committee investigation quite likely saved the land trust movement as we know it.”

Seeing the crisis as an opportunity, the Alliance played offense—not defense—and built strong support in Congress. Instead of losing the tax incentives, the Alliance convinced Congress to increase them on a temporary basis. Making them permanent became the Alliance’s top policy goal for 10 years, and, finally, on December 18, 2015, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed a bill that did just that. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that this incentive will leverage over \$3 billion and 3 million acres of new conservation donations every decade.

According to a news release by the National Association of Nonprofits, it was Wentworth’s “vision, leadership and courage” that united other charities to push the permanent tax incentive over the finish line. Wentworth said, “The real champions are the land trust leaders and our staff, led by Mary Pope Hutson, Russ

Shay and Andy McLeod, who persevered over a decade to pass this historic bill.” The Alliance also doubled the amount of funding available for land conservation under the Farm Bill and helped increase the funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. All of this helped local land trusts to double the annual pace of conservation to 1 million acres a year.

An Extraordinary Team

The incentive victory would not have been possible if Congress had doubts about the integrity and effectiveness of land trusts. Under Wentworth’s leadership, the Alliance began a public process to explore ways for the land trust community to preserve public trust and recognize excellence. In 2006, Wentworth worked closely with Tammara Van Ryn, Larry Kueter and the founding commissioners to design and launch the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, which is structured as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The Alliance raised the funds to start and sustain the new program, and it provided coaching, assessments, training and grants to help prepare land trusts for accreditation.

“Thank you for your visionary leadership, your commitment to inclusion and your gift for sharing stories about the land and for those who protect it; you have touched people’s lives.”

Melanie Allen, Conservation Trust for North Carolina (accredited)

Today more than three-quarters of the nation’s privately conserved land is held by an accredited land trust. Accreditation has served as a powerful incentive for land trusts to advance along the path to excellence, and has transformed the strength and effectiveness of the land trust community. At the same time, the Alliance launched new services for those land trusts for whom accreditation is not yet an option so that every land trust has a path to improvement.

Concerned by the increase in violations and legal challenges to conservation easements and land owned by land trusts, Wentworth presided over the creation of Terrafirma, an innovative charitable risk pool that funds the legal costs of defending conserved lands. Terrafirma issued its first policies in 2013 and now protects 24,193 properties while boasting a perfect track record of five court victories. Wentworth says, “It was a great delight working with Conservation Defense Director Leslie Ratley-Beach. She has done a spectacular job in managing this indispensable service.”

To fund all of these new services, the Alliance embarked on its first campaign, *Together: A Campaign for the Land*, co-chaired by



DI GLUSSON, II

Rand with his executive team: Marilyn Ayres and Mary Pope Hutson

Dave Anderson, Fred Rich and Michael Dowling. With Wentworth at the helm, the Alliance exceeded the campaign goal of \$35 million and raised over \$40 million (see pg. 12).

“I have had the privilege of working with an extraordinary staff team, board, donors and land trust leaders who believed that we could do great things by working together,” says Wentworth. “I am especially grateful for the friendship and service of my great co-leaders over the past 14 years: Mary Pope Hutson and Marilyn Ayres.”

Wentworth’s legacy will provide a solid foundation as the Alliance’s new president, Andrew Bowman, takes over the organization’s leadership. Board Chair Laura Johnson says, “We will be a force defining land conservation for the 21st century. Andrew will take the reins of an organization that is strong, innovative and highly respected.”

In honor of his legacy, the Alliance board has named Wentworth president emeritus. The board also voted to name the Alliance’s leadership development services the *Wentworth Leadership Program*—a fitting tribute for his commitment to the next generation of conservation leaders.

Alliance board member Alan Bell takes the long view: “Decades from now, we’re going to look back and recognize the astonishing impact that the Alliance had on the world because of Rand’s extraordinary vision and work.” 🌿

KATHY WESTRA, PRINCIPAL OF YOUR GREEN VOICE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY COMMUNICATIONS, IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST.

A Chat with Rand

What have you learned over the years?

You can get anything done if you don’t mind who gets the credit.

What is the biggest challenge facing conservation?

Young people spend nine hours a day looking at a screen. Their world may be expanded, but their lives are diminished. We need to get them out in nature.

How do we get people to care about conservation?

Nature is essential to human health and well-being. The research is convincing; we just need to get the word out.

What got you into land conservation?

As a child, I would dig carrots in my grandmother’s garden, build forts in the woods and wander along streams looking for fish and salamanders. I was grabbed by the beauty all around me and am working for the day that every child in America can have that kind of experience.

Who influenced your thinking about conservation?

Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Ed Wayburn, Wendell Berry, Mary Oliver and conversations with big-thinking land trust leaders all over the country. When I was a teenager, I was irresistibly drawn by the singing of Pete Seeger—a joyous call to action.

What do you like about land trust people?

They are fun, creative and passionate about land. They are social entrepreneurs who get things done—in spite of the odds. They are the most hopeful, can-do people in the world.

What’s next for you?

My wife and I are planning a sabbatical with time for writing, travel and a long-distance hiking trip. When we get back, I will return to work in land conservation—I can’t imagine doing anything else with my life. But, having traveled almost every week for 14 years, I am looking forward to eventually being planted in one place.

As you turn over the reins of the Alliance to Andrew Bowman, do you have any advice for him?

Build friendships, listen carefully, dream big.



DI GLUSSON, II

“I have never had so many hugs in my life!” Rand said after Rally 2015 in California (pictured with board member Mary McFadden). He also treasured being “accredited in perpetuity” by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

A vast green field under a blue sky with white clouds and a lightning bolt. The field is filled with various green plants and shrubs, extending to a flat horizon. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds, and a single lightning bolt is visible in the upper left quadrant.

STEWARDSHIP:

THE NITTY GRITTY OF *forever*

BY Christina Soto

“During my first weeks on the job, I was run out of an Aspen stand by an elk, almost struck by lightning, dive-bombed by red-tailed hawks and chased by cows. I also learned to row a drift boat, fly fish and how to jump a barbed wire fence without losing my pants...all good stuff!” You may be asking just what exactly does Paul Wendland do? Most land trust people would not be surprised to hear he’s in stewardship.

“I’m originally from Presque Isle, Michigan, but I’ve lived in six states and traveled to about 40 countries,” says Wendland, stewardship coordinator for the accredited Teton Regional Land Trust in Driggs, Idaho. Wanting to transition away from a career as a banking and finance consultant in developing countries, Wendland read Story Clark’s book *A Field Guide to Conservation Finance*. “It showed me that I could leverage my former career into working in conservation full time. I joined the Palouse Land Trust [accredited] in Idaho as a board member, which was a great hands-on introduction into conservation work. Then the position opened up at Teton Regional Land Trust. This is my dream job. I get to live and work in such a spectacular place.”

Wendland is not alone in espousing the joys of working in the stewardship field. And it’s not just the pleasure of being outside that makes the job worthwhile.

“I’ve watched the land trust grow and my job has evolved, but the work that has always had the most meaning for me personally is stewardship,” says Ian Sinks, stewardship director for the accredited Columbia Land Trust in Vancouver, Washington. “Being part of a dedicated team of people working to restore wetlands and rivers, manage forests, work with communities on common ground issues and watch (and measure) change to understand the impacts of our work makes this one of the best jobs I could imagine.”

Chatting with land trust stewardship staff—the people who monitor conservation easements or manage fee land—certain themes emerge. Those in the job for a long time have witnessed the evolution of technology. Many say that, in the early years, the excitement in land trust work was over newly acquired property or easements, but now land trusts are shifting to become stewardship organizations. And some things don’t change. All of the people in this article expressed a deep love for the land

in their care, and all proclaim the absolute necessity of stewarding good relationships with landowners.

The Rise of Technology

“When I first started at Columbia Land Trust we were using slides and hand-drawn maps for grant presentations,” says Sinks. “We relied on compasses to navigate properties and had to go to government offices to get copies of aerial photographs. Now we scan the landscape from our office, navigate and collect data on our smart phones—including taking high-quality photos that are georeferenced with coordinates and orientation—GIS organizes all of our spatial data and an online database maintains property information.” After a pause, he says, “This makes me sound ancient but it’s only been 15 years. Technology has been evolving very quickly to the point where it can be a challenge to keep up with it.”

Jesica Blake, director of stewardship for the accredited North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, says that when she started in 2002, “We were worried about storage of film and negatives; now we try to keep up with best practices for digital imagery. We’ve gone from clipboards and film cameras to iPads as monitoring tools, with detailed aerial imagery at our fingertips in the field instead of a folded-up survey with notes written in black marker.”

