

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, contact:
Dan Pike, Colorado Open Lands, (303) 988-2373

Laura DiBetta, Land Trust Accreditation Commission, 518-587-3143, ext. 208

COLORADO OPEN LANDS SELECTED FOR NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PILOT

Lakewood: Colorado Open Lands was recently selected as one of 23 land conservation organizations from 16 states to participate in a second round of testing of a new national accreditation program. The program will recognize land conservation organizations, also known as land trusts, that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The nation's nearly 1,700 land trusts have protected over 11.9 million acres of land.

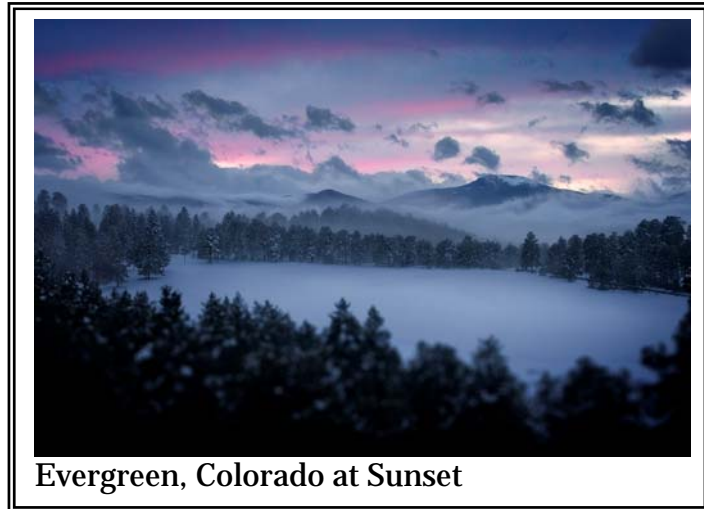
Colorado Open Lands is a statewide land trust that has protected over 190,000 acres of productive agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and scenic viewsheds across Colorado. "Accreditation will help build even broader public support for our work and we are extremely pleased to be part of the pilot program," said Dan Pike, President of Colorado Open Lands.

Colorado Open Lands is one of 44 land trusts across the country that are piloting the program, operated by the [Land Trust Accreditation Commission](#), this year. Land trusts volunteered to be part of the program, and those selected to participate represent a diversity of land trust sizes, geographic locations and types of land protected. They will help the Commission improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program before it goes nationwide next year.

The Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, was created in 2006. "In an era when the public is demanding accountability from

government and nonprofit organizations, independent land trust accreditation will help provide the assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation the public is looking for,” explained Executive Director of the Commission, Tammara Van Ryn.

The accreditation program will be tested in 2007 and will be available to interested organizations starting in 2008. At that time, land trusts can join the ranks of other nonprofit organizations that gain professional recognition through accreditation, such as museums, zoos, aquariums, colleges and hospitals.



Accredited land trusts will be able to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

“We see accreditation as another tool in our conservation toolbox, making us more effective and demonstrating our high standards to the community,” said Dan Pike. Van Ryn emphasized, “We are extremely grateful to the land trusts that volunteered to be part of the pilot accreditation program. These organizations are willing to demonstrate publicly their commitment to high standards of ethics and operations and serve the land conservation community and the American public by shaping this new program.”

Colorado Open Lands is a 501(c)3, non-profit land trust, dedicated to protecting working farms and ranches and the diminishing natural heritage of Colorado for future generations. Colorado Open Lands works with willing landowners and communities through collaborative approaches to land conservation. By facilitating land preservation agreements with landowners, Colorado Open Lands helps keep land in private ownership while preserving traditional land uses such as family farming and ranching. Since its inception, Colorado Open Lands has preserved more than 190,000 acres through 232 projects in 38 counties.

Please contact Colorado Open Lands at (303) 988-2373 or visit our website at www.coloradoopenlands.org if you are interested in learning more about land preservation.

Land Trust Accreditation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission will award the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance established in 2006, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. For more information please visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org.