

This example can be used as a starting point to create a policy or other document for your own land trust, but should be altered as necessary to reflect your organization's unique circumstances using guidance found in the *Land Trust Standards and Practices Guidebook* text and corresponding Standards and Practices Curriculum.

Please Note: If you are using this material for accreditation purposes, see also the [Land Trust Accreditation Commission website](#) for additional information. To search for policies from accredited land trusts, insert <<accredited>> along with the search term (e.g., conflict interest policy accredited).

The Land Trust for Tennessee

OUR MISSION: “To preserve the unique character of Tennessee’s natural and historic landscapes and sites for future generations”

The Land Trust for Tennessee was formed in 1999 to preserve Tennessee’s beautiful landscapes and historic character for future generations. Our region has seen a wealth of growth in the past years, and our communities continue to blossom, bringing new businesses and drawing new residents. However, the very reasons that many people live in Tennessee – the green rolling hills, scenic beauty, rural landscapes, open farmland and pastureland, and backroads – must actively be preserved or these precious, unique characteristics will be lost.

What is a Land Trust?

A land trust is a private, non-profit organization that works locally or regionally to permanently protect some of that area’s most beautiful and critical land. It uses a variety of tools to accomplish this goal, including permanent restrictions on uses of the land (conservation easements) and land donations.

The Land Trust for Tennessee is a private, non-profit organization that works with property owners to meet their conservation goals. In most cases, the Trust accepts voluntary conservation easements from the landowner. These easements protect the land from development and allow the property to stay in private hands. In special cases, the land trust may use other means of protection, such as purchase or donation of land. Depending on the specific situation, the property owner may also receive a reduction in estate taxes, significant income tax deductions, or an adjustment of property taxes by participating in this conservation effort.

Why does Tennessee need a land trust?

Communities around the country have created and worked with land trusts to save those places that need to be protected forever. More than 1,200 land trusts across America have protected 4.6 million acres of open space, farms, woodlands, scenic corridors, vistas and historic places. In our state, the Tennessee River Gorge and the foothills of the Smoky Mountains are being protected with the support of land trusts. Elsewhere, the rolling hills of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the horse country surrounding

Lexington, Kentucky, the sweeping farmland in Virginia, and the valley beneath the Grand Tetons are all being preserved through the work of land trusts.

The Land Trust for Tennessee works privately to meet conservation goals. It can provide an alternative to development of family lands. And the protection placed on the land is forever. That is our trust.

Tennessee has engaged visitors and residents with its scenic beauty and wealth of historic and natural resources. Antebellum homes, native burial grounds, and battlefield sites enrich our sense of place and community. Farmland, forests, and waterways are part of our history and help define our uniqueness.

But Tennessee is rapidly losing that beauty and character that we all hold dear.

- Recent community studies and planning initiatives in Tennessee counties, including Davidson, Rutherford and Williamson, have registered significant concerns about unplanned growth and a critical need for preserving open space before it is too late.
- Middle Tennessee – specifically the Nashville Basin – has been identified by the American Farmland Trust as the 12th most threatened area for farmlands in the country.
- Early mention of the formation of the Land Trust for Tennessee in the local press has brought enormous response and requests for assistance across the state.

Our region's high rate of development demands our attention. The open spaces, green vistas, sense of history, and places to hike, horseback ride, hunt, fish, and bike are rapidly disappearing. And with them will go that intangible "quality of life" that brought or kept us here in the first place.

We cannot wait. Daily, we witness the loss of opportunities to preserve those special places. The land trust provides a choice for those who want to keep their land the way it is. Other regions have succeeded in working with land trusts to provide a balance between growth and a region's way of life. Now it is time to make that happen here in Middle Tennessee.

The volunteer board of the Land Trust of Tennessee is made up of citizens who have made a commitment to protecting what is truly Tennessee.

For more information about the Land Trust for Tennessee:

Contact Eileen Hennessy at (615) 244-LAND (5263), or email us at info@landtrusttn.org.

Our office is located in Cummins Station, 209 10th Avenue South, Suite 530, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

° This material is designed to provide accurate, authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that the Land Trust Alliance is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional counsel. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of competent professionals should be sought.