

Excellence, Trust, Permanence:

BOARD MEMBERS ON ACCREDITATION

If your land trust is ready to apply for accreditation, one factor is key to your success: board member involvement. Whether it's reviewing new policies, organizing old records or campaigning for community involvement, strong board leadership demonstrates a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

The board members quoted in this article helped lead their land trusts through the accreditation application process and learned that the process itself can lead to great insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a land trust, and what can be done to ensure the success and longevity of the work of saving land. Excellence, trust, permanence—each accredited land trust has a better understanding and appreciation of these terms.



Excellence

“We are a more efficient land trust today after completing the accreditation process. We improved our business practices and our ability to conduct the work of our trust. Our board was active every step of the way—writing new policies, revising old ones and reviewing each to ensure we were in tune with *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. Our board’s involvement lessened the workload on our small, six-person staff and McKenzie River Trust’s accreditation has proven to our community that we are committed to excellence in all that we do.”

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ROGER ROBB, MCKENZIE RIVER TRUST
 BOARD PRESIDENT



Trust

“In the small community of those who understand the work of land trusts, accreditation has exemplified our public commitment—but, more important, accreditation has deepened the trust our board members place in themselves and their ability to achieve sustainable conservation as a member of our board.

As an all-volunteer, 10-board member land trust, there were areas of importance to the long-term protection of the land that we neglected. Each land acquisition potentially placed us one step closer to a legal defense problem—which reflects upon the practices of our *entire* conservation community.

Our board pulled together to assess our areas of weakness and we implemented *Land Trust Standards and Practices* to ensure we follow the best practices, increasing trust in ourselves and our work.”

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DAVID BINGHAM, SALEM LAND TRUST
 BOARD PRESIDENT



Permanence

“In the course of the accreditation process, I came to recognize the huge importance of keeping detailed, accurate records. Our land trust has been around for 20 years, and we’ve been conscientious in our recordkeeping. But easements are forever, and any detail you miss today can cause a problem tomorrow. Making sure that our files could meet the accreditation standards really brought this home.

Our three-person staff worked long hours to prepare for accreditation, and I hope that knowing that our 30-member board was solidly behind the effort made a difference. We all knew that long-term, accreditation would make our efforts to preserve land more credible to our community and to donors of future easements.”

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RU RAUCH, THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS LAND TRUST BOARD SECRETARY