



Benefits & Elements of Land Trust Membership

Benefits

Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts provides technical assistance, advocates for public policies and funding that support land conservation, and fosters a community of practice to strengthen Wisconsin's land trusts. A strong alliance benefits your organization and the land trust community across the state.

As a land trust member, you have access to a variety of benefits, including:

Public Policy Advocacy & Government Relations

Access professional government relations staff & participation in a network of advocates supporting state & federal policies & programs that support land conservation.

Resources & Updates

Receive timely information on resources, training, & public policy through *Currents*, Gathering Waters' technical e-bulletin for land trusts. Access GIS tools & sample policies & documents.

Peer-to-Peer Networking

Engage in network opportunities with peers & experts to share information and best practices.

Training & Technical Assistance

Tap into support for organizational development, conservation strategies, preparation for national accreditation, and more. Also, take advantage of member discounts to events & training programs.

Publicity

List your land trust on the Gathering Waters' website in an interactive, online map, and in print materials. Promote your successes through our website, newsletter, and e-news. Participate in Wisconsin Land Trust Days.

Required Elements of Membership

1. **Current list of the board of directors** with mailing addresses, emails, and phone numbers (send to info@gatheringwaters.org)
2. **Current list of staff (if applicable)** with titles, emails, and phone numbers (send to info@gatheringwaters.org)
3. **Response to periodic surveys.** Gathering Waters may request information about a land trust's recent land protection efforts and current organizational structure to inform our planning and to demonstrate the scope and quality of land trust work in Wisconsin.
4. **Accreditation earned and maintained, OR a board-approved attestation to the membership principles for Wisconsin Land Trusts.**

Note: For non-accredited land trusts, Gathering Waters' staff may request additional documentation supporting the land trust's commitment to the membership principles.

If a land trust fails to fulfill membership requirements, Gathering Waters' board of directors reserves the right, at its discretion, to deny or revoke membership of any individual or organization.



Attestation of Land Trust Membership Principles

The mission of Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts is to help land trusts, landowners, and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special. To fulfill our mission, we work to build a strong and cohesive land trust community. Earning and maintaining accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission OR annually attesting to the following principles is a requirement of membership in Gathering Waters and an important part of operating a sound and successful nonprofit land conservation organization.

_____, [insert name of land trust] (the "Land Trust") has reviewed the **Benefits and Elements of Membership, and the Land Trust understands and agrees to Gathering Waters' right to deny or revoke the membership of the Land Trust at any time.**

As consideration for membership in Gathering Waters, the Land Trust board of directors does hereby attest to the following:

- ✓ We commit to implementation of the [Land Trust Standards and Practices](#), and strive to undertake only those actions that enhance the reputation and credibility of the land trust community.
- ✓ We comply with all federal, state, and local laws.
- ✓ We acknowledge our obligation to provide a public benefit and we rely on the trust placed upon us by our donors, landowner partners, and the public. Therefore, we commit to building a sustainable, capable land trust organization that considers our long-term responsibility to the lands we protect and the communities we serve.
- ✓ We pledge to follow sound financial practices including the development and implementation of effective internal controls, the use of a board-approved annual budget, and regular financial reporting to the board of directors.
- ✓ If the Land Trust holds conservation easements:
 - We participate in the TerraFirma conservation defense program or demonstrate a commitment to fund conservation easement stewardship and defense (i.e., an adequate reserve fund set aside to monitor and enforce easements, and/or a policy requiring that adequate funds be set aside for each additional easement the land trust takes on and a policy for holding/investing internal funds).
 - Additionally, we have a baseline documentation report for each easement we hold or a board-resolved plan to complete baseline reports in a timely manner, and a written policy we faithfully follow to monitor each easement annually.

Date of Board Approval

Gathering Waters is relying on the Land Trust to truthfully and accurately make this attestation. Gathering Waters is not able to fully verify the accuracy of the attestation, nor necessarily examine the records or files of every land trust member. Therefore, third parties seeking to engage the Land Trust in a business or other relationship are advised to do their own due diligence based on the terms of the proposed relationship.