

# **Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) is a partnership dedicated to the conservation of herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians) and their habitats. Our membership includes individuals from state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, museums, industry (e.g., pet trade, energy, forest products), nature centers, zoos, universities, herpetological organizations, research laboratories, and environmental consultants. PARC is an inclusive network, covering all aspects associated with herpetofaunal conservation and welcoming all who have a passion for conserving amphibians and reptiles. PARC is an entity that values inclusivity and collaboration; acting proactively; finding responsive and adaptive approaches; scientific integrity; biodiversity; and optimism.

The purpose of this document is to define what is expected behavior and the procedures for reporting and addressing unacceptable behavior (i.e., violations to the Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct). We also identify potential outcomes and consequences of unacceptable behavior. If you have any recommendations for how to revise, strengthen or clarify this Code, please let a member of the Ethics Committee (listed below) know. Your opinion is important to us!

## **2.0 PARC Code of Ethics**

PARC will strive to foster a safe and respectful environment for our colleagues and professional contacts. PARC members will observe and uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and professional behavior. All members of the network will practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities within the PARC network and will endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or other unprofessional demeanor. PARC members will not harass or discriminate on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status, race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, economic status, disability, political affiliation, medical history, physical appearance, body size, level of education or intellect, region of the country, or organizational affiliation. This Code applies both to in-person and electronic (text, email, social media) communications.

## **3.0 PARC Meetings Code of Conduct**

PARC is committed to providing a safe, productive and welcoming environment that fosters open dialogue, exchange of scientific ideas, and equal treatment of all participants. All those who take part in PARC activities, including but not limited to, attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, PARC staff, service providers and others are required to abide by this Meeting Code of Conduct policy. We drew inspiration from similar efforts by the Ecological Society of

America, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, The Wildlife Society and the Society for Conservation Biology.

### **3.1 Expected Behavior**

#### **3.1.1 Participants will:**

- Treat other participants with respect and consideration, and value a diversity of views and opinions.
- Be considerate, respectful, and collaborative.
- Communicate clearly, critiquing ideas rather than individuals and avoiding personal attacks directed towards others.
- Be mindful of their surroundings and the experience of fellow participants.
- Respect the rules, policies, and property of the meeting venue.
- Adhere to State and Federal laws, including wildlife regulations.
- Follow biosecurity protocols as recommended by PARC's National Disease Task Team (<http://parcplace.org/resources/parc-disease-task-team/>).

### **3.2 Unacceptable Behavior**

#### **3.2.2 Participants will not:**

- Harass, discriminate, or intimidate other participants in any manner.
- Initiate or participate in physical or verbal abuse.
- Inappropriately disrupt oral or poster presentations
- Make negative or demeaning verbal comments that do not adhere to our Code of Ethics listed above.
- Use human sexual images in public spaces or in presentations.
- Behave in threatening ways such as bullying or stalking other people.
- Participate in behavior, speech, or writing that is not welcome and that is so severe, pervasive, or recurrent that it is considered hostile, intimidating, or offensive by the recipient or other members.

### **4.0 Reporting Unacceptable Behavior**

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code of Ethics must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations made with a malicious intent or knowingly false will be viewed as a Code violation.

Violations of the Meeting Code of Ethics should be reported by the complainant to any PARC Ethics Committee member (see contact list below) verbally, preferably, immediately after the violation has occurred and then later with a written report. The report should include all the

pertinent documentation needed for the Ethics Committee to investigate the violation (including but not limited to date, time, misconduct observed, name of the person accused, and names of others who may have witnessed the misconduct). Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation or to the extent allowed by law. All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to promptly by at least two PARC Ethics Committee members.

**No Retaliation:** No PARC member who in good faith reports a violation of the Meeting Code of Conduct shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequence from the Ethics Committee. Furthermore, it is a violation of the Meeting Code of Conduct for an alleged offender to harass, retaliate, or adversely act toward a complainant who in good faith reports a potential violation.

