

Adopted by [land trust], [date]

Ethics Policy and Statement of Ethics

As a matter of fundamental principle, the [land trust] upholds the highest standards of ethics in implementing its mission, and in its governance and operations. The [LT] upholds these ethical obligations to the land conservation community, donors, taxpayers, landowners, and the community at large. The [LT], under all circumstances, conducts its business following the fundamental values of honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility, inclusiveness, and accountability in all of its operations. The [LT], at all times, endeavours to operate under the following Statement of Ethics.

Ethics Policy. The [LT] uses the following Ethics Policy to guide its compliance. The policy is not inclusive of all possible issues or circumstances that may require the careful consideration of ethics, but is meant to guide the overall principles of the [LT].

- ⤴ **a. Accountability.** The [LT] Board is the legal entity for the corporation and is responsible for the formulation and maintenance of [LT]'s policies. When establishing policies or authorizing activities, the Board acts to ensure policies or activities will not jeopardize the basic not-for-profit status of the corporation or reflect unfavourably upon the [LT] or its credibility as an institution devoted to public service. Directors devote time and attention to the affairs of the [LT] to ensure that all [LT] actions, including those of staff, are in accordance with its established bylaws and do not reflect unfavourably upon the [LT] as an institution devoted to public benefit.
- ⤴ **b. Fiduciary Responsibility.** The Board holds the primary fiduciary responsibility for the [LT] and protection of its assets. These assets include, but are not limited to, land holdings, physical facilities, financial assets, and the staff itself.
- ⤴ **c. Loyalty and Support.** Directors and staff do not attempt to act on behalf of the [LT] or for [LT] in an individual capacity without Board approval. All actions are taken as a board, committee, or in coordinated manner at the staff level, and in conformance with the bylaws or applicable procedures and resolutions. Directors work for the institution as a whole and not as advocates for particular activities or committees of [LT].
- ⤴ **d. Conflict of Interest Policies.** The [LT] has in place both an organizational Conflict of Interest Policy and a Board Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy. Operating in tandem, the policies enable the [LT] to address the real conflicts, and also manage perceived conflicts to ensure the organization's credibility and integrity remain strong.
- ⤴ **e. Confidentiality.** During the course of a transaction, the [LT] may become privy to highly sensitive and confidential information. Directors and staff keep information acquired in conjunction with [LT] activities in the strictest confidence when related to the administration and activities of the [LT] that are not generally available or known to the public. Any improper transfer or disclosure of such information, even though it is not apparent that a Director and/or employee have personally gained by such action, constitutes unacceptable conduct.

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- ⤴ **f. Actions in Furtherance of Land Conservation.** The Board and staff do not take actions that will compromise the cause of land conservation by the [LT] or by other legitimate land conservation organizations. The Board and staff make every effort to effectively balance the land conservation goals of the [LT] with those of landowners willing to conserve their land.
- ⤴ **g. Gifts.** Directors, staff and volunteers do not solicit or accept for personal benefit, directly or indirectly, any gift or anything else of substantial monetary value from any person or firm that has sought, or is seeking, assistance or has other contractual business, or financial relations with the [LT]. For the purpose of this policy, substantial monetary value means any gift with a value exceeding \$25.00. Meals, accommodations, and travel services provided to Directors and Staff on official business may be accepted.
- ⤴ **h. Property Purchase.** Directors and/or Staff do not purchase from the [LT] any real estate or personal property having substantial value without prior approval of the Board. All transactions with members of the Board are closely reviewed and documented. For the purpose of this policy, substantial value means any purchase with a value exceeding \$500.
- ⤴ **i. Openness and Disclosure.** The [LT] provides accurate and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders, and is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. All information about the [LT] reflects fully and honestly the policies and practices of the [LT], including basic information about the [LT] posted on the [LT] website or otherwise made available to the public. All solicitation materials represent accurately the [LT]'s policies and practices and will reflect the dignity of program beneficiaries. All financial, organizational, and program reports are complete and accurate in all material respects.
- ⤴ **j. Program Evaluation.** The [LT] regularly reviews program effectiveness and has mechanisms in place to incorporate lessons learned into future programs. The [LT] is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and learning. The [LT] is responsive to changes in its field of activity and is responsive to the needs of its constituents.
- ⤴ **k. Inclusiveness and Diversity.** The [LT] has a policy of promoting inclusiveness and its staff, board, and volunteers reflect diversity in order to enrich programmatic effectiveness. The [LT] takes meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment, and constituencies served.

Ethics Statement. Each Board of Trustees member and staff member acknowledges by his or her signature that he or she understands and will abide by the following Ethics Statement. Each signed Ethics Statement is filed permanently in the [LT]'s records:

I, as a Board/ staff member of the [Land Trust], dedicate myself to the protection of land that furthers the mission of the [Land Trust]. As a representative of [Land Trust], I have an obligation to maintain the credibility of the land conservation community by ensuring that my actions will enhance the reputation of land conservation.

I acknowledge the trust placed in [Land Trust] by our donors, landowners, partners, and the public, and my actions will always uphold that trust.

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I pledge to conduct organizational and land protection activities under the highest professional standards and in accordance with Ontario Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. Furthermore, I pledge to be especially diligent in ensuring that my actions serve the public interest, respect all laws, demonstrate integrity, and consider the long-term responsibility to the lands we protect.

Name

Date