

# Pacific Crest Trail Association

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and its network of partners work cooperatively to protect, promote, and preserve the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). As a network, we recognize that greater strength and resilience for the PCT is gained through the practice of building and being an inclusive culture. Because roles of volunteers may overlap between groups, organizations and agencies, we all hold a stake in what it means to share a culture of care. The PCTA's Volunteer Code of Conduct promotes a shared culture of care which provides an environment that is safe, inclusive, just, fair and consistent, and sets an expectation for respectful behavior among all volunteers and a shared responsibility for each other's wellbeing.

The Code of Conduct guides behavior on and off the trail and inspires a shared responsibility not just to the land but also to each other. **The Code is based on the following values:**

- **Safety is our highest priority and our shared responsibility**
- **We support each other and work together to maintain a positive and welcoming community; this collaboration is a source of strength**
- **Operating in a respectful and ethical manner is an essential component of how we conduct our work, lead volunteer activities and use shared resources**

The Code applies to interactions that occur across the PCTA's operations, including in offices, on trips, at events, programs and trainings, in meetings, on the trail, at social events, in written communication, including online and social media, and at all other events, activities and

places when we are ambassadors for the PCT. Therefore, this Code applies to every arena where PCTA and its network of partners operate, and includes all PCTA volunteers, PCTA employees and anyone who partners or interacts with the PCTA by joining us in the Code.

### **Standards of Conduct**

The goal of a standard of conduct is to educate, inspire, and empower those we interact with, and to further expand civic engagement for the PCT. In every situation, those in the PCT network are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the following standards. Safety is a high priority focus of PCTA partners, both physical and emotional. To that end, PCTA partners and individuals within them commit to inclusive and equitable practices in action, word and deeds.

#### **All individuals have the right to:**

- Be treated with respect
- Participate in an environment free of harassment, discrimination, or hostile conditions
- Receive a suitable assignment
- Receive training and necessary support
- Have qualified supervision
- Have safe working conditions
- Have their time used effectively

#### **All individuals have the responsibility to:**

- Make safety the highest priority
- Act in a considerate and respectful manner
- Follow trail and association policies and guidelines
- Participate in and learn from training sessions and meetings
- Perform high quality work
- Care for trail resources
- Seek and accept guidance and support

## **All individuals will:**

- Welcome all people and actively seek new stewards, supporters, and constituents
- Uphold a community built on respect, encouragement, and opportunity for all, where issues are addressed in a calm and considerate manner
- Conduct and participate in activities with safety as the highest priority, while minimizing risk and impacts
- Respect natural resources and the ways that people connect with one another and the outdoors
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Stay informed of the association and land manager(s) policies and regulations, including guidelines and recommendations
- Represent the PCTA and its partners in a respectful manner

Staff, volunteers, or others in the PCT network will not comport themselves in a manner detrimental to others within the network, including federal and state management partners, the PCTA, its members, the public or volunteers.

## **Misconduct**

Misconduct describes actions in violation of the Code's Standard of Conduct. Actions that may be detrimental to the PCT network, the public, and natural resources or are in violation of the network's shared values are considered misconduct.

The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of misconduct:

- Unwelcome, discriminatory, or exclusionary behavior toward others of any kind based on identities including, but not limited to, race,

ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, mental ability, neuro(a)typicality, physical characteristic, socioeconomic background, nationality, age, religion, or beliefs. This includes but is not limited to unsolicited judgments on a person's lifestyle choices and practices: things like food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment

- Physical or sexual assault, including violence or threats of violence toward others
- Harassment that is sexual, psychological, and/or physical. Harassment may be verbal, physical, digital, deliberate, unsolicited, or unwelcome. This includes but is not limited to physical contact without consent and/or a refusal to honor request to stop
- Failure to prioritize, or willful disregard for, personal and group safety during participation in activities on PCT lands, whether through disregard for stated policies and rules or through negligence
- Disregard for Leave No Trace principles and/or for the rules and regulations of applicable local and federal governments
- Failure to interact with or represent PCTA and its network partners in a respectful manner
- Illegal or unethical activity while participating in PCTA network activities
- Misuse, misreporting, or embezzlement of PCTA related project funds or other assets

### **Reporting misconduct:**

Volunteers are encouraged to discuss issues that arise with others in an open way to help lead to improved communication and stronger working relationships. If those efforts are unsuccessful, or if volunteers do not feel comfortable discussing issues with the person responsible, the steps outlined below offer available processes for reporting misconduct.

