

Ethics and Professional Conduct for Professional Wildlife Biologists

Associate and Certified Wildlife Biologists shall conduct their activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics and the Standards for Professional Conduct as prescribed by The Wildlife Society outlined below.

A. Code of Ethics

Associate and Certified Wildlife Biologists have a responsibility for contributing to an understanding of mankind's proper relationship with natural resources, and in particular for determining the role of wildlife in satisfying human needs. Certified individuals will strive to meet this obligation through the following professional goals: They will subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct.

They will recognize research and scientific management of wildlife and their environments as primary goals. They will disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, values of wildlife and their habitats. They will strive to increase knowledge and skills to advance the practice of wildlife management.

They will promote competence in the field of wildlife management by supporting high standards of education, employment, and performance. They will encourage the use of sound biological information in management decisions. They will support fair and uniform standards of employment and treatment of those professionally engaged in the practice of wildlife management.

B. Standards for Professional Conduct

The following tenets express the intent of the Code of Ethics as prescribed by The Wildlife Society and traditional norms for professional service.

Wildlife biologists shall at all times:

1. Recognize and inform prospective clients or employers of their prime responsibility to the public interest, conservation of the wildlife resource, and the environment. They shall act with the authority of professional judgment, and avoid actions or omissions that may compromise these broad responsibilities. They shall respect the competence, judgment, and authority of the professional community.
2. Avoid performing professional services for any client or employer when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or Standards for

Professional Conduct or detrimental to the well-being of the wildlife resource and its environment.

3. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client/employer accepted, regardless of the degree of remuneration. They shall be mindful of their responsibility to society, and seek to meet the needs of the disadvantaged for advice in wildlife-related matters. They should studiously avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of professional authority for personal satisfaction.
4. Accept employment to perform professional services only in areas of their own competence, and consistent with the Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Conduct described herein. They shall seek to refer clients or employers to other natural resource professionals when the expertise of such professionals shall best serve the interests of the public, wildlife, and the client/employer. They shall cooperate fully with other professionals in the best interest of the wildlife resource.
5. Maintain a confidential professional-client/employer relationship except when specifically authorized by the client/employer or required by due process of law or this Code of Ethics and Standards to disclose pertinent information. They shall not use such confidence to their personal advantage or to the advantage of other parties, nor shall they permit personal interests or other client/employer relationships to interfere with their professional judgment.
6. Refrain from advertising in a self-laudatory manner, beyond statements intended to inform prospective clients/employers of qualifications, or in a manner detrimental to fellow professionals and the wildlife resource.
7. Refuse compensation or rewards of any kind intended to influence their professional judgment or advice. They shall not permit a person who recommends or employs them, directly or indirectly, to regulate their professional judgment. They shall not accept compensation for the same professional services from any source other than the client/employer without the prior consent of all the clients or employers involved.

Similarly, they shall not offer a reward of any kind or promise of service in order to secure a recommendation, a client, or preferential treatment from public officials.

8. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the wildlife profession. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.

Certified Forester[®] Standards of Professional Practice

Every Certified Forester[®] (CF) and applicant for Certified Forester status agrees to:

1. Make every effort to periodically review and follow all applicable state and federal regulations governing environmental quality and, specifically, the stewardship and management of forest resources;
2. Make every effort to recognize and inform prospective clients or employers of the responsibility to conserve forest resources and to maintain environmental quality in management recommendations;
3. Refrain from providing a professional opinion or recommendation for an area of expertise for which the individual is not qualified by either academic preparation or experience and to refer clients or employers to other natural resource professionals when the expertise of such individuals shall best serve the interests of the public, the forestry profession, and the client/employer;
4. Use only truthful and not misleading statements in any advertising or statement of qualifications;
5. Refrain from misrepresenting CF certification, or one's individual CF status, including the misuse of application status, trademark, certificate, or other related credentials;
6. Refrain from any misrepresentation on an application; willful submission of incorrect information in recertification; or failure to include relevant information in any communication to the Certification Review Board (CRB) or SAF National Office; and to
7. Pay all required fees, as set forth in Certification Requirements.

Further, every CF and CF applicant agrees that violation of the standards listed above may be a basis for adverse action, including denial or revocation of certification or recertification, in accordance with Certification Review Board (CRB) Administrative Rules, and that:

8. Certification may be suspended, and may be revoked pending review by the CRB, following final action resulting in revocation or suspension of a CF's state forestry registration or licensing credential, or related professional credential or professional membership;

9. A conviction of, plea of guilty to, or plea of nolo contendere to a felony related to forestry practices or to public health or welfare or misdemeanor that relates directly to forestry practices, is grounds for denial, revocation, or suspension of certification; and that
10. The CF shall report any revocation, suspension, conviction, or plea as described above to SAF within thirty (30) days of the final action. An individual convicted of such a felony or misdemeanor may be ineligible to apply for certification or recertification for a period of three (3) years from the exhaustion of appeals, probation, parole, or final release from confinement (if any) whichever is later.

Adopted by the Council of the Society of American Foresters in 1994. Document revised April 2003 and September 2005.