



# annual report *2015*



## the Chair

2015 was an eventful year for the Land Trust Alliance. We said farewell to our long-time leader, Rand Wentworth, and have enthusiastically welcomed our new president, Andrew Bowman. We are delighted to have Andrew leading the Alliance, as he brings considerable strengths to the job and tremendous vision for the future of land conservation.

Andrew will be building on some amazing 2015 achievements. Our recent victory—the permanent conservation tax incentive—is a great example. Members, partners and supporters stepped up and made it happen. As a result, more land will be saved across the country. We also completed our first-ever campaign. *Together: A Campaign for the Land* is already increasing the Alliance's ability to help land trusts around the country do what they do best. We thank you for all you have done to make these 2015 accomplishments possible.

I hope you enjoy this look inside our work, told through a few stories that highlight how we empower land trusts through legislative wins, education and leadership programs and initiatives like Terrafirma and community conservation.

Thank you for being an important part of the land trust community and continuing to act on our shared love of place.

Laura Johnson  
Chair, Land Trust Alliance



## the President

During my career in land conservation, I've seen firsthand how the land is the heart and soul of each community. People of different backgrounds and political persuasions regularly join together to protect the places they love. Now, as the Land Trust Alliance's new president, I'm thrilled to be part of the land conservation community in a brand new way.

As we celebrate important victories in 2015, we also look toward our next great challenges. We must make land conservation more relevant to communities not traditionally engaged in conservation. With about 4,000 acres of land lost to development each day, we need to increase the rate of land conservation. We must make land trusts and conserved land more resilient to coming threats. Finally, we need to make land conservation as rigorous as possible. The Alliance already excels at this with the accreditation program, standards and practices and trainings for land trust staff across the country.

Land is a key part of the solutions to much of what ails us in America and around the world—public health, childhood obesity, even climate change. We need to show all sorts of people that conserving land makes life better for everyone.

I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work. I hope you'll join me.

Andrew Bowman  
President, Land Trust Alliance

# together

*A Campaign for the Land*

Over the past five years the Alliance's first campaign has funded the transformation of the entire land trust community 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



383 bipartisan votes

in Congress to make the tax incentive for easement donations permanent

## IMPROVE the quality of land conservation

342

accredited  
land trusts




Nearly  
5,000  
land trust leaders strengthened by trainings,  
coaching and other resources in 2015

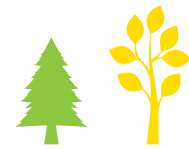
Over  
75%

of conserved land now held  
by accredited land trusts

## ENSURE the permanence of land conservation

 90% of acres

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



100%

success rate in court for TerraFirma

## ◆◆◆ TOGETHER, OUR SUCCESS ◆◆◆

\$40.1 million\*  
raised

\* As of January 2016



\$17.7 million

invested in strengthening land trusts



50 million acres

of land conserved by land trusts

### CAMPAIGN LEADERS

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

#### CAMPAIGN CABINET

Robert A. Ayres  
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

#### REGIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES

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Scott Dickerson  
Jameson S. French

Sherry F. Huber  
Laura A. Johnson  
Mary McFadden, J.D.  
Nicholas J. Moore  
Julie Sharpe  
Steve Small  
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Co-Chair

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Marjorie L. Hart  
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Tony Kiser  
Fernando Lloveras San Miguel  
Caroline P. Niemczyk  
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William Mulligan,  
Co-Chair  
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Kathy K. Leavenworth  
Judith Stockdale

##### Pacific

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Maria Elena Campisteguy  
Anne Kroeker  
Glenn Lamb  
Richard Leeds  
Thomas S. Reeve  
Darrell Wood

##### Rocky Mountain/Texas

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Robert A. Ayres,  
Co-Chair  
Lise H. Aangeenbrug  
Laurie Andrews  
Michael P. Dowling  
Lawrence R. Kueter  
Penelope H. Lewis  
George S. Olsen

# Look What We Did



Hays Cummins on his protected land with his sons, Adam at left and Blake at right.

## WON A HISTORIC VICTORY FOR LAND CONSERVATION

*In 2015 the Land Trust Alliance celebrated the single greatest legislative action in decades to support land conservation: the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations made permanent by Congress.*

College professors Donna McCollum and Hays Cummins dreamed of owning a piece of land in the Florida Panhandle where they could take students for transformative educational experiences. In 2012 they purchased 150 acres of wetlands, cypress swamps and scrub oak forests southeast of Tallahassee. They've counted as many as 80 alligator wallows within the wetlands and discovered a true paradise of birds, including snowy egrets and bald eagles.

In 2015 Donna and Hays worked with the accredited Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy to protect the land with a conservation easement. They were able to do so thanks to the Alliance's lead in enacting the tax incentive, enabling landowners like them to realize their conservation dream. "As an ecologist, there's no better feeling for me than to be able to make a small difference in the future of a landscape," says Hays.

