

## **LAND TRUST EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION - BECOMES ONE OF FIRST ACCREDITED LAND TRUSTS IN COUNTRY**

(CAMDEN) --The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, recently announced that Coastal Mountains Land Trust has been awarded accredited status. The award was accepted by Land Trust Board President Doug Sensenig at a special ceremony during the 2008 National Land Trust Rally in Pittsburgh on September 19.

"Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

"Coastal Mountains Land Trust's accredited status demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation," said Sensenig. "We're a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program."

Coastal Mountains Land Trust was established in 1986 with the assistance of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Its first project was conservation of Beech Hill in Rockport. Since then, the land trust has conserved 6,723 acres of productive farms and forests, wildlife habitat, and more than 28 miles of bay, lake, and river frontage. The land trust has created and maintains more than 23 miles of public trails. Its current major projects are creating a Rail Trail along the Passagassawakeag River in Belfast, conserving 3,470 acres on Bald and Ragged Mountains in Camden, Rockport, and Hope, and working to reach a conservation resolution for the future of the 941-acre Sears Island in Searsport.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awards accreditation to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. In September the Commission awarded accreditation for the first group of land trusts in this new program, 39 of the 1,600 land trusts across the nation. 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. More information is available on the Commission's website, [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org).

"There's a reason it's called real estate," said Scott Dickerson, Executive Director of Coastal Mountains Land Trust. "Whether it's our home, the park down the street, the farm that raises our food, or a preserve in the mountains, land is a crucial foundation for our well-being as individuals and as a community. Accreditation recognizes that this land trust has the capability to ensure protection of the natural legacy we're conserving."