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Title: Save Mount Diablo Earns National Recognition *Accreditation Promotes Public Trust, Ensures Permanence*

Image:



Caption: *Diablo Winter Sunset* by Christopher Foster

Walnut Creek, CA (Feb. 24, 2016) – Today, Save Mount Diablo announced it has achieved national accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission – a mark of honor in land conservation. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that Save Mount Diablo lands will be protected forever.

Accredited land trusts across the country have permanently conserved more than 15 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas that are vital to healthy, vibrant communities.

“Save Mount Diablo takes its job of protecting the Bay Area’s iconic Mount Diablo natural area seriously and that is why we took National Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission seriously and are absolutely thrilled to have earned Accreditation. More than 7 million people live within about an hour of Mount Diablo, and hundreds of thousands of new residents will move into Contra Costa and Alameda Counties in the next 30 years. Accreditation makes us stronger so that we can protect the Mount Diablo area long-term to sustain current and future generations,” said Ted Clement, Executive Director for Save Mount Diablo. “I want to thank our Board of Directors, Staff, and other supporters for helping make this great accomplishment possible.”

Save Mount Diablo is committed to permanently protecting land in the Mount Diablo area. In January, Save Mount Diablo signed a ten-year option agreement to purchase 88.5-acre North Peak Ranch from Steve and Brenda Benkly for a total purchase price of approximately \$1.1 million. The beautiful property rises from Marsh Creek Road just east of Clayton onto the slopes of North Peak, Mount Diablo's second tallest and more rugged peak. It shares a boundary with Mount Diablo State Park.

Save Mount Diablo was among 37 land trusts across the United States to achieve accreditation or to have accreditation renewed in February. Of the more than 1,700 land trusts in the United States, Save Mount Diablo has joined the 342 land trusts that demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence through accreditation, helping to maintain the public’s trust in their work.

“It is exciting to recognize Save Mount Diablo with this distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, Executive Director of the Commission. “Together, accredited land trusts stand united behind strong national standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever. In all, over 75 percent of private lands conserved by land trusts are now held by an accredited land trust.”

Each accredited land trusts meets extensive documentation requirements and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation application. The process is rigorous and strengthens land trusts with systems that help landowners and communities achieve their goals. More information about land trust accreditation can be found at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

The Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization working to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. More information about the many benefits of land conservation is available at www.landtrustalliance.org.

About Save Mount Diablo

Save Mount Diablo is a non-profit 501(c)(3) conservation organization, which has been preserving lands on and around Mount Diablo and educating the public to the mountain's natural values since 1971. Preserved lands have increased from 6,788 acres in one park to more than 110,000 acres in more than 40 parks and preserves. Save Mount Diablo continues to preserve, defend and restore the remainder of the mountain for people and wildlife to enjoy. Contact: Save Mount Diablo, telephone: (925) 947-3535, fax: (925) 947-0642, 1901 Olympic Blvd., Suite 320, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; www.SaveMountDiablo.org.

About the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts. For more, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

About the Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents more than 1,100 member land trusts supported by more than 100,000 volunteers and 5 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C. and operates several regional offices. More information about the Alliance is available at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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