## SHAPED STRONG LEADERS AND EXCELLENT LAND TRUSTS

*The Land Trust Alliance helps land trusts be more effective, and strong leaders are an important part of the equation. Our Leadership and Excellence programs provide land trusts with training and financial assistance to advance their program priorities, staff and board leadership skills and financial sustainability. Land trusts with in-depth training from the Alliance save 20 times more land than land trusts with no training.*

Dave Sands at the accredited Nebraska Land Trust, a creative and effective leader who is well respected in the land trust community, took advantage of our leadership training. In 2015, fueled by an Alliance excellence grant, he oversaw a community-wide effort to protect land in the diverse Pine Ridge in Northwest Nebraska, historically significant as the site where Northern Cheyenne died escaping imprisonment at Fort Robinson in 1879. Working collaboratively with community members led to the creation of locally relevant project selection criteria to spend a \$900,000 state grant to purchase easements, and to partnering with the Northern Cheyenne to complete a monument on their hallowed land, protected by a conservation easement with the NLT.



Nebraska Land Trust helped raise money for this monument to the Northern Cheyenne who died at Fort Robinson. Dave Sands, second from right, stands with descendants of those honored.

# Together



Local children get acquainted with an estuary thanks to Damariscotta River Association.

## ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

*Community conservation is an approach to land conservation that starts with people, because to keep saving land, we need more people who care about the land. The Land Trust Alliance works with land trusts to help them engage people in their communities.*

In Maine the accredited Damariscotta River Association connects local fifth- and sixth-graders with university scientists to explore local estuaries. “We realized there are kids living in the community who have never set foot in these beautiful places,” says Steven Hufnagel (an Alliance Leadership Program alumnus). “One of the kids who usually sat in the back and rolled his eyes during science class came alive doing this hands-on work. One day he said to the scientists, ‘You can really go to school for this stuff?’ We count that as a victory for community conservation, for kids in science and for the future.”

*“Working with the Alliance has helped us expand our vision and our impact on the community.”*

—Steven Hufnagel, Executive Director, Damariscotta River Association (ME)



Conservationists on a Rally field trip in 2015.

## ENSURED QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, recognizes land trusts meeting rigorous quality standards. The benefits of accreditation include stronger land trusts that assure the public of their commitment to perpetuity. Thirty-four of the 342 accredited land trusts were awarded accreditation in 2015.*

Upstate Forever in Greenville, South Carolina, was one of the first organizations to achieve accreditation in 2008 and, after renewing in 2014, continues to praise the program that reassures landowners of its commitment to the highest standards. “We always viewed ourselves as a strong land trust,” says Erin Knight. “But we wanted to prove it. We feel like accreditation is a part of who we are now—we’re really proud of it. It has been the best thing we’ve ever done in terms of improving our organization.”





## TRAINED LAND TRUST BOARDS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

*Training and education form the thread that weaves through all of the work of the Land Trust Alliance, reflecting our commitment to strengthen land trusts so they can work more efficiently to save more land.*

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust covers 2,100 square miles in Upstate New York. Executive Director Linda Garrett (an Alliance Leadership Program alumna) relies heavily on the Alliance for access to information that helps the trust meet standards and operate ethically. “Between the webinars and The Learning Center, everything we need to know as an accredited land trust is right there for us.” But Linda’s favorite learning opportunity is the Alliance’s annual event, Rally: The National Land Conservation Conference. “Especially for small, rural land trusts like ours, it’s such an important opportunity to network face-to-face with people from across the country,” says Linda. “It’s truly inspirational.”

*“You feel like you’re a part of something bigger—a huge community of people working in the land trust movement.”*

—Linda Garrett, Executive Director, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (NY)

*“Accreditation is vital because it helps us all reach for the same standards, and that’s critical to ensuring the permanence of our work.”*

—Erin Knight, Director of Land Trust Program, Upstate Forever (SC)



The Blue Ridge Escarpment near the border of North and South Carolina.

