

Following The Land Trust Alliance Standards

The Gates Mills Land Conservancy is accredited through the national Land Trust Alliance. As a member of LTA, we are held to their Standards and Practices of ethical and technical guidelines for responsible operation of a land trust.

“Land trusts work to ensure that lands acquired or placed under easement are properly conserved and stewarded for the long haul, ensuring their conservation benefits last long into the future. Land stewardship is the promise a land trust makes to care for the land forever. Permanent conservation means not only protecting the land but taking care of it too. Stewardship can include annual monitoring of properties and other responsibilities outlined in Land Trust Standards and Practices. An essential part of stewardship is maintaining good relationships with landowners and serving as a resource on land management issues. It also involves staying abreast of the most innovative land management practices. For many land trusts, stewardship is a large part of their work.” (*Land Trust Alliance*)

Gates Mills Land Conservancy Responsibilities:

- Develop a written land management plan and goals for each property.
- Perform administrative duties for each property, which includes paying insurance, filing required forms and keeping records.
- Maintain properties in accordance with LTA Standards.
- Track efforts associated with long-term management, stewardship and enforcement of conservation properties.
- Inspect properties annually, addressing problems including encroachments, trespassing and take steps to avoid or mitigate possible harm to the conserved or surrounding properties.

Every year all of the properties are inspected by GMLC Directors assigned to evaluate specific holdings. A written report with supporting photographs is made for each annual visit. Our Directors cover 724 acres over 58 properties for inspection every year!

Directors walk each site recording the status of trees, signs of disease or injury, documenting invasive plants and insects, and identifying issues of erosion, encroachment and trespassing. Once inspections are complete, we identify a plan to rebuild fencing and signage, mitigate erosion, and eradicate the spread of invasives on each of our properties. This has been an ongoing effort that takes time and commitment.

It is our hope that we will soon be able to document our properties with a digital Geographic Information System (GIS) app that will assist us in identifying exact property boundaries and allow us to easily document our inspections. If you are interested in knowing more or want to volunteer in the documentation, cleanup or protection of the GMLC conserved lands please contact us!

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