
Your October accreditation news update

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To Jennifer Brady-Connor <jbconnor@landtrustaccreditation.org>

**LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION
COMMISSION** 
An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

Your news update
October 2025



Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Queens Land Trust, newly accredited in 2025.

Announcing the 2026 first-time applicants

Congratulations to the 2026 first-time registrants. This summer the Commission conducted an open lottery enrollment period for first-time applicants. We are excited to announce the eight land trusts who will be embarking on the journey of applying for accreditation in 2026 and the four land trusts who were selected by a lottery system to submit an application in 2027. These decisions reflect the Commission's applicant capacity for 2026 and its commitment to ensuring a fair,

consistent review process.

2026:

- Bear River Land Conservancy (UT)
- Beaverkill Valley Land Trust (NY)
- Edward L. Rose Conservancy (PA)
- Friends of Alta (UT)
- Gaviota Coast Conservancy (CA)
- Lewisboro Land Trust (NY)
- Nation Ford Land Trust (SC)
- Virgin River Land Preservation Association (UT)

2027:

- Broad Water Innovations (VA)
- Hanover Conservancy (NH)
- South Carolina Farm Bureau Land Trust (SC)
- Zion Forever Project (UT)

Is your organization interested in learning more about the first-time application process? The Commission offers many resources that can help your organization understand if it is ready to apply.

[Learn more](#)

Requirements feedback update

Thank you to all who contributed feedback on the proposed changes to the Requirements Manual. The Commission reviews the requirements each year to ensure that the requirements are current with the issues that shape the land trust world. Community input is a critical part of the requirements review process.

The Commission is now considering the feedback received and will share an update in the first quarter of 2026. As in years past, the Commission will publish a document summarizing any changes made to the requirements, along with links to the related Land Trust Alliance resources.

If you are looking to learn more now, the Alliance Resource Center lets you learn at your own pace with self-guided online courses and detailed written guidance on each indicator element.

[Learn more](#)

Lessons learned: Materials before project approval

The role of the Commission is to verify, through the accreditation process, that land trusts meet the requirements and [Land Trust Standards and Practices](#). The Commission reviews about 100 applications for accreditation each year, which provides a unique view about trends in the land trust community. These trends can help you learn from others, avoid risk to your land trust, and save time in the accreditation process.

Conservation project materials

To make an informed and responsible decision, the board (or the entity delegated decision-making authority) must be knowledgeable about the facts and circumstances of a project. To meet practice elements 3C3 and 3D1 and the accreditation requirements, the board (or delegated entity) must receive sufficient materials describing the land or conservation easement project several days in advance of the decision-making meeting.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What documentation is required for accreditation?** The accreditation process relies on a land trust documenting how it met the requirements in the accreditation application (both first-time and renewal). Both applications use a sampling of conservation easement and/or conservation fee projects selected by the Commission. For those selected projects, the application asks for copies of the materials provided to the board (or the delegated entity) before the meeting to decide final approval of the project.
- **What is “sufficient” information?** The materials should include pertinent information about the project, such as the project location, project size, how the project meets the project-selection criteria, conservation values, public benefits, costs, number/type of reserved rights retained, management challenges, preliminary management goals, project risks and so forth.
- **What if the board discusses the project over several meetings?** Many boards do review and receive information as a project develops. However, to be clear about the final project details and to inform individuals who may not have been present during each discussion, project materials need to be provided again before the meeting to decide final approval of the project. Relying on board members’ memories or on materials given in advance of earlier meetings is not sufficient to meet the requirement.

Resources

Land Trust Accreditation Commission Resources

- Requirements Manual: [Transactions II.2](#)
- [Reference Application Packet for First-Time](#)
- [Reference Application Packet for Renewal](#)

Land Trust Alliance Resources

- [Practice Element 3C3](#)
- [Practice Element 3D1](#)
- [Self-guided Course](#)
- Samples
 - [Sample for Practice 3D: Project Fact Sheet Template](#)
 - [Sample for Practice 3D: Project Proposal Template](#)
 - [Sample for Practice 3D: Preliminary Project Proposal and Selection Criteria, Final Project Approval Form](#)

We need to hear from you if you...

- | | |
|---|--|
| » Have a new executive director. | » Changed geographical area. |
| » Have a new contact for accreditation. | » Changed corporate structure. |
| » Changed names. | » Changed programming, such as accepting easements when previously only accepting fee lands. |
| » Decided to merge with another organization. | |

Update your information now

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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.
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