She adds, “We have just started playing with drones, but they are tricky and have not been incorporated into our monitoring procedures yet.”

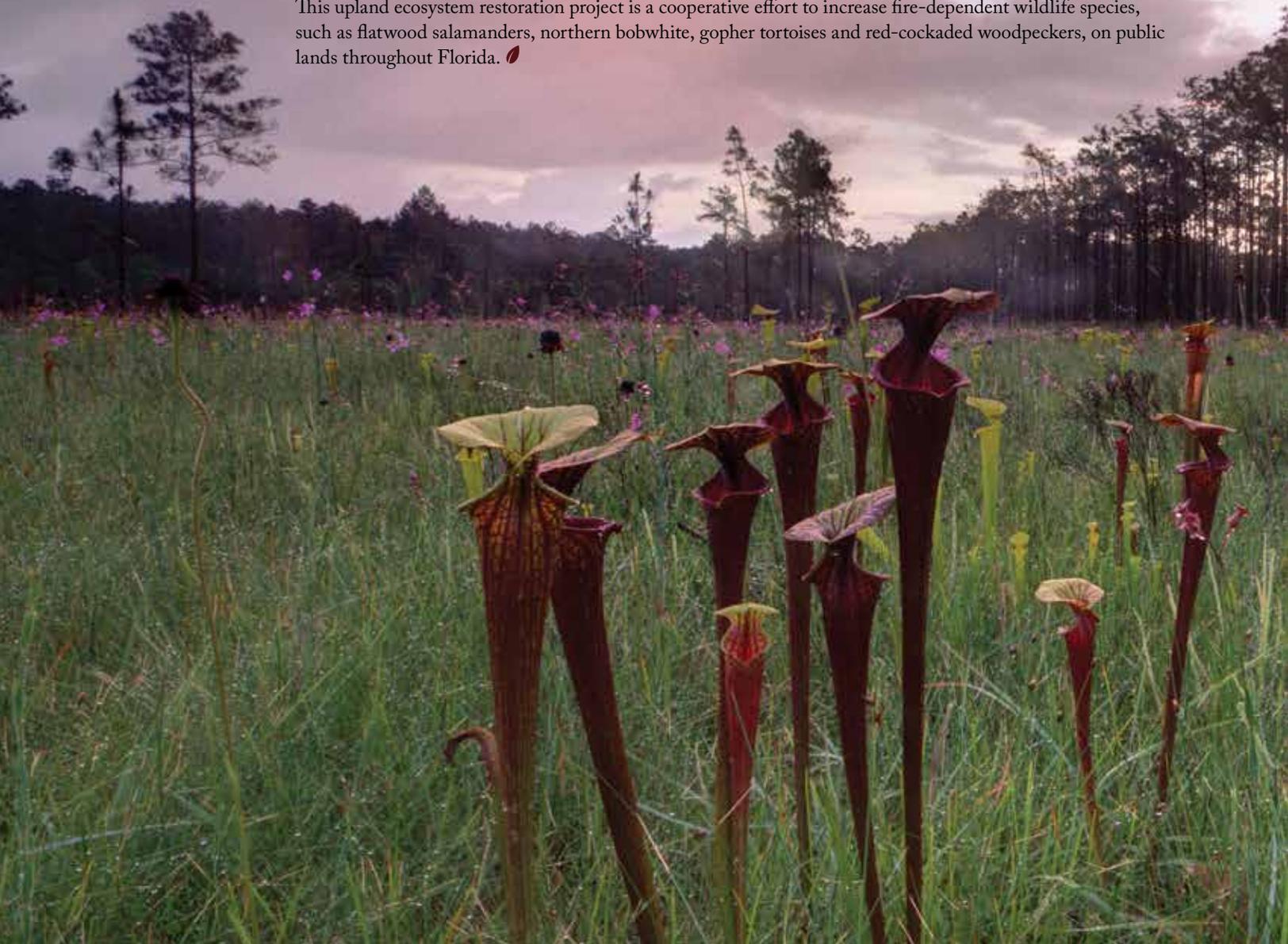
Some land trusts have started testing the use of drones. “One of our board members is proficient with drones and filming,” says Wendland. “He’s helping us to apply that technology for the future, such as monitoring larger and more remote easements, checking specific violations and conducting ecological monitoring, including counting pre-migrating Sandhill Cranes in our region.”

continued on page 22

AIDING AN *Amazing Forest*

The accredited Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy leads conservation field trips along waterways that flow through the Apalachicola National Forest, such as the Ochlockonee and Sopchoppy Rivers. Spanning from Tallahassee, Florida, southward to the Gulf of Mexico, the Apalachicola National Forest encompasses nearly 633,890 acres. This includes more than a half a million acres of longleaf pine and wiregrass habitat—the type of forest that once blanketed the southeastern United States. Conservation field trips and “bio-blitzes” offer the public a hands-on opportunity to learn more about the spectrum of plants and wildlife in the forest.

Tall Timbers also collaborates with the U.S. Forest Service and other entities by monitoring wildlife response to prescribed fire frequency and other management practices in the Apalachicola National Forest. This upland ecosystem restoration project is a cooperative effort to increase fire-dependent wildlife species, such as flatwood salamanders, northern bobwhite, gopher tortoises and red-cockaded woodpeckers, on public lands throughout Florida. 🍌





STEWARDSHIP:

THE NITTY GRITTY OF *forever*

continued from page 19



From left to right: Dennis Desmond found it hard to locate a photo of himself. “I’m usually the one behind the camera.” Jessica Blake (front of vehicle) conducting a baseline documentation report site visit with a Duke Stanback intern. Lowcountry redfishing with Helen Rogers.

Other aerial monitoring includes local companies willing to partner with land trusts. Helen Rogers, stewardship manager for the accredited Lowcountry Land Trust in Charleston, South Carolina, says, “We’ve been fortunate to partner with a local pilot, Jon Engle of Green Eyes Aero, to shoot aerial photography for both the baseline reports and for stewardship. On the stewardship front the photos supplement our on-the-ground monitoring, allowing us to see corners of properties, especially the larger ones, that we may not be able to access on foot. Jon’s motto is that he can fly ‘low and slow,’ which truly gives us another perspective of our protected properties.”

When assessing properties for conservation, Dennis Desmond, land and easement stewardship coordinator for the accredited Mainspring Conservation Trust in Franklin, North Carolina, says, “I’m intrigued by the data and models that are increasingly available to us, such as One North Carolina Naturally’s Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat Assessment

model, the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan, and North Carolina Natural Heritage Program county inventories. When I started, only one of our six counties had a heritage inventory completed. Now we have data for four of them. Combined with regional models, such as The Nature Conservancy’s [accredited] climate change terrestrial resiliency analysis, this information is helping us to better target our conservation efforts.”

Kevin Thusius, director of land conservation at the accredited Ice Age Trail Alliance in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, notes that technological advances have also made the amount of quality resources available to land trusts easier to access. “The Land Trust Alliance and our statewide association, Gathering Waters, have really provided land trusts with effective ways to communicate and share resources. When I began retroactively preparing 40 or so baseline document reports in 2005, I had only a couple of hard-copy examples to work with. Now I can go to the Alliance’s online Learning Center and find dozens of examples, attend one of the Rally seminars or contact staff at Gathering Waters who are more than willing to lend a hand.”

Some Things Don’t Change

As exciting as the advances in technology have been in stewardship tools, some tried-and-true methods and tools remain in use. Site visits are a basic, i.e., walking the land. And one essential tool for doing that has been in use since about 206 BC. “I still rely

on a compass,” says Blake. “And I teach every intern how to use one. All the technology in the world will not help you find your way back to the truck in a 2,000-acre swamp when the battery dies.”

Wendland says he wouldn’t go anywhere without “a good paper map, a waterproof field book, a mechanical pencil, a pocket knife and bear spray.”

“We still have file cabinets!” says Emily Hague, director of land protection and stewardship at the accredited Mohonk Preserve in Gardiner, New York. “But we also scan and back up hard copies of documents.”

Rick Remington, conservation director of the accredited West Wisconsin Land Trust, says he still relies on his intuition, “good, bad or otherwise.”

And Paul Elconin, director of land conservation at the accredited Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust in Kent, Connecticut, says you still have to walk the boundaries, “finding corner pins, stone walls and other witness marks in the field.”

