

## Trail Partnership Policies

The best practices for communication and partnership are founded on key success factors found across a variety of programs and include ensuring good communication and honoring commitments. Honesty, respect, courtesy, tact, and diplomacy, should govern partner relationships.

There shall be 3 BCHC members in good standing from the north, center and south sections of California appointed to serve on this committee by the BCHC President. They will serve a 3 year term and may serve additional terms if appointed.

The committee shall include :

- PCTA's Trail Operations Director and Trails Operations Manager
- USFS PCT Program Manager and agency packer(s)
- 3 BCHC Members as stated above
- BLM PCT Program Coordinator or National Landscape Conservation System Program Manager

The partnership committee shall meet face-to-face at least once annually and may conduct telephone conferences as needed. The partnership committee will strive for consensus decision making with legal agency parameters when possible.

The partnership between the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA), Backcountry Horseman of California, and the US Forest Service is committed to our shared interests in preserving and protecting the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and continuing to provide outstanding recreation opportunities for hikers and equestrians.

This document contains the following sections:

- 1) Best Practices in Communication, Operations, and Leadership;
- 2) Steps to Resolving Conflict,
- 3) Partnership Code of Conduct and
- 4) Volunteer Packer Rights and Responsibilities.

### 1. Best Practices in Communication, Operations, and Leadership

Given our shared interest, the following best practices in communication, operations, and leadership are adopted:

In working with and as Individuals we value integrity and excellence in all we do.

**Integrity:** At the core of all our activity we expect honesty, accountability, congruence between words and actions, and respect for fellow volunteers, staff, and agency partners.

- Be trustworthy and accountable for your actions
- Demonstrate trust in colleagues
- Communicate honestly and respectfully
- Make decisions on the basis of fact not hearsay
- Measure and reward performance based on results and achievements

rather than personality, personal traits or relationship with you

**Excellence:** We relentlessly strive for excellence by setting and achieving high goals, recognizing accomplishment, learning from mistakes and making continuous improvement.

- Expect success
- Do not identify an issue, problem or opportunity without seeking solutions
- Challenge processes to continually improve
- When confronted with an issue or problem, address it promptly and directly with the person involved and/or the project leader
- Continuously seek to learn and teach others
- Take ownership of your mistakes and failure
- Seek opportunity for growth and capacity building
- Set challenging but achievable goals and measure result
- Exhibit a positive, “can do” attitude toward our partnership and our work

In support of our partnership we are *other-centered* and value teamwork.

**Other Centered:** While each of us strives for the highest level of personal performance, we are also committed to serving our colleagues and helping them be the best they can be.

- Listen – really listen – to hear what others are saying
- Respond in a timely manner
- Strive to exceed expectations in meeting others needs
- Share what you learn with others
- Keep yourself and others safe for the benefit of their contributions
- Proactively seek input, feedback and advice from others with whom we work

**Team Oriented:** We believe more gets accomplished through teamwork than by individual effort alone. Externally and internally, we build healthy and successful partnerships that are inclusive of diverse abilities and points of view, create win-win solutions, celebrate success, and foster trust.

- Demonstrate a fundamental belief in the capacity of fellow volunteers, PCTA staff, and agency partners.
- Ensure each person understands how his/her job connects to the larger vision
- Set high expectations, monitor, measure, close performance gaps and celebrate success
- Look for and recognize achievement
- Address performance or behavioral issues directly, quickly and privately
- Encourage respectful dissent – Be intolerant of disrespect
- Share information and knowledge
- Encourage participation by all members of the team
- Talk about “we” more than “I”
- Have fun

## **2. Steps to Resolve Conflict**

The PCT Partnership conflict resolution process is designed to help volunteers, PCTA staff, and agency partners resolve concerns about unfair treatment or dissatisfaction that is related to work or the program. We strongly encourage all members to follow the steps below:

