

2017 Land Trust Standards and Practices: What's New

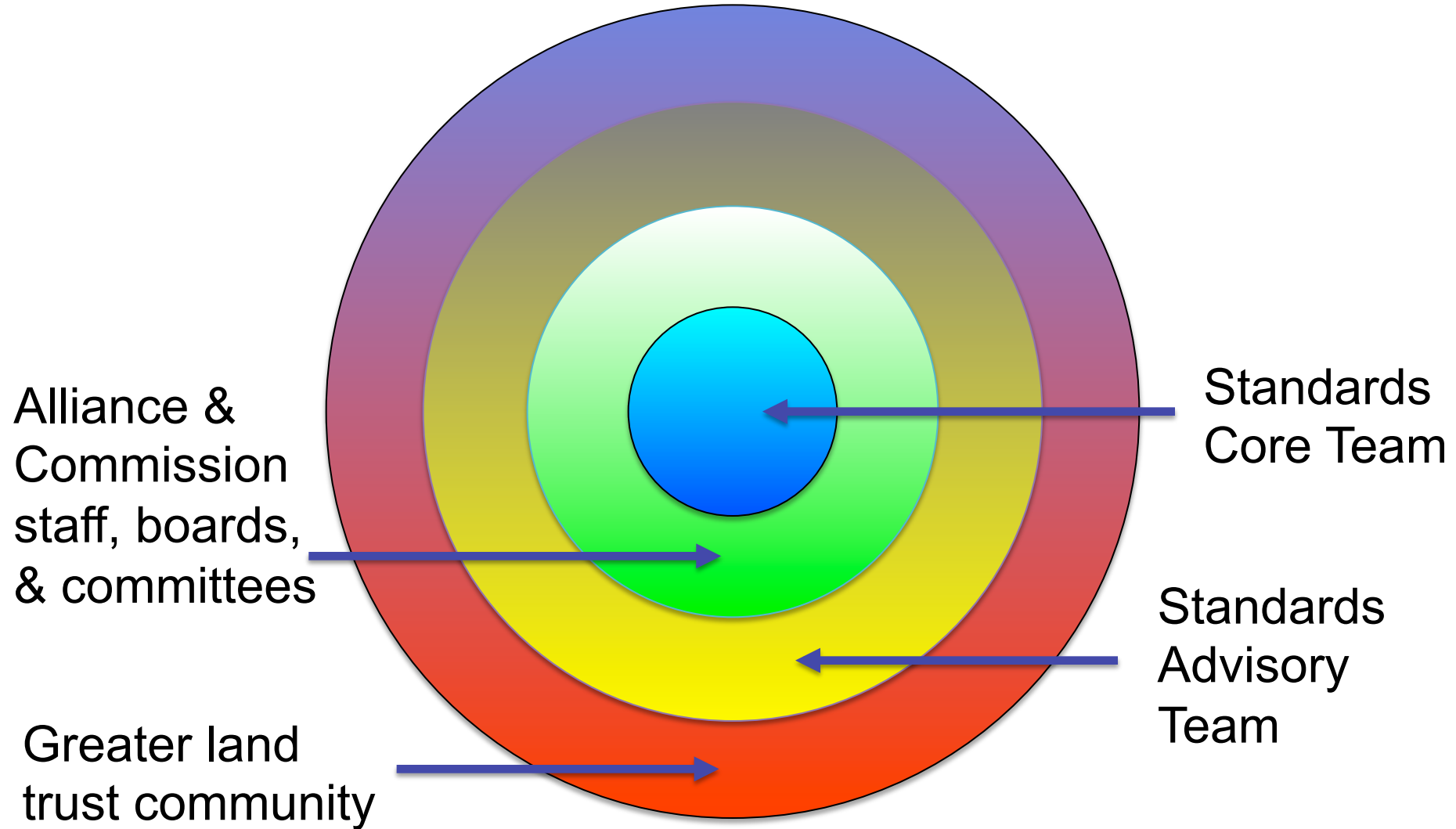
Prairie State Conservation Coalition
Starved Rock State Park Lodge
March 3, 2017

