



2016 annual report



From
the Chair

When she became executive vice president of the Land Trust Alliance, Wendy Jackson told me something that caught my attention. She said that because the Alliance enables the effectiveness of land trusts, at every land conservation deal the Alliance is there in spirit. Wendy knows because she spent 15 years leading a land trust and says she could not have done it without the Alliance.

What the Alliance does best is illustrated in the stories in this annual report. We support strong leaders and land trusts through education and training; we lobby for policies that benefit all land trusts; we inspire land trusts to engage deeply with their communities; and we defend protected land for all time. And this past year, with feedback from land trusts, we revised *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, the guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust.

Imagine trying to do your land trust work without the Alliance. Fortunately, you don't have to. We'll continue to be a partner for every land trust to protect the places we need and love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Johnson'.

Laura Johnson
Chair, Land Trust Alliance



From
the President

In my first year with the Land Trust Alliance, I got to know many people in the land conservation community. It was a privilege to meet them in the places that they love and work so hard to protect.

In this time of change, the Alliance forges on with confidence. I firmly believe that land is the answer to so many things that ail us as a society. I believe that land, land conservation and land trusts can play a pivotal role in helping to bridge our political divide and build a consensus around the need for a healthy, vibrant environment. The more that people interact with each other one-on-one and focus on furthering a common, agreed-upon purpose, the more they discover each other's humanity and find a way forward together. And what better activity to bring people together than land conservation through the work of land trusts?

For 35 years we've been helping land trusts save land. Your involvement in our programs and generosity as supporters make this possible. Thank you for your partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Bowman'.

Andrew Bowman
President, Land Trust Alliance

Stronger Together



“We get to participate in deep and profound ways with the community. It makes our work even more fulfilling.”
—Suzanne Tugman

BRINGING WELLNESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Inspired to action by the Land Trust Alliance’s national Community Conservation Program, Suzanne Tugman of the accredited Kaniksu Land Trust in Idaho researched challenges her community faced and found surprisingly high levels of obesity and a host of other illnesses, including diabetes. In response, Tugman created a “ParkRx” program called Walk 7B.

Walk 7B connects local health care providers, who write outdoor walking prescriptions for people, who then use local trails to fulfill the recommendations. The program has taken off in a big way. Mary Ann Love, a Walk 7B participant, says, “I want to stop the scale from creeping up. It isn’t easy for me, but it is important.” She has lost more than 45 pounds since last summer.

Joyce Wilson, a nurse practitioner who specializes in the care of patients with diabetes, says the results are very encouraging. “Almost all achieved weight loss... less pain and less depression. And these folks are now using the local parks and trails in this area regularly and introducing their friends and family to these amazing places right outside our back door.”

SHAPING STRONG LEADERS AND LAND TRUSTS

The accredited Kestrel Land Trust in Massachusetts received a \$500,000 anonymous gift to help buy a new office. But after experiencing the Land Trust Alliance’s excellence and leadership programs, Executive Director Kristin DeBoer talked with the donor and her board about using half of the funds “to enhance our connections to and impact in the community. After almost a decade of counting success only by acres and dollars, I was so inspired by the training that I came back wanting to expand our land trust’s vision.”

After revising its strategic plan, Kestrel used the funds to create a new three-year staff position and applied for and received two large grants for community conservation projects that go beyond business as usual. The first was a \$250,000 grant to help purchase and protect a farm to provide fresh produce for those in need, in partnership with the local food bank. The second grant of \$357,000 established a community forest in partnership with the local university and local environmental education center to teach students of all ages how selective sustainable forestry can promote climate resiliency.



“The excellence and leadership trainings have made a tremendous difference for me and for Kestrel Land Trust, helping us find our way to make land conservation more meaningful to the communities we serve.”
—Kristin DeBoer



The Gallatin Valley in Montana

FINDING POLICY SOLUTIONS

The Toohey family has been farming in Montana's Gallatin Valley since 1876, when the great-grandfather of the current owners emigrated from Ireland. After four generations of farming the land, the family decided to protect the property to keep it in agricultural production for future generations.

The accredited Gallatin Valley Land Trust worked with the Tooheys to use the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program of the Farm Bill to protect the farm. During the process, the land trust's attorney noticed a technical problem and turned to the Land Trust Alliance for its expertise. The Alliance met with the IRS and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which manages the Farm Bill, to seek a remedy, both for this easement and others like it.

