

## Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay (OCT) Earns National Recognition Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

Casco Bay, Maine – Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay has achieved land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

This accredited status demonstrates Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay's commitment to permanent land conservation that benefits the entire community," says Roger Berle, OCT's President. "Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program."

Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay was founded in 1982 and works to protect land on the Casco Bay islands. Currently OCT owns 5 properties and holds 9 conservation easements on privately owned island properties.

"Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay is a small volunteer land trust which is proud of the properties it has protected in Casco Bay. These are tiny properties in comparison to other conserved lands across the United States but dear to our island communities and to those who enjoy the waters of Casco Bay. The accreditation process of meeting the LTA's high standards gives us confidence that this protection will be permanent so that future generations can enjoy what we so treasure," says Chris McDuffie, OCT's Vice President.

OCT was awarded accreditation this month and is one of 317 land trusts from across the country that has been awarded accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission since the fall of 2008. The Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization working to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. Rand Wentworth, the Alliance's president, said. "Accredited land trusts are the brightest stars in the constellation of land trusts, and they have earned national recognition for their commitment to excellence and public trust."

Each accredited land trust meets extensive documentation requirements and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation or renewal application. The process is detailed and thorough and, while success is not guaranteed to applicants, the process helps transform land trusts. 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. 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.

Roger Berle, OCT’s President, says, "Let's make sure we nurture the next generations of community members who will learn the joys of land preservation."

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).