Land Trust Standards and Practices

Goals of 2016-17 Revisions Process

- Engage all land trusts in work of pursuing excellence and continuous improvement
- Make S&P accessible for entire land trust community
- Update to reflect changes in legal and operational environment
- Ensure alignment with accreditation, Terrafirma and other resources and tools

Role of Stakeholders



Community Input Phases: What We Heard

- About 1,600 individual comments from more than 450 different stakeholders
- Multiple ways to participate:
 - In person, including sessions at state association meeting
 - Online discussion platform
 - Email comments
- Complete cross-section of the land trust community – everyone was represented

Standards & Practices Revisions

- Land Trust Alliance board approval 2/3/17
- eNews announcement 2/15/17

Materials available (handouts)



Standards & Practices Revision

- **Designed as online resource**
 - Clearly highlights those items that lead to accreditation
 - Linked to Alliance resources, narratives and requirements (in process)

Standards & Practices Revisions

- **12-standards framework essentially sound**
- **More readable and streamlined document**
 - Focuses on practices that apply *broadly* to land trust *community*
 - Improves clarity, reduces redundancy
 - Organizes the practices into *elements*

2017 Standards: Highlights of What's New



Practice 9H. Title Investigation – *2004 version*

The land trust investigates title to each property for which it intends to acquire title or an easement to be sure that it is negotiating with the legal owner(s) and to uncover liens, mortgages, mineral or other leases, water rights and/or other encumbrances or matters of record that may affect the transaction. Mortgages, liens and other encumbrances that could result in extinguishment of the easement or significantly undermine the important conservation values on the property are discharged or properly subordinated to the easement.

9H. Title Investigation and Recording - *Revised*

1. Prior to closing and preferably early in the process, have a title company or attorney investigate title for each property or conservation easement the land trust intends to acquire
 - a. Update the title at or just prior to closing
2. Evaluate the title exceptions and document how the land trust addressed mortgages, liens, severed mineral rights and other encumbrances prior to closing so that they will not result in extinguishment of the conservation easement or significantly undermine the property's important conservation values
3. Promptly record land and conservation easement transaction documents at the appropriate records office

Standard 6: Financial Oversight

Example of streamlining . . . Moved all of stewardship funding to Financial Standard 6

A.5. Build and maintain dedicated or restricted funds sufficient to cover the long-term costs of stewarding and defending the land trust's land and conservation easements

a. If funds are insufficient, adopt a plan to secure these funds and a policy committing the funds to this purpose

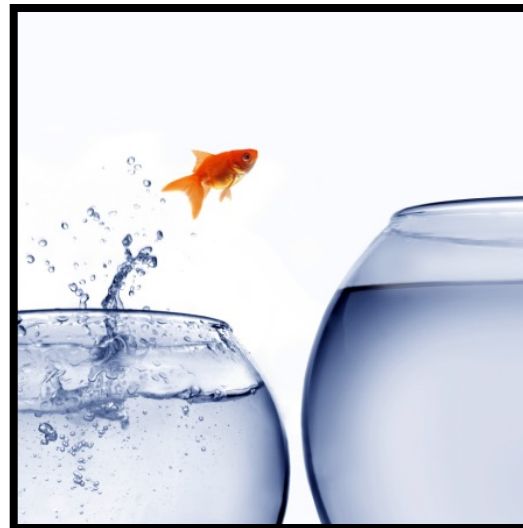


Standard 7: Human Resources



D. Transition Planning

1. Develop a written process or plan to provide for continuity in the leadership and management of the land trust's functions.



Impacts to Accreditation Program

- **Indicator Practices → Indicator Elements**
- **Indicator Elements**
 - Keeps Core
 - Title investigation, baseline documentation reports, management plans, monitoring...
 - Drops Redundancy and Low-Risk Areas
 - Charitable solicitation registration
 - Adds Key High-Risk Areas
 - Financial health, transactions, stewardship

Standards Implementation

- Development of materials and integration with accreditation requirements
 - Starting summer 2017
- Land trust boards adoption
 - As part of membership renewal



Thank you