Know the Land, Know the People

“Lemonade, unless you’re in the South, then sweet tea. Sometimes it’s a Coors, unless you’re watching your weight, in which case Coors Light is acceptable.” Connor Coleman, stewardship director at the accredited Aspen Valley Land Trust in Colorado, is describing a basic tip for any stewardship person. “The number one rule of stewardship is always accept the

Resources

See the collection on remote sensing technology on The Learning Center at <http://tlc.lta.org/tlc/collections/586>.

What equipment do stewardship staff prefer? Check it out at www.lta.org/stewardship-latest-tools.

From top to bottom: Connor Coleman says, "Landowner relations are number one. Always. Period." Paul Elconin in the field with kestrel chicks. Ian Sinks on the job for Columbia Land Trust.

lemonade when offered. The best stewardship happens on the front porch or around the kitchen table, sipping a cold drink."

He also believes good stewardship is proactive, not reactive. "Time spent with a landowner is always more valuable than time spent walking the land monitoring. I would take a stewardship staff person who can converse and empathize with the landowner over someone with a Ph.D. in any 'ology' any day. Land trusts aren't saving land, landowners are. We are just providing them with the tools to do so."

The best stewardship happens on the front porch, sipping a cold drink.

Before Hague left Monadnock Conservancy (also accredited) to work for Mohonk Preserve, she says by retooling online communications with help from other staff and consultants, "We developed e-newsletter templates and content for monthly newsletters to the volunteers and quarterly newsletters to the landowners. By having regular communications with these two key groups the land trust provided educational resources *and* kept them engaged."

And as always, communications is a two-way street, as Rogers explains, "Our current landowners serve as ambassadors of conservation and help us to grow the vision of strategic protection around the Lowcountry."

Blake points out the importance of building trust with the next generation of landowners: "I spend a lot of time trying to meet the families of our older landowners so that when they eventually pass the land on, we already have a relationship."

A key point to landowner outreach, according to Elconin, is that "it reinforces that we are partners and not just monitors. We believe our outreach and relationships will lead to fewer violations, better links to successive landowners,

more support and increased conservation. With fee preserves, we are reaching out to neighbors to inform them of our management goals, garner their support for stewardship, enlist their eyes and ears and recruit volunteers. We are also diving into the issue of hazard trees and associated risk management. Being responsive to neighbors' concerns is important and will build friendships."

Voicing the bottomline, Coleman says, "Landowner relations are number one. Always. Period."

The Best Parts

Stewardship people have no trouble naming the favorite parts of their jobs. Desmond says for his fee lands work, "I enjoy our Stewardship Volunteer workdays. Working alongside people who share their free time and their can-do attitude to help us accomplish our mission, whether it's planting trees for a riparian buffer or cleaning up an old farm building, always leaves me feeling good at the end of the day."

Most people rue their commute to work, but not Coleman: "I live on a conservation property and look out at several others through my window, and as I drive to work I pass by many more. As corny as it sounds, I go to work every day inspired by the work Aspen Valley Land Trust has done and go home encouraged by the commitment of so many landowners."

And Hague has enjoyed watching changes occur in the broader land conservation movement: "In the 10 years I've been closely involved, there's been a shift in focus from getting bucks and acres toward digging deeper into the hearts and minds of the communities we serve to understand their long-term goals and needs, and get people connected to and inspired by the land into action." 

CHRISTINA SOTO IS EDITOR OF SAVING LAND.





The accredited Damariscotta River Association's Camp Mummichog is just one of many land trust programs around the country that engages local people and connects them to the land.

CARA SLIFKA

more conservation FOR more people

Heading into my third year as community conservation director at the Land Trust Alliance, I still hear this question at least once a week: What is community conservation?

The key to the answer is people: Community conservation is an approach to land conservation that starts with people. It begins when the land trust listens to many different voices in its community and then uses its strengths to meet the needs expressed by the community. It connects people to the land and to each other. And while it strengthens the community, the community strengthens the land trust.

Some land trusts respond with a second question: "Isn't that mission drift?" It's not, and I'll tell you why. The U.S. population is expected to grow by 100 million people in 50 years, which means land will face more pressure from development. The population is also growing more diverse, so land trusts need to serve diverse constituents to stay relevant. On top of those demographic changes there are societal changes. Today many Americans are

growing up without a strong connection to nature—and if they don't learn to love it, they won't act to save it.

So try and think 50 to 100 years from now. Can you even imagine all of the economic, social and environmental pressures on your protected lands? You may not be alive, but your land trust will be responsible for protecting all the land it has saved. No matter how big your conservation defense endowment or how well your easements are written, if you don't have a broad and deep base of support for your work—including political support—that land will be at risk. So just as you steward the land and cultivate landowners, strategic land trusts are stewarding their communities and engaging them as allies.

You and I may have had a meaningful experience in nature as a child, which sparked a lifelong commitment to conservation. Everyone deserves a chance to make that connection, to have access to nature and to live in a healthy community. When land trusts include more people in their work, we improve more lives. In turn, we gain broader support for conservation. This is a happy coincidence, where doing the right thing is also in our own collective self-interest.

BY Rob Aldrich

Salinas Valley youth, most of whom are Hispanic and living in cities, experience nature through overnight summer programs at Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur.

LANA WEEKS, BIG SUR LAND TRUST

What It Is and What It Isn't

As the community conservation concept spreads, we are seeing a wide range of community conservation projects. Here's what most of them have in common.

They:

- Respond to a community need
- Connect people with place
- Connect people with people
- Create opportunities for people to get involved
- Energize the community
- Provide some form of public access
- Connect land conservation to other sectors, such as water, kids, health and food
- Provide lasting and meaningful impact in people's lives

In some ways, community conservation is different from traditional land trust projects. To alleviate confusion, here's a list of what community conservation is not. It:

- Is not about educating people about how land conservation benefits them
- Is not solely concerned with biodiversity
- Is not primarily focused on landowners
- Is not about serving every community need at once
- Is not limited to just those groups in the community the land trust is familiar with
- Is not necessarily more complicated or time-consuming

Community conservation is also not a new idea. But it usually does mean branching out—meeting new people and trying new things. So how does a land trust start?

Community Conservation Starts with Listening

Any land trust interested in community conservation can start by asking itself these questions:

1. Why do we do what we do?
What's the purpose?



2. Whom do we serve? Who benefits the most?
3. Is there anyone in our community outside of our usual circle we can and should engage?

These questions can generate ideas that lead to a whole world of unexpected allies, champions and influencers in other sectors that could become critical partners for your work. Many land trusts have started doing community conservation with a full-on stakeholder analysis. An iterative process, the more you listen, the more potential allies you'll discover.

Once people or groups have been identified outside of the organization, try having coffee on a regular basis with a new contact. The key is to listen to what people need, even if it doesn't seem at first that you can help. Ask questions more than you give answers. Seek out groups that might share some of your values and goals—but keep an open mind. Focus on what you can do for them, rather than what they can do for you.

Community Conservation in Action

After brainstorming and listening comes integrating community conservation into your land trust. A three-part process adapted from *Conservation Horizons* [California Council of Land Trusts, 2015 (link on pg. 27)] is helpful: know ourselves, know our community and take one step. Whichever one you work on first or second doesn't matter; community conservation is the sum of the three parts combined. You'll likely learn something in one part that applies to another part, which furthers your learning and impact. As you complete the cycle, you

will repeat it again and again, progressing further each time you do.

The best way to show how community conservation works is to share stories. Here are three, one for each process. You can find more online at www.lta.org/topics/community-conservation.

Know Ourselves—Big Sur Land Trust

Bill Leahy began to realize that the role of his organization, the accredited Big Sur Land Trust, was going to have to change. BSLT had conserved more than 25,000 acres, mostly along the coast, but there were other areas in Monterey County with greater need for conservation. After attending a Center for Whole Communities retreat in Vermont, Leahy decided that change had to come from within, so he invited Peter Forbes, then head of the center, to come out and lead a retreat so that BSLT could learn directly from local community leaders their perspectives on land conservation, the relevancy of land trust work and how BSLT could better serve the county's diverse communities.

Forbes facilitated a deep discussion about BSLT with leaders from different sectors of the community in which BSLT operates. Staff and board joined in the retreats and engaged in frank and open dialog. Together, they explored what would be most impactful for the community and what might be possible, given BSLT's capacity, challenges, opportunities and openness to doing conservation in new ways.

There was a sense that BSLT could do more than just save land—it could support deeper and more important community values—like improving the quality of life for the whole community.

