



2014

annual report



from
the Chair



from
the President

If you look at these numbers, it is clear that something extraordinary is happening: 75% of conserved land is now held by accredited land trusts; more than 300 groups are accredited; TerraFirma—the legal defense insurance that has won every challenge that its policies have covered—has a 100% renewal rate; and 3,500 land trust leaders have been strengthened by trainings, coaching, publications and online learning.

Our work can also be measured by things that you can't count so easily, but are nonetheless important in measuring success. We built an unprecedented coalition of charities to convince Congress to pass tax incentives that will benefit conservation and encourage charitable giving, and we continue our work together for success in 2015. Our circuit rider pilot program sends specialists to meet with small land trusts on their home turf. And our intensive leadership development program is inspiring a new generation of land trust leaders to reach for new heights.

We are grateful for the friendship and support of our members, partners and supporters, without whom none of this could have happened.

Thank you.

Laura Johnson
Chair, Land Trust Alliance

I will always remember my first Rally—the smell of salt air, waves crashing and a bonfire lighting up the friendly faces on a beach in Monterey. My mind caught fire that night listening to the stories of land trust people from around the country. This is the genius of the Land Trust Alliance—bringing people together who are passionate about land conservation and willing to share what they know to help others.

At Rally last fall, Andy Goodman reminded us, “When you change the story inside someone’s head, you’ve taken the first step to changing the world.” The Land Trust Alliance is changing the story of why land conservation matters. Around the country, land trust leaders are telling their stories to old and new audiences—from elected officials to local families, from donors to business leaders—and building unprecedented support for land trusts. This outreach better engages our communities and fosters a stronger, broader constituency for conservation.

If we are to be successful over the long haul, we must be seen as essential to the future of our communities—allies for good jobs, education, housing, clean water, local food and, perhaps most important, community health. Inside you’ll read about some of the people who are making this story come true.

Rand Wentworth
President, Land Trust Alliance

together

A Campaign for the Land

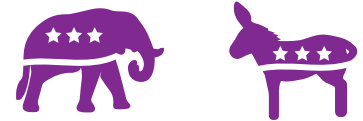
Over the past four years this campaign has funded the work of the Land Trust Alliance and enabled significant accomplishments for land conservation.

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



279^o bipartisan votes

to pass the enhanced tax incentive in the House (work continues to make it permanent) ^oFebruary 2015

IMPROVE the quality of land conservation

301

accredited
land trusts


 3,500

land trust leaders strengthened by trainings, coaching and other resources in 2014

75%

of conserved land now held by accredited land trusts

ENSURE the permanance of land conservation

 88% of acres

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



zero

cases TerraFirma has lost

◆◆◆ TOGETHER, OUR PROGRESS ◆◆◆

\$30.6 million
raised



\$4.4 million

still needed *as of March 31, 2015*



50 million acres

of land conserved by land trusts

CAMPAIGN LEADERS

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Honorary Chair
Michael P. Dowling,
Campaign Co-Chair
Frederic C. Rich,
Campaign Co-Chair

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Alan M. Bell
Lauren B. Dachs,
Campaign Vice-Chair
Peter O. Hausmann,
Chair, National Council

Sherry F. Huber,
Campaign Vice-Chair,
Regional Committees
Ted Ladd, Campaign
Vice-Chair
William Mulligan

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Jameson S. French

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Laurie Andrews
Michael P. Dowling
Lawrence R. Kueter
Penelope H. Lewis
George S. Olsen

our accomplishments



Buzzard Lake, a protected property in north central Washington

SETTING UP A BIG WIN

In 2014 the Land Trust Alliance came closer than ever before to making the enhanced tax incentive for easements—one of the most effective ways to increase the pace of land conservation—permanent. Ultimately, the bill was only eight votes short of passing, but the Alliance’s work to enlist America’s top charity organizations and their powerful memberships, land trust leaders around the country and allies in Congress has set up a big win for the incentive in 2015. This February, the America Gives More Act, which included the conservation easement incentive, passed the House by a vote of 279-137. For current information, go to www.lta.org/issues-action.

“I could not have found finer partners in this fight to protect America’s most special places.”