#### **4.1 Procedure for Addressing Meeting Code of Conduct Violations While Currently Attending a Meeting**

If you are experiencing or witnessing behavior that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to your personal safety, contact venue security and/or local law enforcement immediately. If it is not obvious how to contact venue security and/or local law enforcement, contact the regional Chair or Co-chair. If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior while currently attending a PARC meeting, but the nature of the behavior does not rise to the level of severity such that it merits contacting venue security or the local law enforcement, please immediately notify a member of the PARC Ethics Committee or regional Chair or Co-chair. If necessary, a meeting will be arranged between the complainant and at least two of the members of the Ethics Committee. The PARC Ethics Committee will determine whether it is necessary to meet with the individual(s) involved to apprise them of the complaint, discuss the situation, and possibly take actions to limit interactions between the individuals involved; such actions may include ejection of Code violators from the meeting or prohibition from attendance at future PARC meetings.

#### **4.2 Procedure for Addressing Meeting Code of Conduct Violations after a Meeting**

The PARC Ethics Committee will investigate allegations of unethical conduct submitted by email after a meeting and will take punitive steps against individuals if they have behaved improperly. The Committee will investigate the issue swiftly, impartially, and in a manner appropriate to the allegation, maintaining confidentiality and due process. It is the responsibility of the victim, not the PARC Ethics Committee, to notify the police if they believe an offense violated the law.

1. An allegation of misconduct against a member of the PARC network may be filed by contacting any member of the PARC Ethics Committee (see contacts below) in writing.
2. Upon receipt, the Ethics Committee member shall transmit copies of the allegation and all supporting materials to all Ethics Committee members.

3. Within 30 days of receiving all materials, the Ethics Committee will make a decision by consensus or majority vote if a reported allegation constitutes a violation of the Meeting Code of Conduct.
4. If the Ethics Committee finds merit in the allegation, the member who committed the violation will be notified within 7 days and sent all pertinent material.
5. The member will have 14 days to file a response to the allegation that was submitted to the Ethics Committee. A single reminder will be provided within the 14-day period by the Ethics Committee.
6. The Ethics Committee will review the member's response, and determine if the Meeting Code of Ethics has been violated, the severity and appropriate consequences
7. The member will be notified within 14 days of the decision of the Ethics Committee, and if the Meeting Code of Ethics was deemed violated, the Ethics Committee will impose such disciplinary action as listed below.
8. The member may appeal the decision of the Ethics Committee within 30 days. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Ethics Committee will review all pertinent materials regarding the allegation and render a decision via a majority vote.
9. The member will be notified within 7 days of the decision of the Committee; a decision may include a warning or more severe consequences, per the Consequences described below.

## **5.0 Consequences**

The Ethics Committee will employ a “Two Strikes” policy for most Code violations depending on severity of the offense. Individuals will receive a warning as described below for a first offense. Following the second offense, more severe consequences may be levied. **An exception to this Two Strikes policy is when an egregious violation occurs (including, but not limited to, one that requires intervention by venue security or law enforcement).** In such instances the PARC Ethics Committee may proceed directly to Removal, Rescission or Barring Participation.

### **Two Strike Policy:**

- **Strike 1: Warnings**
  - Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately; this strike will be considered a warning.
  - Participants may be warned of their Code violation during a meeting, or afterwards based on reporting and appropriate investigation.
- **Strike 2: Removal, Rescission, or Barring Participation**
  - Upon egregious violation, or following the Two Strikes policy (i.e., two warnings have been issued), PARC leadership or venue security may take any action deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal from the meeting without warning or refund.

- State, Regional or National PARC Co-chairs reserve the right to prohibit attendance at any future meeting.
- PARC leadership reserves the right to prohibit participation in any future PARC working groups or participation/development of PARC products or related activities.
- PARC leadership may remove the offender from any position within PARC, including a Chair, Co-chair or committee position.
- PARC may rescind any awards or endorsements the person or their projects may have received, and will not consider Code violators who have received two warnings for such awards, endorsements, leadership or project assignments.

**6.0 PARC Ethics Committee Positions:**

- Federal Agencies Coordinator
- State Agencies Coordinator
- Chair and Co-chair of the PARC Inclusivity, Equity, and Diversity Task Team
- Chair and Co-chair of the PARC Joint National Steering Committee