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Five Valleys Land Trust Among Nation's First to Receive Accreditation Status

On Friday, September 19th, Five Valleys Land Trust was among the nation's first land trusts to receive national accreditation at the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. □□Over the past decade land trusts and conservation easements have come under scrutiny from congress because of the tax incentives associated with the charitable donation of a conservation easement. To address concerns the land trust community worked with Congress and the IRS to develop a rigorous set of standards and practices and an accrediting body that evaluates implementation.

"Our mission is focused on protecting for future generations western Montana's rivers, forests, farms, and scenic open spaces", said Five Valleys Executive Director, Grant Kier. "We do this by honoring the wishes of the private landowners where those wishes benefit of the whole community—this accreditation gives everyone involved the confidence that we are working at the highest standard."

Five Valleys has protected nearly 50,000 acres of open space to date. "Five Valleys has managed to continually increase our rate of conservation work. We depend so much on the support of our members and partners, it is great to reassure them that we are maintaining our long-held commitment to quality as we strive to increase the quantity of our work," Kier said.

This year marks the first opportunity for any land trusts to receive this accreditation. Other land trusts will be given the opportunity to undergo accreditation during the next five years. Kier acknowledge that, "although we were the first land trust in Montana to go through this process, we have a great association of land trusts operating in our state and I know that many others will follow close behind."