Now BSLT, headed by Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis, is a leading innovator in community conservation. The organization is focusing resources on land conservation projects that attract and engage people and communities, including those not traditionally well-served by the land trust movement. Priorities include multibenefit green infrastructure projects that restore habitat, reduce flooding, link public trails, and in urban areas, create much needed park space.

Know Our Community – California Council of Land Trusts

Darla Guenzler, executive director of the California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT), had been talking with land trusts all over California and hearing an increasing level of concern and anxiety about the future. Land trusts had noticed changes in their communities—organizational sustainability, leadership transitions, board recruitment and engagement, stewardship challenges, funding constraints, age and diversity of supporters, climate change impacts, to name a few—and were wondering about the impacts those changes might have on their work.

In response, Guenzler launched the *Conservation Horizons* project to frame a discussion about the future of land conservation. CCLT started by getting to know more about what was going on in communities statewide, researching data and identifying trends that would be key to conservation's future. It organized them into five topic areas: population, culture and attitude, land and resources, funding and land trusts. The result was a report full of infographics telling a rich



Neighborhood youth playing at Springwood Avenue Park, which Monmouth Conservation Foundation helped to create. See more of the story at www.lta.org/blog/conservation-consciousness.

demographic tale, and, for each category, an interpretation of what the data might mean for the future of private land conservation.

With a large and diverse population and complex economic and social factors, California often leads the nation in economic, social and environmental trends. It offers a good example to follow for community conservation as well. See www.calandtrusts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CH2015_webfinal_lr.pdf.

Take One Step – Monmouth Conservation Foundation

For 37 years Monmouth Conservation Foundation (MCF) (accredited), situated in one of the wealthiest counties in the country, had successfully helped preserve open space and farmland in coastal New Jersey. It was business as usual, until staff were approached to help with a new kind of project. “We thought that the urban part of our county needed some attention” says Executive Director William Kastning, “so we brought it to our board and said let’s look at some others who are from underserved areas and who are not readily able to access open space and parks.”

MCF worked with a local nonprofit, Interfaith Neighbors, and city representatives on a project to help revitalize Asbury Park, an historically underserved city with a tumultuous past, by creating Springwood Avenue Park. Springwood Avenue is the main commercial corridor serving Asbury Park’s once vibrant West Side neighborhood, which was decimated by civil disturbances that swept the area in 1970.

As the project developed, board members saw the press become interested and their own interest increased. As the board members’ interest increased, so did their contributions to the project. As their contributions increased, so did their good feelings about supporting the project. In the end, MCF raised the \$150,000 needed to complete the acquisition and they discovered what their president called “socially conscious conservation.”

The experience has spurred the board and staff to other projects that demonstrate creative approaches to partnering: A marina

in Middletown that was at risk for condo development is being transformed into a park and a nun’s retreat in Long Branch will be preserved perhaps with the help of a child advocacy group or another partner. By working on these innovative projects, in conjunction with more traditional projects, MCF is building broader and deeper support, learning more about their community and also about themselves.

Envisioning the Future

Imagine a future in which land trusts are valued institutions that are critical to making their communities vibrant places to live, work and play. Where everyone knows their local land trust. Where everyone cares about what happens to the land and where everyone *benefits* from protecting the land. By listening to the people in their communities and responding to their challenges, land trusts can demonstrate that they care about people, as well as the land. Land trusts can become cherished community institutions that citizens won’t want to live without. That’s a future I want to be a part of. 🌱

ROB ALDRICH IS DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AT THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE.

How the Alliance Supports Community Conservation

The Alliance showcases groundbreaking community conservation projects so land trusts can inform and inspire each other. We are also making community conservation a focus in our educational and training programs—from workshops and webinars to articles and publications. Additionally, the Alliance has created a tool to help land trusts assess, plan and evaluate community conservation projects (www.lta.org/publication/community-conservation-tool). We are starting to measure the impact of community conservation as part of the 2015 National Land Trust Census. And we are supporting select pilot projects with the potential to scale nationally.

BY Kirsten Ferguson

A Living Document

While the core principles stay the same, *Land Trust Standards and Practices* adapt to reflect the latest laws, practices and technology.

Even land conservation professionals with years of experience run into situations that call for them to brush up on *Land Trust Standards and Practices*—the guidelines on how to run a land trust responsibly and ethically that were developed and revised over the years with input from the land trust community.

When a land trust is offered a gift that is not fully consistent with its mission, for instance, *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (the Standards) can help navigate that potentially tricky situation, says Paul Doscher, board chair of Piscataquog Land Conservancy (NH). “We all get excited about new projects and protecting land, but you need to understand the upside and downside of the risks. Standards and Practices is where you look,” says Doscher.

A conservation advisor and former environmental science professor who also owns a small tree farm under easement, Doscher previously oversaw land protection and stewardship as the vice president for land protection at the accredited Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. There he recognized the value of the Standards not long after the Forest Society was among one of the first to adopt them.

“We realized that previously we had not dotted every ‘i’ and crossed every ‘t’ the way we should have,” he says. “We didn’t make any serious mistakes, but going forward there were a lot of questions we might not have asked ourselves when acquiring property if we hadn’t used the Standards as a touchstone.”

The Land Trust Alliance developed the first standards in 1989 at the urging of land trust practitioners who felt

a strong land trust community depends on the credibility and effectiveness of all its members. The guidelines were revised in 1993, 2001 and 2004 to reflect changes in land trust practices and regulations governing nonprofit organizations. Now, more than 10 years after the last revisions process, the benchmarks are being updated again to reflect changes in land conservation.

More than 1,100 land trusts have since adopted the Standards—a requirement of Land Trust Alliance membership. To earn accreditation, a land trust must demonstrate that it has implemented the Standards through a rigorous verification of 26 indicator practices.

According to Doscher, the Standards can offer valuable direction on best practices when land trusts face challenging issues. He cites conservation easement amendments—and circumstances under which conservation easements meant to protect land in perpetuity can be altered or terminated—as an area of potential controversy.

“The Standards are a quality-control mechanism for the things you do on a daily basis all the time to make sure you’re not getting too over confident,” he says. “But they are also helpful in new areas and with things you don’t do all the time—so you’ve got guidance on how to approach them.”

Time to Revise

A core team from the Alliance and the Land Trust Accreditation Commission (Commission) is leading the revisions process with guidance from the Standards Advisory Team, a group of 14 land trust representatives who reflect the diversity of the land trust community.

“We’ve learned a lot since the last revisions process,” notes Sylvia Bates, the Alliance’s director of standards and educational services. “The land trust community is operating at a higher level. Professionalism has increased. There are different risks out there. Overall we hope to streamline and clarify the practices. It’s timely now to see where we are and make sure they still represent what land trusts feel are the best practices out there.”

The framework of 12 broad principles will stay, although some of the practices and the format are changing. “The overall rigor, integrity and concepts of the Standards are the same—the ethical and technical requirements for operating a responsible land trust,” says Bates. “But it’s a living document. Practices change. The laws change.”

For one, land trust accreditation—a mark of distinction showing that a land trust meets high standards for land conservation—didn’t exist in 2004. After evaluating scores of land trust applicants for accreditation, the Commission has gained knowledge about “what’s happening on the ground” that will help in updating the Standards, says Bates.

Technology is also changing rapidly. “People were still taking photos with film in 2004, prior to the transition to digital photography. We have monitoring now with drones. The whole technology has really shifted,” says Bates (see pg. 19).

The legal and tax environment for land trusts has also evolved over time. Fraudulent transactions are an increased risk. Laws and regulations have changed, and some land transactions are facing increased scrutiny from the IRS. These are all challenges that the revised Standards can help land trusts address.



COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

Every year Coastal Mountains Land Trust (see sidebar) opens its demonstration organic blueberry farm on the 295-acre Beech Hill Preserve for a weekend in which the public can pick blueberries for free.

Standards and Practices: The Board's Role

“The board of a land trust has legal, ethical and fiduciary duties to the organization. That’s why it is important that board members understand and follow *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, which help them meet their obligations,” says the Alliance’s Sylvia Bates.

Jim Krosschell, board president of the accredited Coastal Mountains Land Trust in Maine, served on a committee with two senior staff members and a previous board president as they prepared the land trust for renewal of accreditation, with help from the current treasurer.

“We started meeting a couple of years ahead of the application deadline,” explains Krosschell. “We went through the organizational assessment that the Alliance provides, and spent a year and a half going through all the standards and practices. It was a long but really rewarding experience.”

Staff members did much of the heavy lifting, while the board members served the role of “checking, questioning and trouble-shooting,” says Krosschell. “Board members are useful checks and balances to make sure the land trust is in compliance.”

