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# **Interior Alaska Land Trust Earns National Recognition**

## *Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence*

**Fairbanks, AK** (Feb. 28, 2018) – At a time of political change, one thing is clear and consistent: Americans strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Since 1995, the Interior Alaska Land Trust (IALT), has been doing just that for the people of Interior Alaska. Now IALT announced it has achieved national recognition – joining a network of 398 accredited land trusts across the nation that have demonstrated their commitment to professional excellence and to maintaining the public’s trust in their work. A land trust is a charitable organization that works with landowners and community partners to acquire and steward land or easements for conservation purposes like protecting natural habitat, water quality, or scenic views; ensuring that the land is always available for farming, forestry, or outdoor recreational use; or protecting other values provided by open land.

“Accreditation demonstrates IALT’s commitment to permanent land conservation throughout Interior Alaska,” said Owen Guthrie. “We are a stronger organization for having gone through the rigorous accreditation program. Our strength means special places – such as the Peat Ponds and Blueberry Preserves – will be protected forever, making the Fairbanks North Star Borough an even greater place for us and our children.”

IALT had to provide extensive documentation and undergo a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation application. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that IALT’s lands will be protected forever. Almost 20 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas vital to healthy communities are now permanently conserved by an accredited land trust.

In its 23-year history, the Interior Alaska Land Trust has conserved over 1,500 acres of land in and around the Fairbanks North Star Borough, including beloved publicly-used properties like the Blueberry Preserves, Peat Ponds, and the Chena Flats and Goldstream Greenbelts. After a decade of feasibility

studies, the IALT in partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began the restoration of historic Cripple Creek this past summer to improve fish passages and juvenile Chinook Salmon rearing habitat within the Chena River Watershed.

“It is exciting to recognize IALT 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 IALT has demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.”

IALT 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 yet accredited.
- Accredited land trusts also have stronger systems and more resources to steward and defend their conservation lands forever.
- As a result, the public’s trust in land conservation has increased helping to 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](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org).

### **About the Interior Alaska Land Trust**

As a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization, the Interior Alaska Land Trust is committed to the enjoyment, stewardship, and voluntary conservation of land. Their mission is to conserve land north of the Alaska Range for the benefit of the community by working with Interior Alaska landowners to acquire, protect, or manage natural, scenic, recreational, agricultural, historic, or cultural aspects of property.

### **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](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 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](http://www.landtrustalliance.org).

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