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Land Trust Alliance and Leading Appraisal Organizations Announce Agreement to Improve Conservation Easements Appraisals

(Washington, D.C.) June 7, 2005 — The Land Trust Alliance, and three National Appraisal Organizations announced today the signing of a memorandum of understanding, committing the organizations to work together to develop the highest professional standards for conservation easement appraisals.

“The Land Trust Alliance, and the Appraisal Institute, American Society of Appraisers, and American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers will set and achieve our common goals of professional excellence and accountability for appraisers and land conservationists alike,” said Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance.

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between landowners and qualified organizations that restrict future activities on the land to protect its unique natural heritage for public benefit. These voluntary charitable donations have been used across America to protect more than five million acres of private land for future generations.

In the memorandum of understanding, the organizations agree to:

- Create a rigorous educational program to educate professional appraisers and land trust personnel about appraisal techniques for conservation easements
- Promulgate guidelines for the highest quality work product in conservation easement appraisal
- Create a certification level credential for appraisers who can demonstrate completion of a stringent educational curriculum

John Ross, Chief Executive Office of the Appraisal Institute added, “The goals of the Land Trust Alliance are important and establishing a uniform educational program for appraisers and Land Trust personnel is a vital part of the future success of the land conservation and preservation initiatives.”

The Land Trust Alliance is the convener, strategist and representative of land trusts across America. LTA is working to dramatically expand the pace of land conservation through tax incentives, build strong land trusts, defend the permanence of conservation easements, and ensure that the work of land trusts is as strategically directed as possible. Please visit www.LTA.org for additional information on the Land Trust Alliance and their work.

The Appraisal Institute is an international membership association of professional real estate appraisers, with more than 18,000 members and 99 chapters throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. Its mission is to support and advance its members as the choice for real estate solutions and uphold professional credentials, standards of professional practice and ethics consistent with the public good. Additional information is available at www.appraisalinstitute.org.

The American Society of Appraisers is the oldest and only major appraisal organization representing all of the disciplines of appraisal specialists. The society originated in 1936 and incorporated in 1952. Each accredited member of the American Society of Appraisers has earned a professional designation in one or more specialized areas of appraisal. To receive the accreditation, the appraiser must pass intensive courses/written examinations, submit representative appraisal reports, an appraisal experience log and evidence of a college degree or its equivalent. Additional information is available at www.appraisers.org.

The American Society of Farm Managers was founded on January 14, 1929, by a core of dedicated farm managers from Illinois, Iowa and Missouri who felt that farm management professionalism was critical to the future of farming. In 1936, the organization was expanded to include appraisers who specialized in determining the value of farms and other rural properties. At that time, the name was changed to the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA). The objective of the ASFMRA is to create and maintain a professionally trained group of farm managers, rural appraisers, review appraisers and accredited agricultural consultants capable of providing expert guidance and assistance to farmland owners, farmers, and other groups which have caretaking responsibilities for farm lands and rural properties. Additional information is available at www.asfmra.org.

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