At the same time, the process helped Krosschell learn a great deal about the Standards and land trust operations. “I would encourage board members to get involved for just that reason,” he says. “I personally learned an incredible amount from doing this. To learn more about the Standards was really amazing.”

Paul Doscher suggests that land trust boards assign a member to check the Standards before embarking on a new project or something they haven’t done before. And that board members make sure to familiarize themselves with the core principles of the Standards.

“Make sure you don’t just stick the book on the shelf,” he says. “Make sure you review it every year with your board members, and make sure new board members review it.”



COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

Coastal Mountains Land Trust's St. Clair Preserve in Northport, Maine

Get Involved

For more information and opportunities to participate in the revisions process, visit www.lta.org/topics/standards-and-practices.

Terrafirma, a program created by the Alliance in 2011 to help land trusts defend their conserved lands from legal challenge, is also an important factor in how land trusts operate. “Terrafirma has shifted the climate in terms of how organizations are insuring themselves,” says Bates. “We want to make sure the Standards are aligned with Terrafirma to help land trusts meet tax code requirements and to ensure that legal defense costs are accurately taken into account.”

Starting in March 2016, the Alliance will seek input from land trusts on the revised Standards during a six-month period. Land trusts will be able to download the revised practices (the S&P Discussion Draft) and use an online platform called Ethelo (ethelo.org) to provide feedback online. Depending on the public response, the updated standards will be finalized in winter or spring of 2017.

“We want to make sure that anyone who would like to weigh in has the opportunity to do so,” says Bates. “We want to make sure that the Standards are about the land trust community—that they are by and for our land trust members and that they reflect the

broad diversity of the land trust community. It’s about preserving the public trust and fulfilling our responsibilities as nonprofit organizations.”

Doscher serves on the newly appointed Standards Advisory Team. “My goal is to make sure the Standards focus on what is most important,” he says. “I want to make sure that we touch on all the key elements and consider changes, but that we always look at whether that change is effective and affordable for the land trust.”

He believes that having land trusts share their knowledge and feedback during the revisions process will help make sure the Standards are broadly applicable. “We all have our own set of personal experiences in conservation, but no one has every experience in every aspect of this work. But within the community we probably do,” he says. “That’s the part of this process that I’m looking forward to most—hearing from practitioners in the field about what their many experiences are.”

KIRSTEN FERGUSON IS A FREELANCE WRITER AND EDITOR IN NEW YORK WHO OFTEN CONTRIBUTES TO *SAVING LAND*.

Land Trust 
 Accreditation Commission
 An Independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

Strength and Confidence Open Doors

When a neighbor cut down a swath of trees in a nature preserve in Washington State's San Juan Islands, the San Juan Preservation Trust (WA) knew exactly what steps to take.

The land trust recently had been through the accreditation process with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, says Dean Dougherty, director of stewardship. "Beefing up our policies is what helped us out here," he says, and the accreditation process showed them where policies needed strengthening. "When it occurred, we knew what to do, how to document it and who to get in touch with."

Quick and thorough enforcement after the timber trespass led to a \$100,000 legal victory for the trust.

Being accredited doesn't always have such dramatic benefits for land trusts. But the more subtle, constant benefits are just as useful, such as the sense of security your accreditation gives the landowners who are thinking about working with you.

"I usually do due diligence," says Gordon MacAdam, a landowner who, with his brother Henry, recently conserved 26 acres and the family homestead in Sullivan County, New York, with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy (NY, PA). "People can tell me whatever they want, but I wasn't born yesterday, so I want to see it and hear it myself."

MacAdam spent 38 years as a financial planner, and the federal income tax benefit from conserving his land is important to him. He knew the IRS would scrutinize the organization that held his easement to make sure it has the commitment and resources

to protect the property. The Delaware Highlands Conservancy's national accreditation was his assurance that it would meet that test. And, he says, it did.

"Let's put it this way, the federal government never came back to me with even one question," MacAdam says.

Funders also rely on accreditation to guide them to worthy organizations to invest with. "The 1772 Foundation considers a number of factors when evaluating grant applicants, including whether a land trust has prioritized the highest level of professional commitment to land protection by undergoing accreditation," says Mary Anthony, executive director of The 1772 Foundation.

The 1772 Foundation farmland grant application asks specifically whether a land trust is accredited, says Kevin Case, Northeast director of the Land Trust Alliance. He says that the Alliance administers the grant program for the foundation, but it was the foundation that brought up

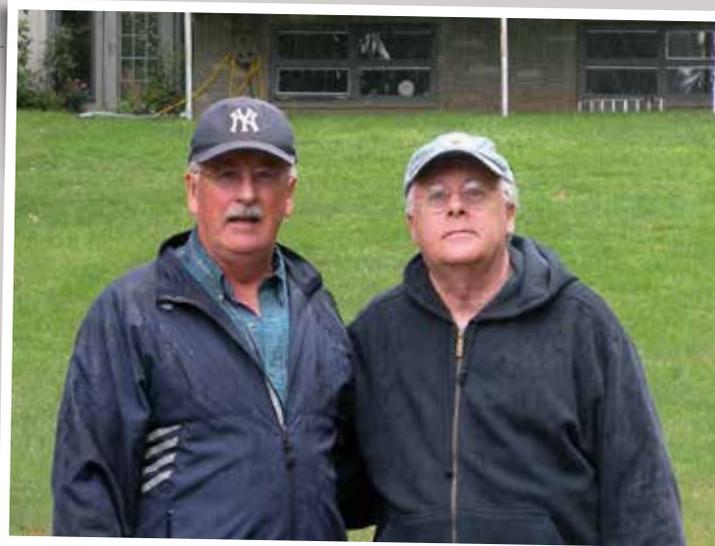
accreditation as a factor in its funding decisions. "It shows that they recognized it as an important consideration," he says.

"Knowing the accreditation process is comprehensive and reliable," says Anthony, "gives us confidence that a land trust applicant is a good long-term investment."

Renewing your land trust's accreditation means you maintain all these benefits, and offers additional benefits too. Dougherty says that accreditation renewal will be a valuable check for San Juan Preservation Trust. It will allow them to confirm the improvements they made during accreditation, and show them new ways to strengthen their policies.

"Not renewing didn't even enter our minds," says Dougherty. "We saw such value in the process and in that seal of approval you get when you say you're an accredited land trust." 

MADLINE BODIN IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN VERMONT.



DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Brothers Gordon and Henry MacAdam

BY Jay Kosa

A Little Doll with a Big Message

This past November's Giving Tuesday was less than a month away and I had nothing. I was getting the distinct impression that in its fourth year we were approaching "Peak-Giving Tuesday." People were growing weary of email and Facebook posts hitting them up for donations following a week of Black Friday and Cyber Monday ads.

I did what I usually do when I'm anxious and trying to procrastinate. I grabbed my phone and hopped on Instagram. As I scrolled through my feed, full of Northwest landscape photography, my thoughts turned to @Socality Barbie (www.instagram.com/socalitybarbie), the satirical Portland-based Instagram account that used a Barbie doll to lampoon the #LiveAuthentic lifestyle. Over the summer, the account went viral, amassing 1.3 million followers and national media coverage. @Socality Barbie let Instagram users everywhere laugh at their own shared tendency to create social media personas that are more creative, outdoorsy and adventurous than anyone could possibly be in real life.

I was struck by the fact that an overwhelming number of photos on the @Socality Barbie account were shot in recognizable landscapes within the accredited Columbia Land Trust's service area. In fact, the land trust played a major role in protecting the beautiful Northwest landscapes that adorn a huge number of social media accounts. After all, people of all ages love this region for its green space. It dawned on me that a doll like @Socality Barbie could serve as a mascot for conservation—as a fun way to draw attention to the landscapes we've protected. Glenn Lamb, our executive director and one of our founders, was an obvious candidate to represent the land trust.

I had no idea if my director, Dianne Alves, would find a doll like @Socality Barbie appropriate or in line with the land trust's voice. I knew that it would be a different tone for us. Fortunately, she loved the idea and the whole team got on board, excited to execute an intricate campaign in just a couple weeks. Dianne and I then brought the idea to Glenn.



Glenn and Glenn

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLUMBIA LAND TRUST



He hesitated at first, but after reading my campaign brief said what many nonprofit employees dream of hearing: “This is *your* area of expertise, so I trust you and I’ll support you if you think this is a good idea.”