1. Talk directly to the person you are in conflict with or discuss it during a project meeting. If this is not effective proceed to step number two.
2. Use a PCTA Regional Representative, Jennifer Tripp ([jtripp@pcta.org](mailto:jtripp@pcta.org) or 916-285-1853) or BCHC Shasta Trinity Chapter President, Sam Burrows ([sburrows@frontier.com](mailto:sburrows@frontier.com) or (530) 547-5975); or US Forest Service Inyo NF Packer, Michael Morse ([mmorse@fs.fed.us](mailto:mmorse@fs.fed.us) or 760-924-5511) to assist with resolution. If this is not effective go to step number three.
3. Schedule an appointment to discuss the matter with the USFS PCT Program Manager, or BHCH President . Teach these above reminders to your team and review the steps with them. Get the parties to see how solving the conflict is inevitably beneficial to them and the group, and get them to commit to solving it. Crew leaders, PCTA staff, and agency partners must step in to immediately address complaints that include sexual harassment, gender inequality, safety (of self and others) and any form of discrimination.

## **3. Partnership Code of Conduct**

All volunteers, staff, and agency partners are expected to follow the PCT Partnership Code of Conduct. These are activities that will be considered grounds for immediate removal from a project and termination from a sponsored volunteer agreement:

- Possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Fighting, insubordination, threatening behavior, threats of violence, or verbal abuse
- Stealing, vandalism, or damage to property
- Sexual harassment or racism.
- Willful disregard for individual or group safety
- Possession and use of weapons, firearms, or fireworks. Note: Packers are allowed to carry firearms on projects as long as they comply with local regulations and notify the crew lead.

## **4.Volunteer Packers Rights and Responsibilities**

All parties acknowledge the packers' rights and responsibilities for managing his/her pack stock. The project or crew leader is the person in charge of the volunteers and/or youth corps crew.

Both the packer and the crew leader must comply with the job hazard analysis requirements and agency policies to ensure a safe and productive work project.

*As a volunteer packer, you have the right to:*

**Do meaningful and satisfying work.** We value the time and energy you are dedicating to the PCT. We understand that this is a significant commitment and your time and energy needs to be used effectively.

**Work in a safe environment.** Safety is a priority when working on the trail. You will receive appropriate training and supervision, including safety protocol and proper tool use. You should never feel pressured to push yourself beyond your personal physical limits. You should be briefed by the staff and/or the project leader on the scope of the project – trailhead location, distance and type of terrain to be packed, amount of supplies to be packed, and condition of the trail.

**Know about your volunteer packing responsibilities and the purpose of the project.** You should feel empowered to ask questions, provide feedback, and offer input to staff and crew leaders at any time. Report promptly any safety issues or concerns such as inappropriate comments/behavior from others to the crew leader. The staff and crew leaders will also provide you with feedback and input regarding your work as a volunteer to help keep you informed.

**Be treated with respect.** You are a member of a team and you should be treated as such. This means that you need to be treated fairly and you need to know that your work is appreciated.

As a volunteer packer, it is your responsibility to:

**Keep the staff and crew leaders informed.** You need to clearly state your background skills, experience, abilities, and expectations to the project leader before the project work begins. All parties understand that projects may require different levels of expertise in packing and that the project leader may require higher levels of packing experience on advanced projects. If issues arise while at the project, you need to communicate with the crew leaders and/or staff. Be open and honest.

**Respect your commitment.** Please remember that you are being relied on. If you need to cancel, provide as much advance notice as possible so other volunteers may have the opportunity to take your spot. If you're going to be late meeting the crew, contact the crew leaders. As a volunteer packer, you need to have the required personal gear, stock experience, and skills to be self-sufficient while working and camping outdoors.

**Treat all others with respect.** As you work with other volunteers and staff, they need to know they can depend on you. Please do not use or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol or possess dangerous or unauthorized materials. Respecting your crew also means that you will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation and not harm anyone through harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, threats, coercion or other harmful actions.

