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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Galveston Bay Foundation Earns National Recognition** Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

**WEBSTER, TX – July 31, 2013** – After an extensive evaluation, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) has been awarded accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Galveston Bay Foundation is among 230 land trusts from across the country, including seven in Texas, that have been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008.

"Simply going through this process has made us a better organization," explains GBF President Bob Stokes. "Our land conservation efforts are done to the highest standards in the nation, and we look forward to continuing to work with local landowners to preserve our lands and heritage and ensure the health of Galveston Bay."

Each accredited land trust submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review. "Through accreditation land trusts conduct important planning and make their operations more efficient and strategic," said Tammara Van Ryn, Executive Director of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. "Accredited organizations have engaged and trained citizen conservation leaders and improved systems for ensuring that their conservation work is permanent."

Since its establishment in 1987, GBF has conserved over 3,300 acres of coastal habitat through property acquisitions and conservation easements and is working to substantially increase acreage conserved in the coming year. GBF is now able to display a seal of accreditation indicating to the public that it meets national standards for excellence, upholds the public trust, and ensures that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

"Land trusts are gaining higher profiles with their work on behalf of citizens and the seal of accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission is a way to prove to their communities that land trusts are worthy of the significant public and private investment in land conservation," noted Land Trust Alliance President Rand Wentworth.

Land is America's most important and valuable resource. Conserving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water, food security, scenic landscapes and views, recreational places, and habitat

for the diversity of life on earth. Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form land trusts to save the places they love. Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.

“We are very proud of this accomplishment,” explains Matt Singer, Conservation Lands Manager for GBF. “Accreditation represents an alignment with other respected land conservation organizations throughout the United States. This designation helps GBF portray credibility and stability as a non-profit organization. We look forward to growing as a land trust and continuing to preserve and enhance important coastal habitats within the Galveston Bay watershed.”

### **About The Galveston Bay Foundation**

The mission of the Galveston Bay Foundation is to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of the Galveston Bay estuarine system and its tributaries for present users and for posterity. The Foundation was incorporated in 1987, and is a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. GBF is located at 17330 Highway 3 in Webster, Texas. For further information, contact GBF at 281-332-3381 or visit the website at [www.galvbay.org](http://www.galvbay.org).

### **About The Land Trust Accreditation Commission**

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, awards the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Commission 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).

### **About The Land Trust Alliance**

The Land Trust Alliance is a national conservation group that works to save the places people love by strengthening conservation throughout America. It works to increase the pace and quality of conservation by advocating favorable tax policies, training land trusts in best practices and working to ensure the permanence of conservation in the face of continuing threats. The Alliance publishes *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and provides financial and administrative support to the Commission. It has established an endowment to help ensure the success of the accreditation program and keep it affordable for land trusts of all sizes to participate in accreditation. More information can be found at [www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org).

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