

Overview of the Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents more than 1,000 member land trusts supported by more than 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operates several regional offices.

The Alliance is the voice of the land trust community. Our work in the nation's capital represents the policy priorities of land conservationists from every state; our education programs improve and empower land trusts from Maine to Alaska; and our comprehensive vision for the future of land conservation includes new partners, new programs and new priorities.

About our expertise

The Alliance is the nation's leading authority on all matters regarding land trusts, conservation easements and related policy. For all media inquiries, including interview and information requests, contact Media Relations Manager Joshua Lynsen at 202-800-2239 or jlynsen@lta.org.

About our annual conference

Also known as the National Land Conservation Conference, Rally is the nation's largest annual gathering of land conservation professionals. More than 1,600 people network with their colleagues, advance their skills and work to solve some of their greatest professional challenges. Learn more at AllianceRally.org.

About the accreditation program

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Alliance, inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing land trusts that meet rigorous quality standards. Such organizations are awarded accreditation, the highest mark of distinction a land trust can achieve. Learn more at LandTrustAccreditation.org.

Style note

On first reference, the Alliance should be referred to as “the Land Trust Alliance.” On second and following references, the organizational name may be abbreviated to “the Alliance.” Although it was previously used, the acronym LTA has been retired and is now a stylistically incorrect way to refer to the Alliance.

A Beginner's Guide to Land Trusts and Easements

What's a land trust?

Land trusts are private, nonprofit organizations that acquire and manage land for the purpose of permanent conservation. They also steward land for public benefit. Land trusts harness three fundamental aspects of the American ethos: volunteerism, community spirit and connection to the land. Most land trusts are community-based, making them deeply connected to local needs and well positioned to provide local benefits such as trails, school programs and more.

What are conservation easements, and how are they tied to land trusts?

Conservation easements are voluntary, legal agreements between landowners and land trusts that permanently conserve wildlife habitats, natural resources and working lands. Each easement is custom tailored. For example, an agricultural conservation easement allows for farming to continue uninterrupted. When landowners sell or donate land covered by easement, the easement remains in full effect. Land trusts help oversee – and, when necessary, enforce – conservation easements.

What's the Land Trust Alliance?

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. Its work in the nation's capital represents the policy priorities of land conservationists from every state; its education programs improve and empower land trusts from Maine to Alaska; and its more than 1,000 member land trusts are supported by more than 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide.

What have land trusts accomplished?

Land trusts have cumulatively conserved 56 million acres of land – an area greater than the size of Minnesota. These conserved natural spaces vary widely in scope and appearance, encompassing everything from ranches to community gardens.

How does Congress influence local land conservation?

Support for local land conservation most clearly manifests in federal tax incentives for conservation easements, which were made permanent in 2015 thanks to the Alliance and its allies. Other sources of support include the Farm Bill and the Land & Water Conservation Fund. All totaled, spending on land, water, ocean and wildlife programs comprises just 1.26% of the federal budget, yet these programs support 9.4 million jobs and over \$1 trillion in economic activity.

How do I find a land trust in my community?

Visit FindALandTrust.org and click on your state.

Land Conservation by the Numbers *(December 2016)*

56 million

Land trusts have cumulatively conserved **56 million** acres of land – an area greater than the size of Minnesota. These conserved spaces vary widely in scope and appearance, encompassing everything from working ranches to community gardens.

More than 1,000

The Land Trust Alliance has **more than 1,000** member land trusts nationwide. Each organization follows *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, guidelines for operating a land trust legally, ethically and in the public interest.

More than 350

Since its inception in 2006, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission has accredited **more than 350** land trusts. Accreditation is the highest mark of distinction a land trust can achieve.

More than 75%

Collectively, **more than 75%** of conserved land in the United States is held by accredited land trusts. Whereas land trusts have cumulatively conserved 56 million acres, their current holdings of 25 million reflect how possession often shifts over time. Some lands, for example, become federal parklands.

\$1.2 billion

Local ballot measures passed in 2015-2016 secured nearly **\$1.2 billion** in funding for land conservation. These ballot measures passed in both Democrat- and Republican-leaning jurisdictions and, in many cases, these measures passed with overwhelming public support.

325 million

Every person living in the United States – all **325 million** people – benefit from land conservation. Keeping land open filters the air and water supply, absorbs carbon emissions and protects wildlife habitats, among other benefits.

For more information...

Specific details about conservation activities and accomplishments in each state are available from the Alliance on request. To learn more, contact Media Relations Manager Joshua Lynsen at 202-800-2239 or jlynsen@lta.org.