**Keep the project and campsite a safe environment.** Please abide by the instructions and directions set forth by the crew leaders; they are working to ensure that the project and worksite are safe at all times. Following safety protocol helps provide a safe work environment. This includes using tools properly, receiving the crew leader's permission before assisting with stock or using tools or equipment, notifying crew leader if you are leaving the immediate area, wearing all pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) as identified in the JHA and/or instructed by project leaders, and notifying crew leaders before you reach your physical limits or if you are injured.

Our intent is to ensure that all volunteers and crew members have the best experience possible, to this end; we reserve the right to dismiss you from a project if you are unable to meet these expectations. Your decision to participate as a volunteer is your acknowledgement that you understand and agree to abide by the Volunteer Packer's Rights and Responsibilities.

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**PLEASE SEE ADDENDUM TO THIS POLICY FOR THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

[Addendum to Policy #34-11021-3](#)

## **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

LETTER OF AGREEMENT 2013  
BCHC/BLM/PCTA/USFS  
Partnership Policies

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- 4) Volunteer Packer Rights and Responsibilities, and 5) Volunteer Training.

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The PCT Partnership conflict resolution process is designed to help volunteers, PCTA staff, and agency partners resolve concerns about unfair treatment or dissatisfaction that is related to work or the program. We strongly encourage all members to follow the steps below:

1. Talk directly to the person you are in conflict with or discuss it during a project meeting. If this is not effective proceed to step number two.


2. Contact the one of the following conflict resolution committee members to assist with resolution. If this is not effective go to step number three. Conflict Resolution Committee Members:


• PCTA:


 Trail Operations Manager, Jennifer Tripp [jtripp@pcta.org](mailto:jtripp@pcta.org), 916-285-1853

 Trail Operations Director, Mike Dawson [mdawson@pcta.org](mailto:mdawson@pcta.org), 206-463-9087

• BCHC:


 State Membership Coordinator, Chip Herzig [chryvchip@msn.com](mailto:chryvchip@msn.com), 951-769-3781

 State President, Dennis Serpa [dmserpa@cwnet.com](mailto:dmserpa@cwnet.com), 209- 848-4017

 Shasta Trinity Chapter President, Sam Burrows [sburrows@frontier.com](mailto:sburrows@frontier.com), 530-646-7336

• US Forest Service:

 Shasta-Trinity NF Ken Graves [kgravesthepacker@yahoo.com](mailto:kgravesthepacker@yahoo.com), 530- 524-1167

 Inyo NF Packer Michael Morse [mmorse@fs.fed.us](mailto:mmorse@fs.fed.us), 760-924-5511

3. If a successful resolution isn't reached in step 2, the parties in conflict or the conflict resolution committee may schedule an appointment to discuss the matter with:

- USFS PCT Program Manager, Beth Boyst [bboyst@fs.fed.us](mailto:bboyst@fs.fed.us), 707-562-8881

- BLM NLCS Program Leader, Mark Conley mconley@blm.gov, 916-978-4641
- BCHC President, Dennis Serpa dmserpa@cwnet.com, 209-848-4017
- PCTA Trail Operations Director, Mike Dawson mdawson@pcta.org, 206-463-9087

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Our intent is to ensure that all volunteers and crew members have the best experience possible, to this end; we reserve the right to dismiss you from a project if you are unable to meet these expectations. Your decision to participate as a volunteer is your acknowledgement that you understand and agree to abide by the Volunteer Packer's Rights and Responsibilities.

## 5. Volunteer Training

Wildfires, wind storms, floods, gravity, and vegetation growth are constant threats to the PCT, the annual maintenance and reconstruction of the trail is a never-ending and monumental undertaking. Such work is typically done by hundreds of volunteers. These volunteers perform hard, physical labor so that others may safely enjoy the beauty and challenge along the trail.

To help our volunteers be successful in their trail work, the PCT Partnership collaborates to

provide training for volunteers. The PCT Partnership:

- Collaborates to provide volunteers with trail skills training, first aid and CPR certification, crew leadership skill training, and saw certifications,
- Collaborates to provide training to volunteers and crews working with packers and packer training,
- Assists the agencies in skill assessment of packers within their respective organizations.