

One Organization's Experience with "Assessing Your Organization"

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In January of 2010, when an Assessing Your Organization (AYO) grant became available through Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts (CCLT) in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance, the Douglas Land Conservancy (DLC) Board determined that it was the right time to seek guidance on moving forward with the accreditation process.

After the application procedure and receipt of the grant, DLC immediately entered into an agreement with an Alliance recommended consultant. DLC chose a consultant based in Montana. The DLC executive director and the consultant began by reviewing *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and DLC's adopted policies. In order to assess the organization's compliance with S&P standards, we spent hours going through each Standard and Practice and comparing them to how the organization functioned.



Dawson Butte Open Space Photo by Patti Hostetler

The consultant traveled to DLC's office in order to better understand the organization and spent time sitting in on a DLC board meeting. She also met with DLC's board president, executive director and attorney. DLC scheduled visits to some of our easement properties so the consultant could better understand our completed projects and the challenges that the organization faces.

From the review of DLC's policies and the office visit, the consultant was able to prepare a suggested timeline which DLC could work from. The timeline will guide the DLC Board in revising policies if necessary, adopt and implement policies and practices, and move forward with applying for accreditation.

Our overall experience with the consultant was fantastic. DLC is now able to understand how far the organization has come over the years and where it is headed. We are very proud of our accomplishments and are determined to continue to better the organization by moving forward with the consultant's recommendations.

DLC is thankful for the opportunity and support of both the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts and the Land Trust Alliance. We encourage other land trusts to utilize the tools that CCLT and the Alliance have to offer and highly recommend taking advantage of the grant funding available for an organizational assessment.