



Alberta Land Trust Alliance

In ever growing numbers, Albertans are recognizing the value of our unique landscapes and the need to conserve the places we cherish. Landowners have a deep connection to their land and know the gifts that conserved lands provide communities – clean air and water, healthy foods, wildlife habitat and scenic beauty.

All too often these special places disappear forever because of development and urban sprawl. Albertans who want to conserve their land can turn to land trusts – non profit organizations that work with landowners interested in protecting open space.



The Alberta Land Trust Alliance (ALTA) is a registered charity formed in 2006 with a mandate to help conserve and protect Alberta's environmental heritage and landscapes of natural and cultural significance.

VISION

Alberta's future landscapes are rich in biodiversity and have strong ecological integrity.

MISSION

To represent the land trust community and build capacity in land trusts to conserve diverse and ecologically important landscapes in Alberta.



HISTORY

In 2006, Alberta Environment brought together Alberta's land trust community to explore ways to enhance the use and delivery of conservation easements in the province. Attendees identified a number of priority issues including a recommendation for coordination among Alberta's land trusts. In response to this, Alberta Environment announced \$300,000 in provincial funding and secondment of a staff person over three years for the creation and facilitation of the Alberta Land Trust Alliance (ALTA).

Now in its fourth year of operation, ALTA has recently received charitable status, and as such, is reaching out to a wider range of potential stakeholders.

More than one third of Alberta's land is privately owned and managed. Alberta's landowners are faced with competing land pressures and many are seeking ways to conserve their lands through personal action. Alberta's land trusts work directly with these private landowners and build partnerships for responsible stewardship of private

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are more than 1000 conserved properties in our province, representing more than 150,000 acres, which are owned by land trusts and others.

There are more than 1500 conservation easements in Alberta that represent more than 115,000 acres. 50 percent of these conservation easements were completed by land trusts.

Source - Public and Private Contributions to Conservation,



ALTA MEMBERS

The organization serves 17 member organizations including 11 land trusts.

Member Land Trusts

Alberta Conservation Association
Alberta Fish & Game Association
Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Edmonton & Area Land Trust
Foothills Land Trust
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
Western Sky Land Trust
Wild Elk Federation

Other Member Stakeholders

Alberta Environmental Law Centre
Beaver Hills Initiative
City of Edmonton
Miistakis Institute for the Rockies
Rockyview County
Special Areas Board

ALTA also encourages involvement by individuals, businesses and government agencies as associate members.

ALTA'S PRIORITIES

The land trust movement has an urgent mandate to secure lands for conservation given the pressures of development, urban sprawl, climate change, intergenerational land transfer and biodiversity.

ALTA does not intend to own or hold conservation lands or conservation easements but rather provide service and support to those that undertake these activities.

Outcomes of major actions that ALTA will be undertaking in the next 36 months include:

- Increasing public awareness of the value of land conservation and land stewardship;
- Advancing environmentally sound stewardship among landowners and increasing their understanding of environmental issues pertaining to specific areas of land in Alberta;
- Educating potential stakeholders about the role that local land trusts can play in preserving land in perpetuity.
- Fostering relationships and building linkages within the land trust community in order to advance the work of local land trusts;
- Working with all levels of government to influence positive land conservation policies;
- Increasing the number of acres of conserved lands in Alberta by building capacity in local land trusts;
- Identifying where gaps may exist in specific areas of the province and assisting with the formation of new land trusts at the grassroots level.
- Speaking as a unified voice on behalf of our member organizations.

With increased awareness of land trusts and more education on the value of conservation, there will be increased donations of land – the best legacy gift to the environment sector and to all Albertans.

FOR THE LOVE OF OUR LAND

As stated in Alberta's Land-use Framework (<http://landuse.alberta.ca/>) - Alberta's prosperity has created opportunities for our economy and people, but it has also created significant challenges for Alberta's landscapes. Industrial and agricultural activity, municipal development, infrastructure, recreation and conservation interests often compete to use the same piece of land. The competition between users groups creates conflict, and often puts stress on the finite capacity of our land, water and habitat.

Alberta is a resource based economy. Agriculture, forestry, conventional oil and gas development, and oil sands (bitumen) extraction are the primary drivers of both the economy and habitat change and it is within this busy landscape that private and public agencies are striving to meet a number of conservation objectives.

ALTA is positioned in the community to work across political boundaries, assisting local land trusts and empowering landowners to take responsible action.

BENEFITS OF CONSERVING LAND

Saving Limited Resources

Our air and water are limited resources. The tree canopy and vegetation serve as critical filters for our air. Wetlands that border our rivers, lakes and streams filter pollution before it reaches our drinking water. If we do not remove the pollutants that our society puts into the air and water, we consume them ourselves.

Boosting Our Economy

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. Study after study has demonstrated the tremendous economic benefits of land conservation.



ALTA will work to bring government, industry and private landowners together to ensure intergenerational responsibility is a key consideration in all forms of human land use.

Ultimately, ALTA will build capacity in local land trusts to enable these organizations to conserve more land. Through our efforts, communities will learn more about conservation and ways to protect private land. Once better informed, landowners can consider their own personal options and how their decisions will impact Alberta's natural areas. Individual and collaborative action will result in more acres of conserved lands - reducing biodiversity loss, protecting wildlife and plants, and protecting and improving the habitat where they live.



What is a land trust?

A land trust is a non profit organization that actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements. Land trusts (sometimes called land conservancies) have existed in North America since 1891. However, it is only in the last two decades that the land trust movement has really taken hold as one of the fastest growing and most successful conservation movements in our history.

*Source – www.landtrustalliance.org
2005 National Land trust Consensus
(2006), Land Trust Alliance*

How is land conserved by land trusts?

Land trusts have many options available to conserve land. The most common options are the acquisition of fee simple interests in land and of conservation easements. Other methods include conservation offsets, transfer of development credits and conservation directives.

Land trusts help preserve land for future generations, protect our food and water supply, provide wildlife habitat, and strengthen communities.



**Alberta Land
Trust Alliance**

Contact us to learn more!

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There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before. ~Robert Lynd, *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*