



Trout Unlimited Code of Ethics

At TU we are committed to honest and ethical behavior and to accomplishing our mission with integrity. Integrity in all aspects of our operations is central to our success as a credible broker of scientifically and economically responsible conservation solutions. This Code of Ethics is designed to put in place a system to ensure we are aware of and can take prompt action against any questionable behavior. It is also intended to help each of us focus on the duty we owe to our members. This Code applies to staff and each and every one of TU's volunteers on the chapter and council level, since we are all responsible for safeguarding and promoting TU's reputation. Of course, many situations will involve subtleties and complexities that lead to difficult choices. When in doubt, take a step back to ask yourself whether the situation feels right, and consider whether you feel confident that your actions would withstand scrutiny. If necessary, take another careful look at this Code for guidance and seek advice from [volunteer operations staff](#).

Company Assets

TU chapter or council assets must be safeguarded and used only for accomplishing TU's mission. This includes, without limitation, protection (including from loss or theft) of the TU chapter or council's funds, physical facilities, office equipment, computer software, records, donor information, TU's trademarks and other proprietary information. [The TU Policy on Financial and Property Controls for Chapters and Councils](#) sets out requirements and best practices for safeguarding your chapter's or council's assets.

Legal Compliance

TU and volunteers acting in TU's name must obey and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. It is every volunteer's responsibility to be aware of and to comply with legal requirements applicable to his/her position.

Personal Integrity

It is important for the integrity of the whole organization that TU's leaders be persons of integrity. While the Board does not expect council or chapter leaders to conduct background checks on current or prospective officers and members of boards of directors, chapters and councils must not knowingly elect to a chapter or council office or to a chapter or council board of directors a person who has been convicted of a crime involving fraud, dishonesty or financial impropriety or who is a registered sex offender. The Organizational Development Committee of the Board of Trustees may grant an exception to this provision.

Openness and Disclosure

It is TU's responsibility to provide comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders about its operations upon request. All information about any particular chapter or council will fully and honestly reflect its current operations.

In raising funds, TU chapters and councils will respect the rights of donors, as follows:

- To be informed of TU's mission, the way the resources will be used, and the chapter/council's capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes;
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's Board of Directors and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;
- To have access to the chapter or councils most recent financial reports;
- To be assured that all restricted gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given;

- To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition for gifts ([For a sample donor letter, see the Tacklebox.](#))
- To be assured that information about donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law;
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing TU will be professional in nature;
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organizations, or hired solicitors;
- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that the chapter or council intends to share; and,
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.

Confidential Information

While TU strives to be as open as possible about its operations, certain information is by nature confidential and should not be disclosed to the public, including, but not limited to:

- All donor and member personal information;
- Information relating to hiring decisions and to current, former and prospective employees; and
- Financial reports and data that have not been formally reported to the public through presentations to the Board of Trustees, Federal Form 990, 990N, or audited financial statements. Such information represents a valuable corporate asset that should be protected as we protect other valued assets.

Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers must avoid any personal activity, investment or association that could interfere with, or could appear to interfere with, good judgment concerning TU's best interests. Volunteers may not use TU property, information or position for personal gain, including taking personal opportunities that are discovered through the use of TU property, information or position. Volunteers should avoid even the appearance of such a conflict. For example, there is a likely conflict of interest if a volunteer

- causes the chapter or council to engage in business transactions with relatives or friends;
- uses nonpublic TU, donor or vendor information for personal gain by his/herself, relatives or friends (including securities transactions based on such information);
- has more than a modest financial interest in the chapter or council's vendors, donors or competitors; or
- competes, or prepares to compete, with the chapter or council while still serving on the chapter or council Board of Directors.

There are other situations in which a conflict of interest may arise. Any volunteer who becomes aware of any material transaction or relationship that could reasonably be expected to give rise to such a conflict of interest, or has concerns about any situation, must follow the steps outlined in the section entitled "Reporting Violations." For chapters or councils with staff or those large enough to be required to file a Form 990, it is strongly recommended that you adopt [a formal conflict of interest policy](#).

Fair Dealing

No volunteer may take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair-dealing practice. Volunteers should endeavor to deal fairly with the TU's donors, suppliers, competitors and employees.

Gifts, Bribes and Kickbacks

Other than for modest gifts and benefits given and received in the normal course of business, no volunteer may give gifts to or receive gifts from the chapter or council's donors and vendors. In

no event should a volunteer put the chapter or council in a position that would be embarrassing if the gift were made public. Dealing with government employees often is different from dealing with private persons. Many governmental bodies strictly prohibit the receipt of any gratuities by their employees, including meals and entertainment. Volunteers must be aware of and strictly follow such prohibitions. Any volunteer who pays or receives bribes or kickbacks will be subject to corrective action, and reported, as warranted, to the appropriate authorities. *A kickback or bribe includes anything of value intended to improperly obtain favorable treatment.*

Loans

No volunteer may request or accept a loan from TU national, a TU chapter, or council.

Political Contributions

Chapters, councils, or volunteers or staff acting on behalf of TU may not endorse or oppose any candidate for public office, nor can TU use its funds to support or oppose candidates for elected political office. The prohibition is found in the federal tax code. Volunteers may, however, engage in political activity with your own resources on your own time, subject to applicable law and the TU policies and rules governing such political activity. For more information on this restriction, read [TU's Tax Exemption Restrictions](#).

Anti-Harassment

Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated by TU. To read the full [TU Anti-Harassment policy](#), visit the Tacklebox. Below is a summary.

Trout Unlimited has a longstanding commitment to culture that respects the dignity and worth of each individual. Inappropriate behavior and unlawful harassment create conditions that are wholly inconsistent with this commitment. The purpose of [TU's Anti-Harassment policy](#) is not to regulate the personal morality of employees or TU volunteers, but rather to foster an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, whether that harassment is because of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Some examples of what may constitute sexual harassment are: unwelcome and repeated flirtations, propositions or advances; unwelcome physical contact; use of stereotypes; offensive, insulting, derogatory or degrading remarks; sexual jokes or use of sexually explicit or offensive language; and the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in a TU setting. The above list of examples is not intended to be all-inclusive, and applies not only to physical and face-to-face interactions, but also to electronic communications such as voicemail, email, text messages, blogs, and social media.

Other Harassment

Other harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law, and that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Some examples of such harassment are: using epithets or slurs; mocking, ridiculing or mimicking another's culture, accent, appearance or customs; threatening, intimidating or engaging in hostile or offensive acts that focus on an individual's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law, including stereotyping, jokes, or pranks. The above list of examples is not intended to be all-inclusive, and applies not only to physical and face-to-face interactions, but also to electronic communications such as voicemail, email, text messages, blogs, and social media.

Reporting Violations

Trout Unlimited strongly encourages the prompt reporting of all suspected violations of the law, TU policy or any provision in this code. As a volunteer, you should report violations immediately to the Vice President for Volunteer Operations or the General Counsel. If, at any time you feel it would be unreasonable to use this procedure to report a violation because of unusual or unique circumstances, TU encourages you to discuss your concerns with the Chair of the Board of Trustees or any other member of the Board of Trustees.

Upon completion of the investigation, appropriate remedial action will be taken which may include either referral to appropriate governmental authorities or expulsion as a member of the organization or both.

An individual who reports incidents that the individual, in good faith, believes to be violations of this policy, or who is involved in the investigation of harassment, will not be subject to reprisal or retaliation. Retaliation is a serious violation and should be reported immediately.