- For immediate threats to safety, dial 911 or on a trail maintenance project, follow the Trailhead Communications Plan
- Contact any PCTA staff member, including but not limited to:
- Volunteer Programs Manager, (916) 285-1838, volunteer@pcta.org
- Director of Trail Operations, (916) 285-1853, jtripp@pcta.org
- Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, (916) 285-1848, traichart@pcta.org
- Contact Forest Service Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Administrator:
- (619) 372-1302, lindsey.steinwachs@usda.gov
- For suspicious activities or to report trail resource damage, use the Pacific Crest Trail Incident Report Form: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/pct/home/?cid=stelprdb5361615>

In all cases of reporting, discretion is taken to protect the identity of the complainant and other alleged involved parties during the course of the investigation and any subsequent determination and resolution.

PCTA's Code does not preclude partners from holding their own code of conduct, nor is it intended to conflict with individual organizations' codes of conduct. It is intended to be additive. PCTA's Code is aligned with laws and policies as noted in the attached appendix. For the purpose of this document PCT network includes all PCTA groups and other entities who coordinate volunteers in support of the PCT.

PCTA volunteer opportunities are not guaranteed. Any volunteer may be disqualified from an opportunity at any time for misconduct, as outlined above.

## **Appendix**

### **Alignment with Laws and Policies**

PCT network partners believe in, uphold, and ethically value Federal Human Rights Laws. According to the law, protected status includes race,

color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, national origin, age (any), disability, genetic information (including family medical history), status as a parent, marital status, or political affiliation. Under the law, protected activities include reporting harassing, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct; filing a claim of harassment; supplying evidence in any investigation; or intervening to protect others who have suffered harassing misconduct, discrimination, or retaliation.

### **PCTA Employee Guidebook: Prohibited Harassment**

PCTA prohibits any form of harassment of any of our employees, independent contractors, volunteers, donors, vendors, or suppliers. For purposes of this policy, harassment includes slurs, jokes or any other verbal, graphic or physical communication or conduct that is offensive. PCTA will not tolerate any form of harassment, including, but not limited to, harassment related to an individual's race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, registered domestic partner status, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, uniform-service member status, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, other medical conditions, or physical or mental disability. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Likewise, it is Pacific Crest Trail Association's policy to prohibit harassment of any employee by any supervisor, employee, volunteer, donor, vendor, or supplier on the basis of sex or gender. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate personal morality within the PCTA. It is to ensure that at the PCTA all employees are free from sexual harassment. While it is not easy to define precisely what types of conduct could constitute sexual harassment, examples of prohibited behavior include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, obscene gestures, displaying sexually graphic magazines, calendars or posters, sending sexually explicit e-mails and text messages, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as uninvited touching of a sexual nature or sexually related comments. Depending upon the circumstances, improper conduct also can include sexual joking, vulgar or

offensive conversation or jokes, commenting about an employee's physical appearance, conversation about your own or someone else's sex life, or teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of his or her gender which is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an unprofessional and hostile working environment. If you have any questions about what constitutes prohibited harassing conduct, ask your supervisor, the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer or another member of the Leadership Team.

If you feel that you are being harassed or subjected to any form of inappropriate conduct at work, or if you observe work-related harassment or inappropriate conduct in the workplace, you are required to immediately notify your supervisor. If you do not feel comfortable reporting your concerns to your supervisor, or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five (5) business days of reporting any incident that you perceive to be harassment, you should immediately contact the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer at (916) 285-1848. No employee will be disciplined for making a good faith report of conduct covered by this policy.

Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the PCTA will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct to management or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy. Employees who make complaints in bad faith may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. All employees must cooperate with all investigations.

The Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Oregon Civil Rights Division, or the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services may also investigate and process complaints of harassment.

Violators are subject to penalties and remedial action. The addresses of the local office of the agencies listed above may be found online.

Notifying PCTA of conduct that violates this policy is essential. PCTA cannot resolve a harassment problem without being informed of it.

### **USDA Forest Service Anti-Harassment Information**

The Forest Service Harassment Reporting Center is available to all employees, supervisors, contractors, and anyone who does business with the Forest Service to report harassment against FS employees or its contractors. The Harassment Reporting Center supports the enhanced Anti-Harassment Policy and Program by providing a single, dedicated channel to report harassment or bullying allegations.

The Harassment Reporting Center is designed to obtain a thorough intake of the harassment report. A complete report allows the agency to more efficiently understand the harassment claims and those involved, resulting in prompt investigation into the matter.

The Harassment Reporting Center is available 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern. If you have experienced, witnessed, or received a report of harassment as a supervisor, you should call the tollfree number (844) 815-8943 to report the allegation. The Harassment Reporting Center is operated by an external contractor. Reporting Center Representatives are skilled, highly-trained non-Forest Service employees. They understand the processing and routing of all harassment reports.

### **Our Agency Partners**

#### **Pacific Crest Trail Association**

2150 River Plaza Drive, Suite 155  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
916-285-1846 main



916-285-1865 fax

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