

## NEW YORK - NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE CODE OF CONDUCT

Since 1920, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (Trail Conference) has partnered with parks and outdoor clubs to create, protect, and promote a network of public trails in the New York metropolitan region. The Trail Conference has attracted volunteers from all walks of life who provide valuable work in maintaining trails and many other functions, and their work is coordinated by a professional staff. In an effort to ensure that all of the organization maintains a welcoming and professional environment, the Board of Directors has established a Code of Conduct applicable to both volunteers and staff members together with expectations for the resolution of Code of Conduct violations and conflicts that may arise among Trail Conference participants.

### **Professionalism**

The Trail Conference expects both staff and volunteers to fulfill their assignments in a professional manner. Staff and volunteers are expected to meet professional standards of timeliness, accuracy, integrity, reporting, and accountability. Staff and volunteers are expected to meet deadlines or report to supervisors if they cannot, treat fellow volunteers and employees with courtesy and respect, and represent the interests of the Trail Conference in good faith. Both staff and volunteers are required to follow the organization's policies and procedures and to inform themselves of and adhere to the policies of our landowning partners.

### **Safety**

Both staff and volunteers will conduct themselves in a manner that protects their own safety and the safety of others and will follow the Trail Conference's safety procedures and the safety procedures of landowning and other partners.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Both staff and volunteer assignment decisions at the Trail Conference are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Trail Conference does not discriminate in either staff assignment or volunteer opportunities or practices based on race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or as otherwise prohibited by applicable federal, state and/or local law.

### **Harassment-Free Environment**

The Trail Conference is committed to ensuring that volunteers and employees have a work environment free from unwelcome or inappropriate speech or conduct and is committed to addressing complaints of harassment of any kind. Volunteer leaders and staff are responsible for making the Executive Director immediately aware of any such situation brought to their attention. The Trail Conference will investigate the complaint and, where warranted by the results of the investigation, will take appropriate disciplinary action as described below.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The Trail Conference prohibits sexual harassment by anybody in a staff or volunteer capacity. Sexual harassment is conduct of a sexual nature that is offensive to an employee or volunteer who is subjected to that conduct. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by any employee, any volunteer, or any non-employee (including vendors and others who engage in business with the Trail Conference) constitute sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual; or such conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. All employees and volunteers should understand that what one person may think is good-natured kidding of a sexual nature may be perceived by others as hostile, intimidating or offensive. Sexual harassment is against the law. It has been and remains the policy of the Trail Conference to prohibit sexual harassment of its employees and volunteers and to investigate and remedy sexual harassment whenever such conduct comes to management's attention. It has also been and remains the policy of the Trail Conference to

support employees and volunteers asserting their rights under this policy. Retaliatory conduct by any employee/volunteer of the Trail Conference against any other employee or volunteer complaining of harassment of any kind, or cooperating in the Trail Conference's investigation of harassment will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Conflict Resolution**

The Executive Director is responsible for managing the interaction of staff and volunteers, for establishing a professional and welcoming environment, and for implementing a system for managing conflict among Trail Conference participants, including both staff and volunteers, which may include the following actions:

- Coaching. Staff and volunteer leaders are encouraged to provide immediate feedback to individuals whose interactions with other Trail Conference personnel do not meet the standards of the Code of Conduct.
- Warnings. The Executive Director may issue a verbal or written warning to any volunteer or staff member whose conduct does not meet the standards of the Code of Conduct. The warning should include a description of the behavior and the specific standard it violated and explanation of the consequences if the individual fails to modify the behavior, to include suspension or termination.
- Suspension or permanent termination from the Trail Conference. The Executive Director may suspend or permanently terminate staff or volunteers from the Trail Conference for violations of the Code of Conduct that significantly impact the work environment, pose reputational or legal risk to the Trail Conference, or reflect behaviors that have not been modified despite coaching or warning.
- Referral to law enforcement. Violations of the Code of Conduct that also reflect violation of law will be referred to the appropriate enforcement agency.  
Volunteers who experience or witness violations of the Code of Conduct should report these incidents to their volunteer supervisors, staff liaison, or directly to the Executive Director.  
Staff members who experience or witness violations of the Code of Conduct should report these incidents to their staff supervisors, or directly to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will report to the board of directors on a quarterly basis a summary of complaints and actions taken.

Alternatively, in situations where volunteers or staff members are uncomfortable reporting violations to their volunteer or staff supervisors or to the Executive Director, they may reach out to the board-appointed organizational Ombudsman on a confidential basis.

One or two Ombudspersons will be appointed by the Chairman of the Board, subject to ratification by the Board, to serve renewable one-year terms starting January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The Ombudsperson's role and contact information will be publicized to both volunteers and staff. The Ombudsperson's role is to ensure that Code of Conduct violations are dealt with appropriately. The Ombudsperson will be empowered in his or her discretion to report complaints to the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors meeting in executive session.