

# The Land Trust Alliance

## Highlights of 2012



Thank you for helping to make 2012 a year full of incredible success stories for our community. Your support of the Land Trust Alliance gives America's 1,700 land trusts the strength and tools to protect more land and to ensure that those lands stay protected forever.

By saving land, we are giving health and natural beauty to millions of Americans. And we are giving people experiences they will never forget: a child exploring a clear stream; a grandfather teaching the quiet art of fishing; a farmer growing fresh food for his neighbors; a family enjoying a picnic. Together, we are building communities, strengthening local economies and instilling hope.



Hi Ute Ranch, Summit County, Utah. Photo courtesy of Utah Open Lands.

### PACE: Building Public Support

The Alliance helps land trusts build strong relationships with their public officials and uses these networks to advance conservation policies despite the challenging fiscal and political climate. We are pleased to report that our efforts are paying off! The House and Senate approached the 2012 Farm Bill with enormous pressure to eliminate programs, and they are poised to cut as much as \$35 billion overall. However, thanks to the coordinated efforts of the land trust community, Congress has now increased the bill's funding for land trusts to buy easements, providing as much as \$1.58 billion over the next decade. With your support, we are now working to pass this bill.

We also successfully defended important conservation programs like Forest Legacy, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act from severe cuts.

The Alliance remains focused on renewing the enhanced easement tax incentive this December. Thanks to the hard work of land trusts around the country, 310 representatives and 25 senators have co-sponsored our tax incentive legislation—including majorities of both parties in the House. The enhanced incentive got a great vote of confidence when the Senate Finance Committee recently passed a bill that proposes extending the easement incentive through 2013, while eliminating many other tax provisions. We continue our work to secure more co-sponsors for this crucial legislation through the end of 2012, and you can help get the job done—read more at [www.lta.org/easementincentive](http://www.lta.org/easementincentive).



Clockwise: Hi Ute Ranch, Summit County, Utah. Photo courtesy of Kim Seese. | Two kayakers, © iStockphoto.com/xril. | Winter wonderland. Photo courtesy of Crested Butte Land Trust (CO), Xavier Fane, photographer. | Fun in the mud. Photo courtesy of Carmen Field, Children and Nature Network. | North Coast, California. Photo courtesy of Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, William K. Matthias, photographer. | Ranch life in Colorado. Photo courtesy of Lynne Sherrod.

## QUALITY: Providing the Tools for Success

The Alliance is committed to transforming the strength and effectiveness of land conservation by improving land trust policies and practices.

We serve as a university for conservation through our extensive online Learning Center, a 15-course core curriculum, 100 webinars and more than 300 workshops offered each year. These programs include Standards and Practices Assessments, coaching, regrants and regional support to help land trusts become more accountable and more sustainable than ever before.

This year, the Alliance made significant investments in 88 land trusts that are poised to double the pace of their conservation work over the next five years. We delivered 36 training programs to 3,000 individuals and provided an intensive Leadership Development Program for 46 executive directors and emerging

leaders of land trusts. Rally 2012: The National Land Conservation Conference held in Salt Lake City, offered 1,600 attendees over 130 training sessions. The Learning Center provides 2,000 visitors per month with instant access to Standards and Practices curriculum courses, the Digital Library, Ask-an-Expert and discussion forums.

The Alliance helped 53 land trusts prepare for accreditation in order to foster public trust in our movement and make land trusts more sustainable in their work. 181 land trusts have earned the accreditation seal through their commitment to national standards of excellence, with an additional 115 land trusts in the accreditation process. Together, these groups represent 40 states and more than 50% of America's conserved lands.

## PERMANENCE: Delivering on the Promise of Perpetuity

This year, we achieved our momentous goal of ensuring that land trusts can deliver on the promise of perpetuity by raising the funds necessary to establish Terrafirma Risk Retention Group LLC. This is the first time an environmental nonprofit has ever created such an entity and is only one of a handful of charitable risk pools ever approved by the IRS in history.

Terrafirma is owned by participating land trusts, and is now a legally recognized and licensed tax-exempt entity that is registered in every state. After its launch in early 2013, Terrafirma will provide participating land trusts with significant legal support

to match even the most determined violators of conservation easements and fee properties. Currently over 469 land trusts in 47 states and D.C. are committed to insuring more than 18,544 conservation properties through the program.

Our Conservation Defense Center provides training, resources, an attorney database, an online legal clearinghouse and a Conservation Defense Fund to support precedent-setting legal challenges. This year, we delivered risk management classes and trainings to 370 individuals, and pro bono law firms committed over 4,000 hours of legal time for land trusts across the country.

## THANK YOU!

Your support made these achievements and opportunities possible. By working together, we are ensuring that the good work of land conservation advances and endures over time. Thank you for all you do to protect the places that give meaning to our lives.



Clockwise: Cummins Falls, purchased by The Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, and now a state park. Photo courtesy of Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation. | Paddling off the coast of Maine near Malaga Island—owned by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Photo courtesy of Mary Burke. | Spring flowers on the 2Lazy2 conservation easement in the Island Park area, Idaho. Conserved with Teton Regional Land Trust, Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy. Photo courtesy of Randy & Jean Bjerke Photography. | Representative Ron Kind (D-WI) visiting with members of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy & Gathering Waters Conservancy. Photo courtesy of Tim Jacobson, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Inc. | Red barn: ©istockphoto.com/akaplummer.