

BY Sean Robertson



KIMBERLY SEESE

Back row, left to right: Bethany O'Donovan, Sean Robertson, Barton James, Russ Shay; Front row, left to right: Alice Turrentine, Mary Pope Hutson, Bryan David

Meet the Team Representing You

The main story of this issue is all about working together to awaken the “sleeping giant” of conservation. Our community’s 1,700 land trusts, 15,000 board members and 5 million members hold the key to the political influence we will need to defend land trusts’ charitable status, secure transformative investments in conservation and navigate inside-the-Beltway politics.

To win on policy, the land trust community needs both authentic voices from legislators’ districts and political expertise and relationships on Capitol Hill. No investment in Washington lobbyists can replace the genuine relationships that you cultivate with public officials at home. With that said, I want to dedicate this month’s column to sharing how we have reinvented the Land Trust Alliance public policy team to better represent you here in D.C.

Rather than calling on your land trust and its legislators only in moments of crisis, our new structure emphasizes regional advocacy leads. This approach will help us really get to know both your

organization and the ever-changing roster of lawmakers and staffers who represent you in Washington. Please consider us your personal coaches on legislative strategy and advocacy as we work in tandem to build relationships with members of Congress and their staffs both here in D.C. and back home in their districts.

YOUR TEAM IN WASHINGTON

Mary Pope Hutson

As *Executive Vice President*, Mary Pope provides overall management and fundraising support for the public policy program. She also coordinates with internal and external leadership bodies, such as the Alliance’s National Council and Federal Partners Group, and serves on the North American Wetlands Conservation Council.
202-800-2245 | mpmhutson@lta.org | [@mpmhutson](https://twitter.com/mpmhutson)

Russ Shay

Entering his 17th year as the Alliance’s *Director of Public Policy*, Russ serves as the chief lobbyist and strategist on all land trust policy priorities. Guided by an extensive network of agency officials and committee staffers, Russ calls the plays that the rest of us work to implement with you in our respective regions.
202-800-2230 | rshay@lta.org | [@RussLTA](https://twitter.com/RussLTA)

Barton James — Southeast

An Arkansas native and veteran lobbyist and strategist, Barton joined the team in March 2013 as the *Conservation Campaign Director*, designing and leading the Alliance's new advocacy initiative focused on constructing a national advocacy network to harness the political strength of the nation's land trusts. In addition, he manages land trust advocacy in the Southeast region and our work on ballot measures.

202-800-2239 | bjames@lta.org | @BartonLTA

Sean Robertson — Northeast

As *Eastern Advocacy & Outreach Manager*, Sean manages land trust advocacy in the Northeast region. A member of the team since 2008, Sean also spearheads national advocacy training, including Land Trust Advocacy Day, advocacy webinars and our groundbreaking new Ambassadors initiative.

202-800-2229 | srobertson@lta.org | @SeanLTA

Bethany O'Donovan — West

Bethany joined our team in February as the new *Western Advocacy & Outreach Manager*. She is based in D.C., but also works from her home in Southwest Montana. In addition to coordinating land trust engagement with Western members of Congress, Bethany will play a key role in launching the new Ambassadors initiative. She also serves as the federal liaison for the Mule Deer Foundation.

202-800-2240 | bdonovan@lta.org | @BethanyLTA

Bryan David — Midwest

As *Public Policy Associate* since 2012, Bryan assists Russ Shay in coordinating our day-to-day federal policy work and produces policy-related communications for land trusts and external audiences. He also coordinates land trust advocacy in the Midwest.

202-800-2223 | bdavid@lta.org | @BryanLTA

Alice Turrentine

Alice serves as *Executive Assistant* to Mary Pope Hutson and provides organizational support to the public policy program.

202-800-2244 | aturrentine@lta.org

PLEASE SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

To effectively represent you, we need to know your policy priorities. Beyond

informing the Alliance's policy work on Capitol Hill, consensus on a national agenda will give land trusts in key districts the confidence to step up and advocate for the programs that their legislators control, knowing that land trusts in other key districts are going to bat for the programs that matter to them.

Each year the Alliance surveys land trusts on priorities for the year ahead.

Even if you agree with our big-picture priorities, we still appreciate hearing your detailed concerns, such as problematic rules that make it difficult to make the most of federal programs and incentives.

Share your comments at www.lta.org/policy/priorities or join us this fall for live forums online and at Rally 2014 in Providence, Rhode Island. 🍁

Supporting Your Advocacy Capacity



Land Trust Advocacy Day

The third annual Land Trust Advocacy Day brought 75 land trust leaders from key districts to Capitol Hill for two remarkable days of hands-on training, briefings, a congressional reception and nearly 200 meetings with members of Congress and administration officials. In 2015 we will be exploring new approaches to give Advocacy Day participants an even

more personalized experience. Of course, any day can be your own personal advocacy day. We hope you will make the Land Trust Alliance your first stop and home base whenever you find yourself in Washington, D.C. Learn more at www.lta.org/advocacyday.

Free Advocacy Webinars & Calls



The Alliance's advocacy webinars and national policy calls help land trust leaders become more effective ambassadors to public officials at all levels of government. Sign up for the next webinar—July 17 at 2 p.m. ET—or view our free archive of past webinars at www.lta.org/policy/webinars. And be on the lookout in our monthly *Advocates* newsletter for details about our next national call.

How to Become an Advocacy Ambassador

"Thank you for your Washington insight and for what you bring to our organizations through the Alliance. I plan to take the pledge and do the work. It is apparent that our future depends on our success with our relationships with our collective congressional delegations."

—Anna Berry, Deputy Director, Alabama Land Trust

The new Ambassadors initiative seeks to inspire, train and recognize land trust leaders who make a commitment to invest in relationships that support conservation nationwide. When taking the Ambassadors pledge, you'll identify three to five members of Congress or other federal officials whom you will cultivate as supporters of your organization and land trust policy priorities. While some Ambassadors may already have political experience, individuals without experience in politics or advocacy are encouraged to participate. We know you are busy, and we can help you be efficient and effective in building these important relationships. Take the pledge, and we'll show you how: www.lta.org/ambassadors.