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## **Skagit Land Trust Earns Continued National Recognition**

*Renewed Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission*

Mount Vernon, WA – Skagit Land Trust (the Trust) has achieved renewed land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The Trust was awarded renewed accreditation this February and is one of only 301 land trusts from across the country that are now accredited. 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.

Skagit Land Trust was founded in 1992 by three visionaries and 31 charter members to conserve the wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space, wetlands, and shorelines of Skagit County for the benefit of our community today and as a legacy for future generations. Trust Board President Brenda Cunningham explained the value of the accreditation seal: “Integrity is a core focus of the Trust’s work, and the accreditation seal enables us to express this commitment to the highest standard with our supporters, partners, and community.”

Skagit Land Trust is an important member of the 301 accredited land trusts that protect more than three quarters 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 renewal, which must be completed every five years, provides the public with an assurance that accredited land trusts continue to meet exceedingly high standards for quality.” Each land trust that achieved renewed accreditation submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review. “Through accreditation renewal land trusts are part of an important evaluation and improvement process that verifies their operations continue to be effective, strategic and in accordance with strict requirements,” said Van Ryn. “Accredited organizations have engaged 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. 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.

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#### About Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Land Trust was founded in 1992 by three visionary founders and 31 charter members to conserve wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space, wetlands, and shorelines of Skagit County, Washington. Today, the amount of land and habitat protected by the Trust has grown to over 6,700 acres including more than 30 miles of shoreline. Visit [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org) for more information.

#### About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

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 is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. See a complete list of all recently accredited land trusts online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/land-trust-locator>. More information on the accreditation program is available on the Commission's website, [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://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 place people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents 1,200 member land trusts supported by more than 5 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operated several regional offices. More information about the Alliance is available at [www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org).