Not only did these words boost my confidence, they empowered me to take responsibility over the campaign and they made me feel proud to work at Columbia Land Trust. Glenn didn’t just trust me and my team with a fundraising campaign, but with his name and likeness too. We were inspired to succeed.

A Star is Molded

First, we found a Ken doll that looked somewhat like Glenn on eBay. Next, Sarah Richards, our communications and development assistant, created Glenn’s trusty journal and wire-rimmed glasses while I used beard trimmers to re-style the doll’s hair and added a salt-and-pepper beard with a marker and Wite-Out. Lastly, I fashioned a beanie out of an old sock and some hot glue.

A few days later, Sarah and I set off along the Columbia River to a half-dozen locations, including Cape Horn, Beacon Rock State Park and the waterfront home of one of our most ardent supporters. Over the course of the afternoon we marveled at the beautiful landscapes the land trust had helped protect, and we got to know our supporters better. I’m sure we looked absurd during our outdoor photo shoots with a doll, but afterward Sarah and I agreed that it might have been the most fun we’ve ever had at work. Amy McCormick, our annual campaign manager helped draft copy for three Giving Tuesday appeal email while our database manager John LaRose made sure our email

reached the right people. Sarah then went about creating an Instagram account for our Glenn doll, @Nature_Glenn (www.instagram.com/nature_glenn).

I was excited, but nervous going into the campaign on December 1. I knew that we had put in the work, but I wasn’t sure if our audience would support our off-beat, slightly irreverent approach. We balanced silly photos with detailed stories of how the land trust had helped conserve the landscapes in the backgrounds of each shot.

In the end, we met our \$12,000 goal and pulled in a total of \$17,000 through a matching gift. Twenty-three percent of donors were first-timers. @Nature_Glenn gained 130 followers in just a few days and *Portland Monthly*, a local lifestyle magazine, ran an article on @Socality Barbie’s conservation-minded companion.

What We Learned

The project’s success offered a few lessons about Giving Tuesday, social media fundraising and broader land trust communications:

1. It’s hard to be noticed in a crowded fundraising space like Giving Tuesday if you don’t take a chance and try something different. Conventional tactics don’t often move the needle.
2. Instagram is a powerful medium for land trusts. Handy filters help quickly convert amateur photos of land and wildlife from the field into beautiful, sharable content.
3. Social media provides an opportunity to loosen your collar a bit. When I first entered the land trust realm, I was amazed at how reserved the tone was in



most messaging. We still send conventional mailings and write detailed email that speak to the importance of our work, but social media offers an opportunity to be funny, silly and poignant in ways that help us connect with supporters on an emotional level.

4. A little trust from leadership can go a long way in fostering a creative, productive and happy workplace.

Beyond the dollars raised on Giving Tuesday, the Nature Glenn campaign supported our work by encouraging recurring donors to test the waters of online giving, by attracting first-time donors through shared social media content on a medium popular with new demographics and by raising brand awareness through an unexpected, fun and engaging story. Perhaps most important, it helped demonstrate that land trusts can maintain their integrity and still be creative and have a little fun. After all, what better muse is there than nature? 🌿

JAY KOSA IS THE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FOR COLUMBIA LAND TRUST. FOUNDED IN 1990, COLUMBIA LAND TRUST CONSERVES AND CARES FOR THE VITAL LANDS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER REGION THROUGH SOUND SCIENCE AND STRONG RELATIONSHIPS. FOLLOW COLUMBIA LAND TRUST ON INSTAGRAM AT WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/COLUMBIALANDTRUST.



DI GLEESON, II

The Land Conservancy of West Michigan, whose Maas Family Nature Preserve features on the cover and above, received a suite of services from the Land Trust Alliance to help prepare for accreditation, including an assessment, trainings, implementation planning, mentoring and two grants.

GET HELP PREPARING for Accreditation

If your land trust is ready to take its first steps onto the path toward accreditation, it's easier than ever to get there with financial and technical assistance offered by the Land Trust Alliance through its Accreditation Preparation Grants Program. We know that the process of preparing for accreditation is a big commitment of time and resources, and the grants program provides the financial assistance land trusts need to be successful. Of the 317 accredited land trusts in 46 U.S. states and territories at the end of 2015, 38% of them had received an accreditation preparation grant from the Alliance.

Land trusts that have gone through the accreditation application process find it helps them focus on practices that otherwise may get overlooked. It also provides opportunities for teams of staff and/or board members to work together and to streamline or codify internal practices.

The Alliance awards grants to support staff time and other expenses related to the accreditation preparation process. Average grant size is \$5,000. Examples of project activities include updating required policies and procedures; conducting an organizational assessment; improving

recordkeeping; completing baseline documentation reports for conservation easement projects; and preparing your accreditation application.

One grant recipient told the Alliance: "The program's support made it possible to advance our preparations for accreditation and make needed long-term improvements in how we document inspections and locate boundaries. The process was easy, and the staff great to work with and very supportive, with a minimum of red tape."

Whether your land trust has already begun or is considering preparing for accreditation, apply today for an accreditation preparation grant. Contact Erin Heskett, Alliance national services director to learn more about how to apply: eheskett@lta.org •



IRA Rollover Explained

THE TAX INCENTIVE for conservation easement donations wasn't the only thing signed into law on December 18 that will benefit land trusts. The individual retirement account (IRA) rollover was included in the package. But how does it work?

Although individuals can begin taking distributions from their IRAs as early as age 59½, they are required to begin taking them at age 70½. Normally, these distributions are subject to income taxes. The IRA Charitable Rollover provision, established under the Pension Protection Act, allows individuals who have reached age 70½ to donate up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations directly from their traditional IRA or Roth IRA, without treating the distribution as taxable income. A donor's plan administrator must issue the check directly to the charity. Donors may receive no goods or services in return for their contributions, and must obtain written documentation of their contribution from each recipient charity.

Studies show that gifting funds directly from an IRA is one of the most tax beneficial means of charitable giving. While this donation cannot be claimed as a charitable deduction, donors could realize other benefits by reducing their taxable income in this way.

A fact sheet from Independent Sector explains that "the tax benefits of the IRA Charitable Rollover are available to taxpayers regardless of whether they itemize their returns. In particular, this helps older Americans who may have paid off their home mortgage and no longer file itemized tax returns. The mandatory distribution from their IRA would otherwise trigger a tax burden, even if they donate the money to charity. The IRA rollover provision removes these negative tax consequences and encourages Americans to give back to their communities during their lifetime."

Consult your plan administrator or your tax advisors for more information about this provision and for specific tax advice. 🍀

SPRING AHEAD

With New Learning Resources



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A Farewell to

Mary Pope Hutson



D.J. GLISSON, II

In December the Land Trust Alliance said goodbye, with heartfelt appreciation, to Executive Vice President Mary Pope Hutson. She has joined Virginia's Sweet Briar College, her alma mater, as vice president of alumnae relations and development, where she is responsible for securing the volunteer and philanthropic support essential to the achievement of the college's strategic goals.

In her 13 years with the Alliance, Mary Pope served as vice president for development, chief operating officer and executive vice president, and her contributions to the organization, to the land trust community and to American land conservation cannot be overstated. It will come as no surprise to anyone who knows her that Mary Pope played both varsity tennis and basketball as an undergraduate at Sweet Briar. She is an enthusiastic and fiercely committed team player and she brought that spirit to her service to land trusts.

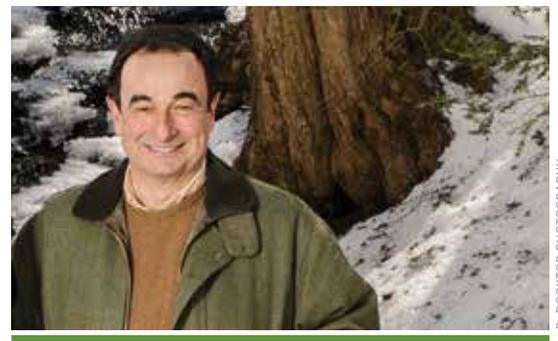
Mary Pope's dedication to mentoring others and her ability to establish and sustain relationships led to significant impacts in the policy arena. Her management of the Alliance's policy work on Capitol Hill yielded billions for conservation groups and resulted in over 15 million acres protected by land trusts in that time. When Congress threatened to eliminate the tax incentives for conservation, Mary Pope took the lead in mobilizing the community to fight back. Since then, she has been a champion for making permanent the enhanced federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations, a victory she celebrated with us in December.

Mary Pope led the development of our Ambassador initiative to build political influence for the land trust community, and she served as a member of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Council, a group that has provided some \$40 million a year since 2003 in funding for private land conservation.

