

NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SLO COUNTY LAND CONSERVANCY EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION
Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

San Luis Obispo, CA - The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County has achieved land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

“Not only does Accreditation give us the confidence that our conservation efforts will last into perpetuity but that our organization will endure as well,” said Kaila Dettman, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy. “Considering the profound impact that conservation has on our community’s health and well-being, The Land Conservancy takes great satisfaction in knowing, through Accreditation, that we are approaching our projects with sound judgment and integrity. Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program.”



The Land Conservancy was founded in 1984 and has conserved over 14,500 acres of land throughout San Luis Obispo County. The land trust has worked with conservation-minded landowners to protect working farms, partnered with state and local agencies to provide open space for public use, and restored hundreds of acres of dunes, wetlands and streams. Recently, The Land Conservancy completed the final phase of purchasing a world-class public open space called Pismo Preserve, raising \$12 million to close the deal.

The Land Conservancy was awarded accreditation this August and is one of only 280 land trusts from across the country that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008. Accredited land trusts are authorized to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

“This round of accreditation decisions represents another significant milestone for the accreditation program; the 280 accredited land trusts account for over half of the 20,645,165 acres currently owned in fee or protected by a conservation easement held by a land trust,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. “Accreditation provides the public with an assurance that, at the time of accreditation, land trusts meet high standards for quality and that the results of their conservation work are permanent.” Each accredited land trust submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review.

“Through accreditation, land trusts conduct important planning and make their operations more efficient and strategic,” said Van Ryn. “Accredited organizations have engaged and trained citizen conservation leaders and improved systems for ensuring that their conservation work is permanent.”

According to the Land Trust Alliance, conserving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water; safe, healthy food; scenic landscapes and views; recreational places; and habitat for the diversity of life on earth. In addition to health and food benefits, conserving land increases property values near greenbelts, saves tax dollars by encouraging more efficient development, and reduces the need for expensive water filtration facilities. Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form more than 1,700 land trusts to save the places they love. These land trusts represent over 5 million members and volunteers. Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about, including land transferred to public agencies and protected via other means. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.

“By earning this prestigious status, this demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation that benefits the entire county. We are honored to have this distinction that conveys trust, excellence, and permanence in what we strive to do for local lands,” said Rob DeGraff, Accreditation Team Leader and Land Conservancy Board Trustee.

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is a local nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local landscapes for the benefit of people and wildlife. The land trust’s efforts help protect drinking water sources, prevent poorly planned development, restore wildlife habitat and promote family farmlands and ranches in our region. Now in its 30th year, The Land Conservancy has led collaborative efforts to permanently protect over 14,500 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County. Details at www.LCSLO.org or call (805) 544-9096.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, based in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., awards the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. 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 from around the country. See a complete list of all six recently accredited land trusts online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/newsroom/press-releases>. More information on the accreditation program is available on the Commission’s website, www.landtrustaccreditation.org.
About The Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance, of which The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is a member, is a national conservation group that works to save the places people love by strengthening conservation throughout America. It works to increase the pace and quality of conservation by advocating favorable tax policies, training land trusts in best practices and working to ensure the permanence of conservation in the face of continuing threats. The Alliance publishes Land Trust Standards and Practices and provides financial and administrative support to the Commission. It has established an endowment to help ensure the success of the accreditation program and keep it affordable for land trusts of all sizes to participate in accreditation. More information can be found at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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