—Dave Camp, former chair of the House Ways and Means Committee

EXPANDING A POOL OF ACTIVISTS



Alicia Reban with then Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid

Andy Chmar spoke with his congressman, Sean Patrick Maloney, at local events. Alicia Reban shared examples with Senator Dean Heller of what her land trust

accomplished when the incentive was in place. And Glen Chown was texting in real time with Representative Dave Camp in the year-end incentive fight on Capitol Hill. These land trust leaders are making a real difference in federal policy, and they are Land Trust Ambassadors, an initiative launched by the Alliance in 2014 to encourage land trust leaders to proactively cultivate relationships with their elected officials. The growing pool of Ambassadors has achieved great things. “We are thrilled that our own Senator Heller introduced the conservation tax incentive legislation in the new Congress,” says Alicia. To learn more go to www.lta.org/ambassadors.



More than 20 volunteers attended a monitoring training held by Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust and the Maryland Environmental Trust

SENDING HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED

What, exactly, is a circuit rider? It's a romantic-sounding title given to Alliance specialists who provide assistance and support to small and all-volunteer land trusts. "These smaller land trusts don't have a lot of bandwidth to go to conferences," says Northeast Director Kevin Case. "We decided the best way to engage them is to go to them." Four circuit rider programs serve 36 land trusts in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Western Pennsylvania and the Potomac River Watershed, and the program will expand to other regions in the future. "Volunteers of small land trusts are in this business for all the right reasons—because it's something they care about," says circuit rider Don Owen. "I meet some pretty neat people."

"Great things are starting to happen for us thanks to the Alliance's circuit rider program. Don Owen has provided guidance to help us rebuild our board, train our executive director and enlist monitoring volunteers."

—Frank Allen, Board President, Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, MD

TRANSFORMING A LAND TRUST—AND A COMMUNITY

Marie McCarty, executive director of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust* in Alaska, says, "There are touch points in organizations when a new vision is needed to determine what's next. Now is one of those pivotal times." Her land trust hosted a statewide meeting of land trusts last spring that focused on community engagement, funded in part by the Alliance. Western Director Wendy Ninteman brought the Alliance's new community conservation program, led by Rob Aldrich, into the framework. "Community conservation is the idea that people will embrace conservation when conservation embraces people," says Rob. Marie adds, "Land trusts need to do a better job explaining what we do in words that people understand." KHLT's board and staff are reaching out to people in their community more frequently, and its old and new mission statements reflect this change:

***OLD:** To preserve, for public benefit, land with significant natural, recreational or cultural values by working with willing landowners across the Kenai Peninsula.*

***NEW:** To conserve the natural heritage of the Kenai Peninsula for future generations.*

Mud games at The Wallow in Alaska





Boyce Budd, President of Tincum Conservancy

MAKING CONSERVATION LAST

Boyce Budd, board president of Tincum Conservancy* in Pennsylvania, describes how the member-owned conservation defense liability insurance developed by the Alliance called Terrafirma has done amazing things for his land trust: "After we earned accreditation we needed to build up our stewardship and easement protection fund through a capital campaign." But the group worried that raising money for stewardship and legal defense would be a difficult sell. They soon discovered otherwise. "One of our most convincing arguments was that Terrafirma was our first line of defense against legal challenges." Ultimately, the group raised 30% more than its initial target.

"Donors were made aware that we were not just a small isolated land trust potentially doing battle with large developers. Rather, we were part of a large network of land trusts under the professional leadership of an organization like the Land Trust Alliance and an insurance program like Terrafirma."

—Boyce Budd, President, Tincum Conservancy, PA

*Accredited land trusts

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS



Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis

When Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis attended the Alliance's leadership training in 2010, one of her mentors was Bill Leahy, president and CEO of the Big Sur Land Trust* in California. Jeannette was executive director of Sierra Foothill Conservancy,* having worked her way up the ranks from a volunteer position. Shannon Meyer, Alliance western conservation manager, says that when a position leading a large land trust opened up in 2014, Jeannette decided to apply. "She had been to the Advanced Leadership retreat in Montana and I helped her prepare for the interview," says Shannon. Whose job had come open? It was Bill Leahy's, who had decided to leave. "I think this is the perfect example of our leadership and excellence program creating the next generation of leaders," says Shannon.

