



Staff and board members of San Juan Preservation Trust in Washington celebrate their accreditation renewal at Rally 2023.

FRED JOE

RALLY ANSWERS THE QUESTION: WHY ACCREDITATION?

By **MELISSA KALVESTRAND**



**This year at Rally,
we celebrated**

58

**Renewed
Land Trusts**

“Well, why should my land trust be accredited?”

I was asked this question at my very first Rally back in 2009, in Portland, Oregon. That Rally was a whirlwind of inspiration, new people and questions I was just learning how to answer, especially because it was in my early days as a Commission review specialist. Being at Rally 2023, back in Portland again, caused me to reflect on that question and the past 14 years. When asked that question today, my answer is:

“Accreditation matters. Having *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and an accreditation program has strengthened the whole land trust community and each land trust going through the process. Displaying the seal shows to the world you meet the national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. Yes, it is a rigorous process. Yes, it takes time and is an investment. But it is an investment in your land trust. It is an investment in the land trust community.”

Rally continues to be an inspiration and a whirlwind! I loved talking with so many of you this year in Portland and hearing about what it means for your land trust to be accredited. You inspire me with your stories and conservation work.

CELEBRATING FIRST-TIME ACCREDITATIONS

At Rally, we celebrated the nine land trusts that achieved first-time accreditation since August 2022, showing us that conservation relies on innovation, patience and persistence, and it is always about people.

- In the Pacific Northwest, **Forterra** uses land-based solutions to address the climate crisis and support equitable, green and prosperous communities. In 2022, Forterra planted nearly 3,500 native evergreen trees to offset carbon emissions with local forest restoration.
- **Downeast Salmon Federation** in Maine received \$1.8 million to explore nature-based solutions to coastal resilience, including salt marsh rehabilitation at three major sites.
- **GreenTrust Alliance** restores wetlands, streams and floodplains in the mid-Atlantic region. Its work ultimately improves wildlife habitat, water quality and ecosystem services.
- **Pound Ridge Land Conservancy** in New York converted a monoculture of Japanese barberry into a native meadow with over 40 different species as part of its efforts to increase the ecological resilience of its landscapes.
- In 2023, the **Buck Hill Conservation Foundation** in Pennsylvania completed its 20-year effort to acquire Chestnut Mountain. A place once heavily logged now has 5 miles of trails.
- After nearly three decades, **Harford Land Trust** in Maryland protected the 347-acre Belle Vue Farm, which is adjacent to public lands, contains 1 mile of undisturbed Chesapeake Bay shoreline and is listed as a site on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.
- The all-volunteer **Platte Land Trust** in Missouri celebrated its 25th anniversary. It was formed when Platte County had one park and was experiencing rapid suburban sprawl. Today, this regional land trust can act quickly to meet conservation needs.
- **Berkshire Natural Resources Council** in Massachusetts connects landscapes and connects people to the land. People use its trails app to plan outdoor adventures, including a hike on The High Road, which is a vision of interconnected hiking trails that connect towns to towns and towns to trails.
- **Falmouth Land Trust** in Maine recently revived its educational programming with first graders going on recess walks and middle schoolers removing invasive species as part of their Civic Engagement class.

My sincerest congratulations to these nine land trusts. We look forward to seeing how you benefit from being accredited. And we can't wait to celebrate the accredited land trust community at Rally 2024 in Providence. ☺

MELISSA KALVESTRAND is executive director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

landtrustaccreditation.org

CELEBRATING A YEAR OF RENEWALS

This year at Rally, we celebrated **58 renewed land trusts**. These land trusts are **based in 21 states** and collectively **protect 4.6 million acres** (or an area over two times the size of Yellowstone National Park). They have **over 1,000 miles of trails**—including **more than 100 miles** designated for universal access—and engage with **over 12,000 volunteers**. Congratulations on continuing to uphold this mark of excellence in land conservation!

Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (NH) ♦	Mountain Area Land Trust (CO) ♦
Cayucos Land Conservancy (CA)	Native Prairies Association of Texas (TX)
Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust (ME) ♦	Natural Land Institute (IL)
Chestnut Hill Conservancy (PA)	North Carolina Coastal Land Trust (NC) ♦
ClearWater Conservancy (PA) ♦	North Olympic Land Trust (WA)
Columbia Land Conservancy (NY)	Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust (WI)
Columbia Land Trust (WA) ♦	Pee Dee Land Trust (SC)
Congaree Land Trust (SC) ♦	Piscataquog Land Conservancy (NH)
Connecticut Farmland Trust (CT) ♦	Prickly Pear Land Trust (MT) ♦
Conservation Florida (FL) ♦	Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (NY)
D&R Greenway Land Trust (NJ) ♦	Salisbury Association (CT)
Delaware Highlands Conservancy (PA)	San Juan Preservation Trust (WA) ♦
Downeast Coastal Conservancy (ME)	Southern Plains Land Trust (CO)
Driftless Area Land Conservancy (WI)	Summit Land Conservancy (UT)
Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve (NY)	Tampa Bay Conservancy (FL)
Genesee Valley Conservancy (NY) ♦	Taos Land Trust (NM)
Great Land Trust (AK)	The Trust for Public Land (CA)
Great Swamp Watershed Association (NJ)	The Wetlands Conservancy (OR) ♦
Hollow Oak Land Trust (PA)	Transition Habitat Conservancy (CA)
Houston Audubon (TX)	Upper Savannah Land Trust (SC)
Interior Alaska Land Trust (AK)	Upper Valley Land Trust (NH) ♦
Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (IL) ♦	Vinalhaven Land Trust (ME)
Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy (SC)	Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (PA) ♦
Lakes Region Conservation Trust (NH)	Whatcom Land Trust (WA) ♦
Landmark Conservancy (WI) ♦	Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WA) ♦
Loon Echo Land Trust (ME)	Winnakee Land Trust (NY) ♦
Methow Conservancy (WA) ♦	Woodstock Land Conservancy (NY)
Midcoast Conservancy (ME) ♦	Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust (WY) ♦
Mississippi Valley Conservancy (WI) ♦	
Mojave Desert Land Trust (CA)	

List as of September 2023

♦ Denotes second renewal