

Frequently Asked Questions about Census

Who can I contact for questions?

E-mail: census@lta.org

Call the Land Trust Alliance: (202) 638-4725

What is the National Land Trust Census?

The National Land Trust Census is the nation's only tabulation of land preserved through private, voluntary land conservation in the United States. The Land Trust Alliance conducts the National Land Trust Census periodically, issuing a major update every five years. It surveys all known land trusts in the U.S.

What is a Land Trust?

A land trust is a nonprofit organization that, as all or part of its mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements.

When is the Census?

The 2010 National Land Trust Census will commence in early 2011. Land trusts and other conservation organizations will receive an e-mail invitation with a link to a questionnaire in early January 2011. We will be collecting data January through March. Beginning in April, we begin to analyze the data, and will announce the final results in October 2011.

How long is the survey?

The survey has approximately 65 questions and should take 45-60 minutes to complete, depending on the size and sophistication of your organization and how much information you have at hand. We have trimmed the questions to those that are most essential. And if you have responded to a previous survey, we have pre-filled the questionnaire with your latest responses that we have or that we imported from your state service center. This allows you to simply review and update those that have changed.

Why should my land trust fill out the questionnaire?

An accurate count of all the land trusts across the United States forms the basis of the statistics we use in quantifying private land conservation. We use these numbers to:

- Track trends in private land conservation over time. The first National Land Trust Census was done in 1982.
- Demonstrate to the public the vital role private land conservation organizations play in their communities.

- Show Congress how important private land conservation is to their constituents. This helps us to advocate for tax incentives and additional resources for land trusts.
- Provide aggregate numbers to land trusts to help promote land conservation in their state.
- Announce these numbers to the national press; the 2005 results garnered national newspaper coverage. With environmental news in the headlines, we expect even more attention in 2011.

What does the Census count?

The National Land Trust Census assesses the following:

- The number of acres conserved through private land conservation both nationally and state-by-state;
- HOW that land is conserved, that is, direct ownership by land trusts, conservation easements held by land trusts, acquisition and transfer to 3rd parties, or conserved by other means.
- Regional patterns in private land conservation.
- Organizational trends in the budgets, staffing and community support of land trusts.
- Other details related to private land conservation.

See <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/about-us/land-trust-census> for the last report of the National Land Trust Census.

How can my land trust participate?

If your organization is in our database, you will receive an e-mail invitation with a link to the questionnaire in early January 2011. If you would like to check to make sure your organization is in our database, please e-mail census@lta.org.

We have already provided this kind of information in the past; do we have to do it again?

If you have provided the Land Trust Alliance or your state service center with updated information recently, it should be reflected in your questionnaire on the Web. We ask that you log on with your organization-specific password to review and update the information if necessary. The paper forms will not have your organizational data pre-filled, so we urge you to use the Web form to save time and trees.

What if my land trust doesn't get the e-mail invitation to see the questionnaire?

If you haven't received your questionnaire invitation by January 31, 2011, please e-mail census@lta.org.

What if I want to fill out the paper form?

Paper copies of the questionnaire are available. Please e-mail census@lta.org with the name of your land trust and mailing address, and we will be happy to put a questionnaire in the mail to your organization. Organizations that don't respond to the e-mail invitation will be mailed a paper copy.

What if I make a mistake on the form?

If you think that data you submitted may not be correct, please e-mail census@lta.org. We can look up your answers and help you make any necessary changes.

What if I need help understanding the form?

Alliance staff are on call, ready to help people fill out the forms over the telephone beginning January 13, 2011. Simply dial (202) 638-4725 for assistance.

Can non-members fill out the questionnaire?

Yes, non-Alliance member land trusts are encouraged to fill out the questionnaire.

How do I know you won't use my data for some other purpose?

The data you give us in the questionnaire is only used together with data from other land trusts across the nation or in your state or region. We collect information to create statistics and look at trends in land conservation. The numbers also help us determine what, and what kinds of services are needed. Many land trust service centers ask land trusts in their state similar questions as those in the National Land Trust Census. To avoid duplication of effort, we will share responses from land trusts in a particular state with that state's service center or network. You will be given the choice to "opt out" of this and if you do, we will not share your information.

The [Land Trust Alliance privacy policy](http://www.landtrustalliance.org/privacy) [http://www.landtrustalliance.org/privacy] prohibits us from sharing your contact information with other organizations, including other land trusts, for mailing or e-mailing lists.