"The Toohey easement marks our 100th," says Executive Director Penelope Pierce. "With the Alliance's help, it all worked out. And with the Alliance's policy work on getting the next Farm Bill reauthorized, we expect to be able to keep saving family farms and ranches in the Gallatin Valley."



Rally 2016 attendees heard Umar Muhammed tell of how his work with Lookout Mountain Conservancy (accredited) transformed his life for the better.

ENSURING QUALITY

"Happy 10th anniversary to the land trust accreditation program," says Deborah White, executive director of Woods and Waters Land Trust in Kentucky. "We're delighted to join hundreds of other land trusts around the country that have achieved accreditation." The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, awards accreditation to land trusts that demonstrate they meet rigorous quality standards—land trusts such as Woods and Waters that save special places.

One such special place is just a short drive from Frankfort. "Two of our landowners had a vision to protect their property for many years," says board President Chris Schimmoeller. "It has a beautiful hill called 'Astronomy Heights' that's great for stargazing and an area set aside for kids to search for fairies. It's a wonderful place for environmental education or a nice walk in the woods."





TRAINING LAND TRUST BOARDS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Training and education form the thread that weaves through all of the work of the Land Trust Alliance. In 2016, the Alliance trained 5,400 people, reflecting our commitment to strengthen the land trust community.

The Alliance provides access to information that helps land trusts save land in a technically and ethically sound manner. Methods of learning include, for example, webinars, publications, an online clearinghouse of information, regional conferences and Rally: The National Land Conservation Conference. Richard Cowan, board chair of Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association in Vermont, attended Rally 2016. "As the new board chair, I felt it important to learn about current best practices and expand my connections with other land trust board and staff," he says. "Rally achieved both objectives and much more. I will change the way we do board orientation, taking folks out onto our land rather than just talking at them."

"The Alliance webinars are terrific, and we're working to enable as many volunteers as possible to benefit from this knowledge."

—Sharon Feeley, volunteer, accredited Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust, CT

"The need to hold ourselves to high standards will never go away. The success of conservation relies on the constant support of the public and public institutions."

—Larry Kueter, former chair of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission



The newly accredited Woods and Waters Land Trust protects forests and streams in the lower Kentucky River watershed.

DEFENDING THE LAND

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County in Illinois settled a suit in 2016 that involved its first agricultural conservation easement. "The stormwater runoff system was failing, and we were trying to work with the owner through his nephew, who had power of attorney, to get it repaired," says Executive Director Lisa Haderlein.

When the nephew put the land up for auction without resolving the violation, the conservancy contacted Terrafirma, an Alliance-created insurance program for land trusts. "Terrafirma was very helpful, not just because our legal expenses were capped at \$5,000, but because its representatives provided great advice," says Haderlein. "After all, they have seen these types of cases before and were able to provide insight that made things go better than they might have otherwise."

Lisa Haderlein

THANK YOU

For the past 35 years, the Land Trust Alliance's work has been made possible by you, our supporters, members and those who have made planned gifts to ensure the future of land conservation. We can all be proud: All that we've accomplished—from the \$40 million we raised through the generosity of individuals, foundations, corporations and organizations for our campaign to the 56 million acres conserved by land trusts—would not have been achieved without you.

Together, we conserve the places we love.



The Land Trust Alliance and Land Trusts:

What We Do Together

In 2016 the Land Trust Alliance released the National Land Trust Census, which provides a snapshot of land conservation in the United States through 2015. Here are a few of the key findings.



INCREASE
the **rate** of
land conservation



56 million

total acres conserved by state, local and national land trusts as of the end of 2015



9 million

increase of total acres conserved by state, local and national land trusts since 2010

IMPROVE
the **rigor** of
land trusts



More than
5,000

land trust leaders strengthened by trainings, coaching and other resources in 2016

372

accredited
land trusts

As of February 2017

77%

of conserved land now held
by accredited land trusts

ENSURE
the **resilience** of
land conservation



\$588 million

dedicated funding for stewardship and legal defense



510

member-owner land trusts of TerraFirma

EMPOWER
land trusts to make
conservation
relevant
to their communities



72%

land owned by land trusts that allows public access



4.6 million

members and financial supporters of land trusts



Our Mission

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



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Cheering otter: Penny Palmer,
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Foundation's photo contest

ON THE COVER

Nicole Braddock, executive director
of the accredited Solano Land Trust
in California, took her son, Bryson,
to enjoy the sunrise at the King-
Swett Ranch Preserve, owned and
protected by the land trust.



Meets all 20 BBB
Charity Standards



4-star rating

