

# **THE LAND TRUST FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

## **Code of Ethics**

*(Approved by the Board of Trustees November 12, 2018)*

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County adopts this Code of Ethics to protect its reputation and effectiveness by providing guidance to board and staff members in making decisions about their activities and conduct that may have ethical implications or pose a conflict of interest.

This Code of Ethics is implemented in large part through formal policies approved by the Board of Trustees, which shall be reviewed and updated periodically. These include:

- Policy on Conflict of Interest, Board Compensation & Insider Transactions *(revised 2018)*
- Whistleblower Policy *(revised 2018)*
- Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines *(revised 2018)*
- Employee Handbook *(revised 2018)*

### **Accountability**

The Board of Trustees is the governing body for the Land Trust and is responsible for the formulation and maintenance of Land Trust general policies and operational continuity. Each Trustee must devote time and attention to the affairs of the Land Trust to ensure that all Land Trust actions, including those of its employees and contractors, are in accordance with its established Bylaws and Board-approved policies. In establishing policies or authorizing activities, the board must ensure that no action is taken that would jeopardize the basic not-for-profit status of the Land Trust or will reflect unfavorably upon the Land Trust as an institution devoted to public service.

### **Fiduciary Responsibility**

The Board of Trustees holds the fiduciary responsibility for the Land Trust and for the protection of its assets. These assets include, but are not necessarily limited to, land holdings, physical facilities, financial assets, and the staff itself.

### **Loyalty and Support**

Trustees should not attempt to act in an individual capacity. All actions should be taken as a board, committee or subcommittee, and in conformance with the Bylaws and applicable policies and procedures. Trustees should work for the institution as a whole and not as advocates for particular activities or committees or outside interests. Trustees should be especially careful to keep staff informed of all items about ongoing board needs and plans and should refrain from making administrative decisions.

Staff efforts will be guided by the Land Trust mission, board-approved strategy, committee-approved plans, Bylaws, and policies. Unless they are representing a Land Trust committee (or, in the case of the president, representing the board), individual trustees will refrain from directing staff efforts.

All trustees should contribute to the Land Trust in time, services, or funds as best they can; encourage others to do so; and support its goals without reservation. The donation of goods or

services by a trustee, a member of a trustee's family, or an enterprise in which a trustee or a member of a trustee's family has a material financial interest will not be considered a conflict of interest.

Trustees will not offer business or professional services to the Land Trust unless approved by the Board of Trustees pursuant to the Policy on Conflict of Interest, Board Compensation & Insider Transactions.

### **Confidentiality**

Trustees and staff should keep information learned during the course of Land Trust activities in confidence when the information concerns the administration and activities of the Land Trust, or the personal and financial interests of landowners, trustees, staff or donors that are not generally available to the public.

### **Disclosure**

The Land Trust's Executive Director has the sole authority to allow disclosure of member and donor information, and may consult with the board in this regard. In the special case of information pertaining to donated conservation easements and donors' motives and status, the Executive Director will decide on disclosure after obtaining suitable permission from the donors and base the decision on the importance of the disclosure to the Land Trust. Trustees are not to discuss donor information or landowner/land project details with anyone outside of the Land Trust, except as has been disclosed to the public or approved by the Executive Director for release to outside parties.

### **Use of Resources**

Trustees, staff and volunteers will not make unauthorized use of Land Trust resources for private purposes. Expenditure of Land Trust funds will always be in accordance with applicable laws and consistent with the terms specified by the donor/grantor of those funds. Staff is responsible for ensuring compliance with all terms of grants, permits, contracts and agreements entered into for Land Trust projects and activities.

### **Gifts**

Staff, trustees and other volunteers will not solicit or accept for personal benefit, directly or indirectly, any gift, loan, service, or anything else of substantial monetary value from any person or firm which sought, or is seeking, assistance or other contractual business, or financial relations with the Land Trust. Meals, accommodations, and travel services provided to the staff on official business may be accepted as long as they are clearly in support of Land Trust programs.

### **Property Purchase**

Staff and trustees will not purchase from the Land Trust any real estate or personal property having substantial value without prior approval of the Board of Trustees, in accordance with adopted policies.