Mary Pope has worked tirelessly as a fundraiser and served on the leadership team for the Alliance's

first-ever campaign (see pg. 12). She helped to secure the largest gift in the history of the Alliance and she built and staffed the Alliance's National Council. She led the staff team that developed the pipeline of land trusts ready to apply for accreditation. She secured the initial funding for the Maine Coast Protection Initiative, a coalition of over 70 organizations, and she had direct oversight of the creation and funding of the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Finally, she has been instrumental in bringing together groups of federal partners to work more collaboratively—with each other and with land trusts.

The Alliance board of directors voted unanimously to invite Mary Pope to join the National Council—an offer which she accepted. We are thrilled that she will continue to serve the Alliance in the years to come and that the land trust community—and our new president, Andrew Bowman—will benefit from her wisdom and warmth. •



B. DOCKTOR PHOTOGRAPHY

The Board Welcomes Michael Polemis

The Land Trust Alliance Board of Directors welcomes Michael Polemis, who has a long history in the land trust community. In 1986 he helped found the Columbia Land Conservancy in New York's

An Exciting Time for Conservation in New York

Hudson Valley. He was on the conservancy's board from 1986, serving as chair from 1995 until 2011, and rejoining the board in 2013. He currently serves as Governance Committee chair.

Michael is especially proud of the accredited Columbia Land Conservancy's innovative match program, which has put together 54 farmer and landowner matches, covering every imaginable type of farming, and of the 10 public conservation areas comprising 2,400 acres owned by the conservancy and operated for the benefit of the public.

Michael joined the Alliance's National Council in 2011, and now that he's on the board, says, "As a long-time supporter of the Alliance's initiatives in community conservation, I am excited to be able to help turn these initiatives into standard practice in the land trust community." •

On January 13, Gov. Andrew Cuomo detailed a historic investment of \$300 million for New York's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). His 2016-2017 state budget proposal represents a resounding victory for New Yorkers and all who visit the state.

This unprecedented commitment underscores the vital role of state-funded programs in protecting clean water, enhancing public access for recreation, and preserving farmland, community gardens, working forests and wilderness areas. Additionally, the funds will go toward promising new climate change initiatives, environmental justice and water quality programs.

Over the past 18 months, the governor articulated one of the most ambitious energy and environmental agendas in the country. The funding

announcement represents a pivotal step for New York as it takes a national leadership role in advancing climate-smart strategies and partnerships.

The \$300 million investment includes \$40 million for Open Space and Land Acquisition, including \$2 million for the Land Trust Alliance's New York State Conservation Partnership Program; \$20 million for farmland protection; and \$20 million for municipal parks, including \$10 million to develop parks and green spaces in inner cities as part of an aggressive environmental justice agenda.

The Alliance joins a diverse coalition of land trusts and other advocates in applauding the governor's investment. By fully funding the EPF, tens of millions of people will continue to enjoy quality land, water and air across the Empire State. •

Ear to the Ground



Iris Gonzalez

Bayou Land Conservancy* in Texas has a new community engagement coordinator, **Iris Gonzalez**, who picked up stakes from Milwaukee to lead new outreach initiatives. The land trust's announcement states that Gonzalez is bilingual, a marathon runner and will be overcoming her fear of snakes with BLC.

The Congaree Land Trust* (SC) welcomed three new board members: **Willard "Rusty" Brodie**, **Susan Krotz** and **Brook Moore**.

Long-time trustee and Cloudland Connector Trail volunteer **Mike Pollock** is now the executive director of the Lula Lake Land Trust (GA).

The Kansas Land Trust* board recently announced that **Jerry Jost** accepted the position of executive director.

Sycamore Land Trust (IN) welcomes its new development director, **Ann Connors**.

The North American Land Trust appointed **Stephen Thor Johnson** to succeed founder Andrew Johnson (no relation) as president and CEO.

Hensley Evans is the new board president of Wallkill Valley Land Trust* (NY). Effective January 1 the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (NC) began operating with a new name: **Mainspring Conservation Trust**.*

Philip Wenger, a local business owner and community leader, has become the CEO of Lancaster County Conservancy* (PA).

Ernie Atencio, former executive director of Taos Land Trust,* is now the Rio Grande Water Fund program associate for The Nature Conservancy* and has opened a new field office in Taos, New Mexico.

Ole Amundsen left The Conservation Fund* to become the executive director of Maine Audubon. 🌿

*Accredited land trust

inspired



KIM SEESE

A Historic Win by Jameson French

As the conservation tax incentive passed on December 18, congratulatory email and calls started pouring into the headquarters of the Land Trust Alliance.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, chair of the Senate Finance Committee and long a supporter of the incentive, said: “This legislation gives smart, responsible tax relief to farmers and ranchers to keep their land, while guaranteeing future generations’ access to our wide, open spaces. This is a win-win for rural America and it’s past time Congress took action to make these tax incentives permanent.”

As chair of the Alliance’s public policy board committee, I let out a long slow breath. This victory was hard won, the product of the ramping up of the Alliance’s policy team, supported by our generous donors; land trust

leaders and Ambassadors all across the country reaching out to their senators and representatives and making them part of the land trust family; and the Alliance forging partnerships with farmers, ranchers, forestland owners, sportsmen and the broader conservation community.

It took optimism, perseverance and loyal supporters, and it paid off big-time. The result will be millions of acres of woodlands, rivers, farms and ranches all across America protected forever.

This is exactly the kind of accomplishment the Alliance was created to do and we have built a foundation for doing even more. All of us who came together for this historic win should feel proud. 🌱

JAMESON FRENCH IS VICE CHAIR OF THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE AND CHAIR OF THE PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE.

Accredited Land Trusts



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING LAND CONSERVATION GROUPS

from around the country for achieving accreditation and demonstrating they meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement.

NATIONAL

- Ducks Unlimited and its affiliate, Wetlands America Trust
- The Conservation Fund and its affiliate, Sustainable Conservation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wilderness Land Trust ♦

ALABAMA

- Freshwater Land Trust ♦
- Land Trust of North Alabama
- Weeks Bay Foundation ♦

ALASKA

- Great Land Trust
- Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
- Southeast Alaska Land Trust

ARIZONA

- Arizona Land and Water Trust
- Desert Foothills Land Trust

ARKANSAS

- Northwest Arkansas Land Trust

CALIFORNIA

- Bear Yuba Land Trust ♦
- Big Sur Land Trust
- California Rangeland Trust
- Center for Natural Lands Management ♦
- Central Valley Farmland Trust ♦
- Eastern Sierra Land Trust
- Elkhorn Slough Foundation
- Feather River Land Trust
- Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
- Land Trust for Santa Barbara County ♦
- Land Trust of Napa County
- Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
- Marin Agricultural Land Trust ♦
- Northcoast Regional Land Trust
- Northern California Regional Land Trust ♦
- Pacific Forest Trust ♦
- Peninsula Open Space Trust ♦

- Placer Land Trust ♦
- Riverside Land Conservancy
- Sacramento Valley Conservancy ♦
- San Diego Habitat Conservancy *
- San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
- Save Mount Diablo *
- Save the Redwoods League
- Sempervirens Fund
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Shasta Land Trust
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- Silicon Valley Land Conservancy *
- Solano Land Trust
- Sonoma Land Trust
- Tejon Ranch Conservancy
- Tri-Valley Conservancy ♦
- Truckee Donner Land Trust
- Wildlife Heritage Foundation ♦

COLORADO

- Access Fund
- Aspen Valley Land Trust ♦
- Black Canyon Regional Land Trust ♦
- Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust ♦
- Colorado Headwaters Land Trust *
- Colorado Open Lands ♦
- Crested Butte Land Trust
- Douglas Land Conservancy
- Eagle Valley Land Trust ♦
- Estes Valley Land Trust ♦
- La Plata Open Space Conservancy ♦
- Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas *
- Mesa Land Trust ♦
- Montezuma Land Conservancy ♦
- Mountain Area Land Trust
- Palmer Land Trust
- Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust ♦
- San Isabel Land Protection Trust ♦

CONNECTICUT

- Colchester Land Trust
- Connecticut Farmland Trust
- Granby Land Trust

- Greenwich Land Trust
- Housatonic Valley Association
- Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust
- Kent Land Trust ♦
- Lyme Land Conservation Trust
- Norfolk Land Trust
- Redding Land Trust
- Roxbury Land Trust *
- Salem Land Trust ♦
- Sharon Land Trust
- Warren Land Trust
- Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

FLORIDA

- Alachua Conservation Trust ♦
- Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
- Conservation Trust for Florida
- Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy ♦

GEORGIA

- Athens Land Trust ♦
- Central Savannah River Land Trust ♦
- Chattahoochee Valley Land Trust
- Georgia-Alabama Land Trust
- Georgia Piedmont Land Trust
- Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia ♦
- Oconee River Land Trust ♦
- Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land *
- Southern Conservation Trust
- St. Simons Land Trust

HAWAII'I

- Hawaiian Islands Land Trust ♦

IDAHO

- Kaniksu Land Trust *
- Lemhi Regional Land Trust
- Palouse Land Trust
- Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
- Teton Regional Land Trust ♦
- Wood River Land Trust

The mission of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission is 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.