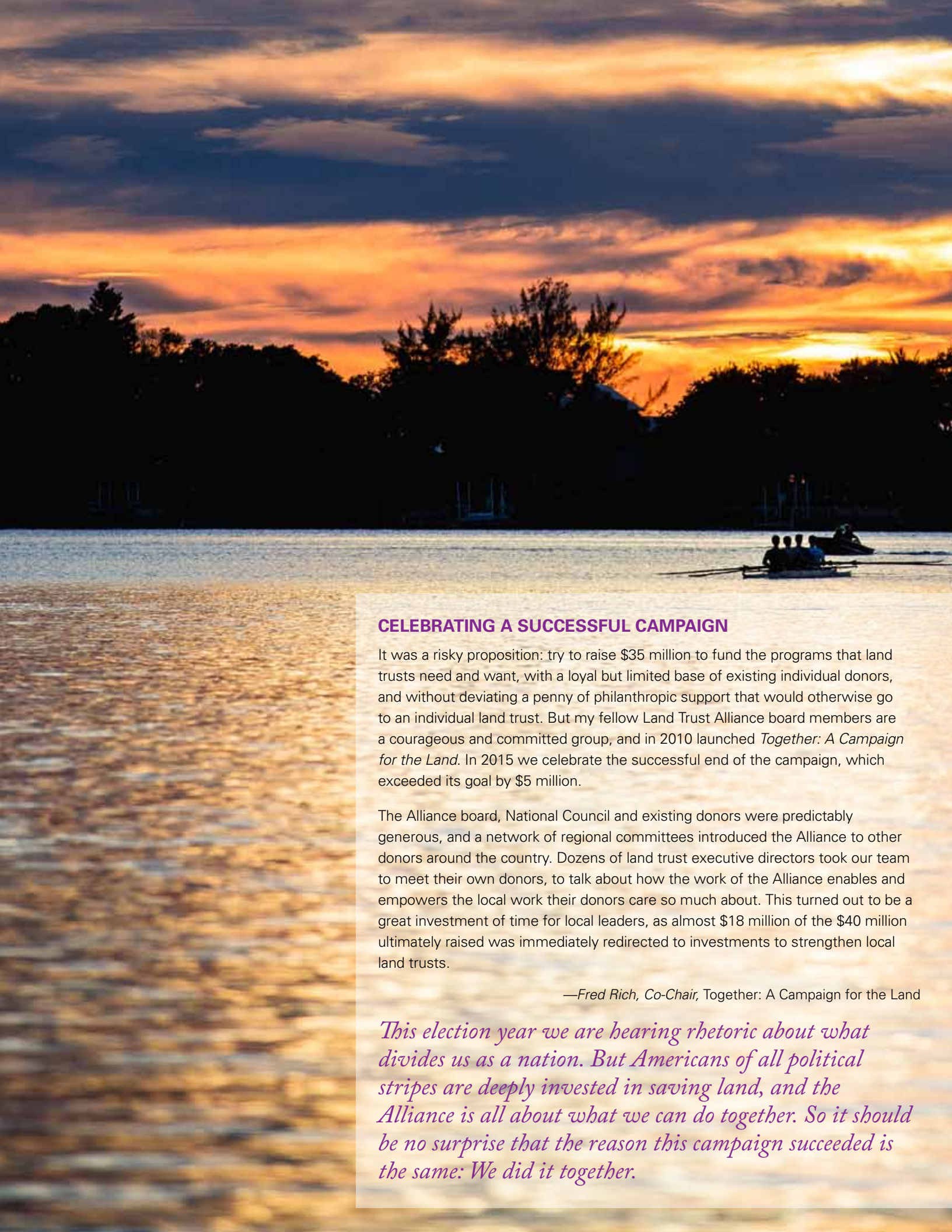


## DEFENDED THE LAND

*Land conservation is meant to last forever, but when challenges occur, the Alliance-created insurance program, Terrafirma, helps to defend conserved lands.*

When the accredited Flathead Land Trust in Montana encountered a landowner who had converted an existing garage into an apartment and refused to acknowledge it as a residence under the terms of the conservation easement, Flathead’s land protection specialist, Ryan Hunter, was concerned they might end up in court. The land trust consulted with Terrafirma. Together they surfaced an idea to file an affidavit of fact to publicly record the land trust’s concerns for any future buyers. That simple solution caused the landowners to reconsider, and they resolved the issue.

Foys Bend along the Flathead River in Montana



## CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

It was a risky proposition: try to raise \$35 million to fund the programs that land trusts need and want, with a loyal but limited base of existing individual donors, and without deviating a penny of philanthropic support that would otherwise go to an individual land trust. But my fellow Land Trust Alliance board members are a courageous and committed group, and in 2010 launched *Together: A Campaign for the Land*. In 2015 we celebrate the successful end of the campaign, which exceeded its goal by \$5 million.

The Alliance board, National Council and existing donors were predictably generous, and a network of regional committees introduced the Alliance to other donors around the country. Dozens of land trust executive directors took our team to meet their own donors, to talk about how the work of the Alliance enables and empowers the local work their donors care so much about. This turned out to be a great investment of time for local leaders, as almost \$18 million of the \$40 million ultimately raised was immediately redirected to investments to strengthen local land trusts.

—Fred Rich, Co-Chair, *Together: A Campaign for the Land*

*This election year we are hearing rhetoric about what divides us as a nation. But Americans of all political stripes are deeply invested in saving land, and the Alliance is all about what we can do together. So it should be no surprise that the reason this campaign succeeded is the same: We did it together.*



# Our Mission

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



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Land Reliance (accredited)

## ON THE COVER

Pete DeBoer, land protection  
coordinator of the accredited Land  
Conservancy of West Michigan,  
and his daughter, Emerson, go for a  
stroll through the land trust's Maas  
Family Nature Preserve.



Meets all 20 BBB Charity Standards