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Groton Conservation Trust Earns National Recognition
Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

[Groton, MA] – The Groton Conservation Trust has achieved full land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the national Land Trust Alliance. This accreditation demonstrates that the GCT meets national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent. Accredited land trusts are authorized to display a seal indicating this accreditation.

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.

“This is a proud moment for the GCT and for Groton. To have the GCT awarded accredited status recognizes the conservation work the Trust has been doing for the past 50 years. It demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation that benefits the entire community. And it says that Groton is a community that values its natural landscape.” says Dan Wolfe, GCT President. “Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through this rigorous accreditation program, and is well suited to be a strong advocate for Groton open spaces in the years to come.” The Groton Conservation Trust was awarded accreditation this August and is one of only 280 land trusts from across the country, and only 10 in Massachusetts, that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008.

Founded in 1964, the GCT acquires, preserves and provides public access to lands with significant conservation value. During the past 50 years the Trust has become the steward of over 40 properties totaling over 1,400 acres, yet it remains an all-volunteer, single-town entity.

“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 year-long 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.

“We are proud to join accredited land trusts across the nation as effective champions and caretakers of our critical land resources”, adds Dan Wolfe. “This distinction will ensure the GCT is working for Groton for generations to come.”

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About The Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance, of which Groton Conservation Trust 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.

About the Groton Conservation Trust

The Groton Conservation Trust is an all-volunteer community land trust in Groton, Massachusetts. Founded in 1964, it is the steward of over 1,400 acres of special natural places in Groton. More information can be found at www.gctrust.org.