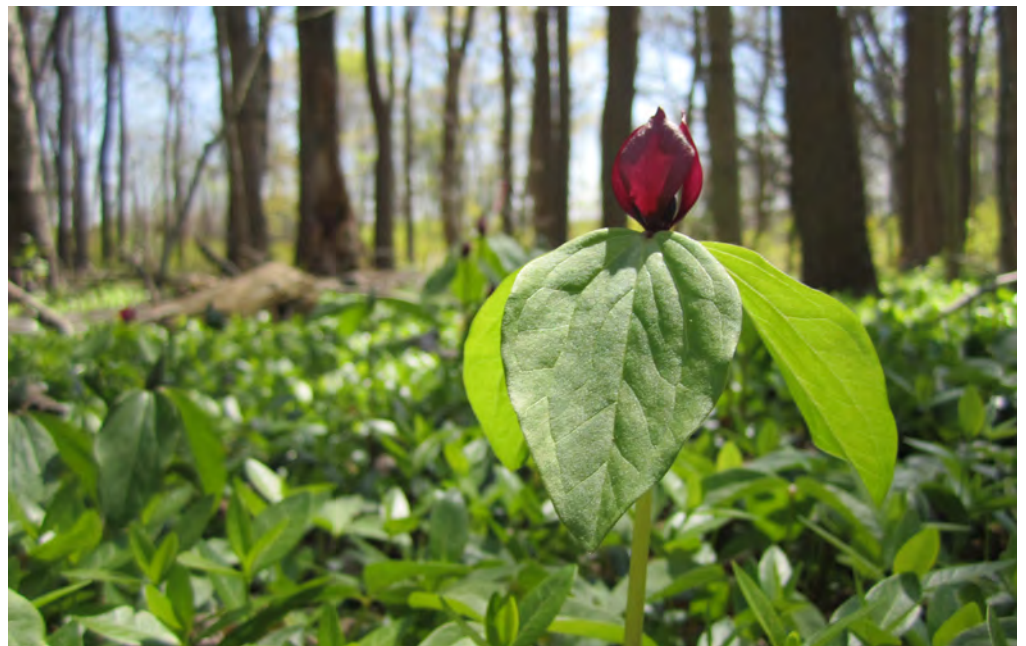
"The Alliance leadership training and the support from Shannon and others at the Alliance helped me grow as a leader and gave me the skills to feel confident in my new position."

—Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis, President and CEO, Big Sur Land Trust, CA

COMMITTING TO EXCELLENCE

In February 2014, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Alliance, awarded renewed accreditation to the first cohort of 16 land trusts to go through the comprehensive renewal application process, including Chikaming Open Lands* in Sawyer, Michigan. "We are proud to be one of the first renewed accredited land conservancies in the country," said Executive Director Chris Thompson. "The rigorous accreditation process sharpened many of our organization's land protection practices and we are a more efficient, effective and successful land conservancy as a result." Accreditation inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of lands by recognizing land trusts that meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement. The beginning of 2015 saw a new milestone: 301 accredited land trusts.

Robinson Woods, protected by Chikaming Open Lands



our vision

FASTER

Each year the Alliance and the land conservation community together decide on the public policy priorities for the next year. In 2015 the list includes creating increased tax incentives for land conservation; securing and maximizing access to federal funds available for conservation programs; improving IRS administration of conservation donation rules; and increasing effective advocacy by land trusts. With these things in place, the pace and amount of land conserved in America will dramatically increase for the benefit of current and future generations.

BETTER

Land conservation is not on the radar of many Americans, but it could be. Working with the conservation community, the Alliance is creating better ways of describing our work to the public that will demonstrate the value of land conservation. One such message is public health. In 2014 the Alliance and Yale University met with leaders from health, academia and nature-focused nonprofits and created the "Wingspread Declaration," which affirms the health benefits of spending time in nature and the imperative to use health as a guide for conservation. It was released at the World Parks Congress and the American Public Health Association conference, with the ultimate goal of health professionals advocating for conservation. See www.healthandnature.org.

LASTING

To make conservation last, the Alliance uses a multipronged approach that includes building the capacity and strength of land trusts through education, such as a series of webinars designed exclusively for land trusts and their partners, trainings for the board members and executive directors who lead land trusts and an array of services that help land trusts prepare for accreditation as well as to defend conservation. In addition to Terrafirma, the Alliance's conservation defense strategy includes training on risk management, easement and stewardship practices; researching potential threats to conservation permanence; and convening scholars, publishing articles and helping shape conservation law, with the goal of winning every precedent-setting case.

our mission

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



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Sun over Blue Ridge Mountains:
Tommy Wyche, founder of
Naturaland Trust (SC)

ON THE COVER

Deirdre, Dylan and Donyé
Ellis enjoy a beautiful day in
Washington, D.C. Donyé is an
Advocacy Ambassador. "I went
to Advocacy Day 2014 to help
pass the enhanced tax incentive.
I wanted to do something a little
different from my day-to-day job
as an accountant at the Land Trust
Alliance."



Meets all 20 BBB Charity Standards