ILLINOIS

- Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
- Lake Forest Open Lands Association and its affiliate, Lake Forest Land Foundation ♦
- Openlands

INDIANA

- Central Indiana Land Trust

IOWA

- Bur Oak Land Trust
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

KANSAS

- Kansas Land Trust

KENTUCKY

- Bluegrass Conservancy
- Kentucky Natural Lands Trust *
- Louisville and Jefferson County Environmental Trust

LOUISIANA

- Land Trust for Louisiana

MAINE

- Androscoggin Land Trust
- Bangor Land Trust
- Blue Hill Heritage Trust
- Boothbay Region Land Trust
- Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust
- Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust
- Coastal Mountains Land Trust ♦
- Damariscotta River Association
- Forest Society of Maine ♦
- Frenchman Bay Conservancy
- Georges River Land Trust
- Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust
- Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
- Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
- Mahoosuc Land Trust
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust ♦
- Medomak Valley Land Trust
- Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay
- Orono Land Trust
- Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
- Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association
- Vinalhaven Land Trust

MARYLAND

- American Chestnut Land Trust
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- Potomac Conservancy ♦

MASSACHUSETTS

- Ashby Land Trust
- Buzzards Bay Coalition and its affiliate, Acushnet River Reserve
- Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust
- Groton Conservation Trust
- Kestrel Land Trust
- Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
- Massachusetts Audubon Society
- Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
- Sheriff's Meadow Foundation
- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- The Trustees of Reservations and its affiliates, Hilltown Land Trust and Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust ♦
- Wareham Land Trust
- White Oak Land Conservation Society

MICHIGAN

- Chikaming Open Lands ♦
- Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy ♦
- Land Conservancy of West Michigan
- Leelanau Conservancy ♦
- Legacy Land Conservancy ♦
- Little Forks Conservancy ♦
- Michigan Nature Association
- North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy
- Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
- Six Rivers Land Conservancy
- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

MINNESOTA

- Minnesota Land Trust ♦

MISSISSIPPI

- Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain ♦

MONTANA

- Bitter Root Land Trust
- Five Valleys Land Trust ♦
- Flathead Land Trust
- Gallatin Valley Land Trust ♦
- Montana Land Reliance ♦
- Prickly Pear Land Trust
- Vital Ground Foundation

NEBRASKA

- Nebraska Land Trust

NEVADA

- Nevada Land Trust

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust
- Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust ♦
- Monadnock Conservancy ♦
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
- Squam Lakes Conservation Society
- Upper Saco Valley Land Trust *
- Upper Valley Land Trust

NEW JERSEY

- D&R Greenway Land Trust
- Harding Land Trust
- Hunterdon Land Trust
- Monmouth Conservation Foundation
- New Jersey Conservation Foundation
- Ridge and Valley Conservancy *
- The Land Conservancy of New Jersey ♦

NEW MEXICO

- New Mexico Land Conservancy
- Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust *
- Santa Fe Conservation Trust
- Taos Land Trust

NEW YORK

- Agricultural Stewardship Association
- Champlain Area Trails
- Columbia Land Conservancy
- Dutchess Land Conservancy ♦
- Finger Lakes Land Trust *
- Genesee Land Trust
- Genesee Valley Conservancy
- Greene Land Trust
- Hudson Highlands Land Trust ♦
- Lake George Land Conservancy
- Mianus River Gorge Preserve ♦
- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
- Mohonk Preserve
- North Salem Open Land Foundation *
- North Shore Land Alliance
- Oblong Land Conservancy *
- Open Space Institute and its affiliate, Open Space Institute Land Trust ♦
- Orange County Land Trust
- Otsego Land Trust *
- Rensselaer Land Trust ♦
- Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy
- Saratoga P.L.A.N.
- Scenic Hudson and its affiliate, Scenic Hudson Land Trust ♦
- Thousand Islands Land Trust ♦
- Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
- Wallkill Valley Land Trust *
- Westchester Land Trust ♦
- Western New York Land Conservancy
- Winnakee Land Trust

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NORTH CAROLINA

- Blue Ridge Conservancy
- Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy ♦
- Catawba Lands Conservancy ♦
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina ♦
- Eno River Association ♦
- Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina
- Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
- LandTrust for Central North Carolina
- Mainspring Conservation Trust ♦
- New River Conservancy
- North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- Piedmont Land Conservancy ♦
- RiverLink *
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ♦
- Tar River Land Conservancy

OHIO

- Gates Mills Land Conservancy
- Licking Land Trust *
- Tecumseh Land Trust ♦
- Three Valley Conservation Trust

OREGON

- Deschutes Land Trust ♦
- Greenbelt Land Trust ♦
- McKenzie River Trust ♦
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- The Wetlands Conservancy
- Willowa Land Trust *
- Western Rivers Conservancy *

PENNSYLVANIA

- Allegheny Land Trust
- Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy ♦
- Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art ♦
- Chestnut Hill Historical Society
- ClearWater Conservancy
- Countryside Conservancy ♦
- Delaware Highlands Conservancy
- Edward L. Rose Conservancy
- French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust *
- French Creek Valley Conservancy
- Heritage Conservancy ♦
- Lancaster County Conservancy ♦
- Lancaster Farmland Trust ♦
- Land Conservancy of Adams County
- Natural Lands Trust and its affiliate, Montgomery County Lands Trust ♦
- North Branch Land Trust ♦
- The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County
- Tinicum Conservancy ♦
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Westmoreland Conservancy
- Willistown Conservation Trust ♦

PUERTO RICO

- Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico

RHODE ISLAND

- Aquidneck Land Trust ♦
- Block Island Conservancy
- Sakonnet Preservation Association
- South Kingstown Land Trust *
- Tiverton Land Trust

SOUTH CAROLINA

- Beaufort County Open Land Trust *
- Congaree Land Trust
- Edisto Island Open Land Trust ♦
- Lowcountry Land Trust
- Pee Dee Land Trust
- Spartanburg Area Conservancy
- Upstate Forever ♦

TENNESSEE

- Land Trust for Tennessee ♦
- Lookout Mountain Conservancy
- Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation ♦
- Wolf River Conservancy

TEXAS

- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas
- Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Hill Country Land Trust
- Pines and Prairies Land Trust
- Texas Agricultural Land Trust
- Texas Land Conservancy

UTAH

- Summit Land Conservancy
- Utah Open Lands Conservation Association

VERMONT

- Greensboro Land Trust ♦
- Lake Champlain Land Trust ♦
- Northeast Wilderness Trust ♦
- Stowe Land Trust ♦
- Vermont Land Trust

VIRGINIA

- Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
- Historic Virginia Land Conservancy
- Land Trust of Virginia ♦
- New River Land Trust
- Northern Neck Land Conservancy
- Northern Virginia Conservation Trust ♦

- Piedmont Environmental Council and its affiliate, Piedmont Foundation
- Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust

WASHINGTON

- Bainbridge Island Land Trust
- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Capitol Land Trust
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- Forterra ♦
- Great Peninsula Conservancy
- Jefferson Land Trust ♦
- Lummi Island Heritage Trust
- Methow Conservancy
- Nisqually Land Trust
- North Olympic Land Trust
- PCC Farmland Trust
- San Juan Preservation Trust
- Skagit Land Trust ♦
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust

WEST VIRGINIA

- Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust

WISCONSIN

- Bayfield Regional Conservancy
- Caledonia Conservancy
- Ice Age Trail Alliance
- Kettle Moraine Land Trust
- Kinnickinnic River Land Trust ♦
- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- Natural Heritage Land Trust
- Northwoods Land Trust
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
- West Wisconsin Land Trust *
- Tall Pines Conservancy

WYOMING

- Jackson Hole Land Trust ♦
- Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust

As of February 2016

* Indicates Newly Accredited

♦ Indicates Newly Renewed

◇ Indicates Previously Renewed

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