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Columbia Land Trust Earns National Recognition

For Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence

Vancouver, WA (Mar. 13, 2018) – At a time of political change, one thing is clear and consistent: Americans strongly support conserving the open spaces they love. Since 1990, Columbia Land Trust has been doing just that for people in the lower Columbia River region, from the high desert to the Pacific Ocean in both Oregon and Washington. The Land Trust recently announced it has renewed its land trust accreditation—proving once again that, as part of a network of 398 accredited land trusts across the nation, it is committed to professional excellence and to maintaining the public’s trust in its conservation work.

“At Columbia Land Trust, we see our Land Trust Alliance accreditation as a commitment to our supporters, our community, and ourselves,” said Steve Cook, the Land Trust’s deputy director and general counsel. “It assures our supporters that their contributions are used effectively, and consistent with best practices. It tells our community that we are a professional and trustworthy partner in conservation. Internally, it’s both a roadmap for how to do things right and an affirmation that we’re working at the leading edge of land conservation.”

Columbia Land Trust had to provide extensive documentation and undergo a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation renewal. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded the renewed accreditation, signifying its confidence that the Land Trust’s lands will be protected forever.

Accredited land trusts must renew every five years, confirming their compliance with national quality standards and providing continued assurance to donors and landowners of their commitment to forever steward their land and easements. Almost 20 million acres of farms, forests, and natural areas vital to healthy communities are now permanently conserved by an accredited land trust.

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In recent years, Columbia Land Trust has worked with private landholders, agencies, and communities to conserve lands and waters for the benefit of both wildlife and people. In 2017 alone, the Land Trust conserved more than 600 acres of wetland and forest habitat along the Southwest Washington coast while securing funding to protect 3,000 acres of forestland in the rugged Klickitat Canyon. Moreover, the group has emerged as a national leader, modeling innovative restoration practices across wetlands, meadows, forests, rivers.

“It is exciting to recognize Columbia Land Trust with this distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Commission. “Accredited land trusts are united behind strong ethical standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever. Accreditation recognizes Columbia Land Trust has demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.”

Columbia Land Trust is one of 1,363 land trusts across the United States according to the most recent National Land Trust Census, released December 1, 2016 by the Land Trust Alliance. This comprehensive report also shows that accredited land trusts have made significant achievements.

- Accredited land trusts have steadily grown and now steward almost 80% of conservation lands and easements held by all land trusts.
- Accredited land trusts protected five times more land from 2010 to 2015 than land trusts that were not accredited.
- Furthermore, accreditation has increased the public’s trust in land conservation, which has helped win support for federal, state and local conservation funding measures.

A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits are detailed at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

About Columbia Land Trust

Founded in 1990, [Columbia Land Trust](http://ColumbiaLandTrust.org) conserves and cares for the vital lands, waters and wildlife of the Columbia River region. The nonprofit has 3,000 members and has conserved more than 32,000 acres of land in 14 counties around the

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Columbia River, from the John Day River near The Dalles, Oregon, to the Pacific Ocean. Learn more at: columbialandtrust.org.

About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts. For more, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

About the Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents 1,000 member land trusts supported by more than 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operates several regional offices.

The Alliance's leadership serves the entire land trust community—our work in the nation's capital represents the policy priorities of land conservationists from every state; our education programs improve and empower land trusts from Maine to Alaska; and our comprehensive vision for the future of land conservation includes new partners, new programs and new priorities. Connect with us online at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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