

# Washington Conservation Society

## Policy Manual

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## Environmental Education Mini-Grant Program

A key goal of the WCS is to support educational opportunities for youth by sponsoring environmental/conservation education programs in Washington State. To that end the WCS will set aside an annual contribution, the amount to be determined by the WCS Board of Directors, which will be utilized to provide grants to dues paying members to assist in funding environmental/conservation education programs for youth as the first priority for funding. Funding guidelines are below:

- The applicant must be a dues paying member, conservation district or partner organization of the WCS. A dues paying individual member, if serving as an officer for a WCS Partner Organization, may submit the application for that organization even if it is not a dues paying Partner Organization.
- Projects that have a statewide reach will receive the highest priority for funding.
- Funding request should not exceed \$500.
- One application per entity per year. Applicants must use the WCS grant application form.
- Grant applications will be accepted continually with the funding allocation made at the WCS Annual Meeting.

This Policy was approved on March 15, 2013 by the Washington Conservation Society and amended on June 9, 2014 and December 1, 2015.

## Pass-Through Grants Program

One of the goals of the WCS is to invest in the future of sustainable environmental assets. To that end the WCS will utilize its 501c (3) status to assist conservation districts and partner organizations in obtaining grants to support conservation programs. Grant procedures are below:

- 1) District/Partner organization identifies grant opportunity that requires 501c (3) status to apply.
- 2) District/Partner organization contacts WCS with request for assistance.
- 3) District/Partner organization develops grant proposal and WCS provides the entity with pertinent information about the Society to complete the application.
- 4) District/Partner organization submits grant application and provides an electronic or hard copy to the WCS.
- 5) If the grant is funded the WCS and the District/Partner Organization will develop an MOU. WCS will charge a 5% administrative fee for non-dues paying districts/partner organizations and a 3% administrative fee for dues paying districts/partner organizations. The administrative fee should be included in the grant budget.
- 6) District/Partner Organization submits a final report or project update (with pictures) every November 1<sup>st</sup> for the life of the grant to the WCS

This Policy was approved on March 15, 2013 by the Washington Conservation Society and amended on June 9, 2014.

# Conflict of Interest Policy

## Article I – Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization's (WCS) interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the WCS or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

## Article II – Definitions

- 1) Interested person: And director, principal officer, or other member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
- 2) Financial Interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the WCS has a transaction or arrangement.
  - b. A compensation arrangement with the WCS or with any entity or individual with which the WCS has a transaction or arrangement or
  - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the WCS is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

## Article III – Procedures

- 1) Duty of disclose: In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- 2) Determining whether a conflict of interest exists: After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interest person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
- 3) Procedures for addressing the conflict of interest:
  - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
  - b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the WCS can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the WCS's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- 4) Violations of the conflict of interest policy:
    - a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a board member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
    - b. If, after hearing a member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

#### Article IV – Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- 1) The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- 2) The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### Article V – Compensation

- 1) A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the WCS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- 2) A voting member of any committee whose responsibilities includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the WCS for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- 3) No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose responsibilities includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the WCS, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

#### Article VI – Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall sign a statement which affirms such person:

- 1) Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy
- 2) Has read and understands the policy
- 3) Has agreed to comply with the policy; and
- 4) Understands the WCS is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

## Article VII – Periodic Reviews

To ensure the WCS operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- 1) Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- 2) Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the WCS's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investments or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

## Article VIII – Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the WCS may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

This Policy was approved on March 15, 2013 by the Washington Conservation Society.

## Leaving a Legacy Entries

Purpose: To memorialize pioneers, partners and persons involved in the Washington State conservation movement.

Any individual, conservation district or recognized partner entity may submit nominations for consideration to the WCS for entry into the Leaving a Legacy book. It is the sole discretion of the WCS Membership which nominations will be selected for inclusion in the book. It will be standard procedure for WCS to edit nominations to ensure that they fit in the space allotted and for content. Nominations with edits will be sent to the nominator and the associated district or partner entity, where the individual served, for review prior to publishing. A lack of response from the associated district or partner organization, within a reasonable timeframe, will not prevent the nomination from being published. WCS reserves the right to decide what is published.

Nominations are due by November 1st of each year. There is no charge for nominations submitted by dues paying members. Non-dues paying members are encouraged to make a one-time contribution to the WCS to assist with the creation and publishing of the Leaving a Legacy book. It is the sole discretion of the WCS to accept nominations with or without financial contributions.

This Policy was approved on December 2, 2014 by the Washington Conservation Society.

## WCS Membership Discounts for Trainings

Any individual, district, or partner entity who meets the criteria of a dues paying member may use their membership status to apply for discounts on trainings offered to members of 501(c)(3)'s. It is the responsibility of the member to report to the WCS that they have used their membership status to receive a discount. The member will report to the WCS the following information:

- Name, Date, and Location of the Training
- Amount of Savings Incurred

The information will be submitted to the WCS by November 1st of each year for inclusion in the Annual Report.

This Policy was approved on December 2, 2014 by the Washington Conservation Society.

## SLACK Use Policy

Slack is an acronym for Searchable Log of All Communication and Knowledge. The WCS Slack account exists to promote conservation community success in Washington State by facilitating communication and the exchange of information within our community.

This service is provided through the Washington Conservation Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving our Washington State conservation community. Some topics are prohibited in the WCS Slack account, including: legislative or political activity; religious activity; and influencing public opinion.

All conservation district supervisors and employees are welcome to participate, subject to certain conditions.

The account is capped at 250 members, so only the first 250 people to join will have access.

To avoid having accidental meetings in violation of the Open Public Meetings Act, we recommend that no more than two board supervisors should join from any one district.

Participating in the WCS Slack account means that you agree not to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, political affiliation or beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Participating also means you agree not to promote a particular religious affiliation, dogma, or doctrine.

Members who violate these terms will be cautioned, and if unacceptable behaviors persist, they will be removed by account administrators. You may also wish to review the Slack terms of service at <https://slack.com/terms-of-service/user>

Messages and documents in the WCS Slack account may be public records subject to the provisions of the State of Washington Public Records Act.

This Policy was approved on June 11, 2020 by the Washington Conservation Society.

# Conservation Futures Scholarship

## **Background**

The Conservation Future Scholarship was created by the Washington Conservation Society (WCS) in 2020. WCS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting natural resource conservation efforts in Washington State by providing a philanthropic center for investments in citizen-led, voluntary-based conservation projects, activities, education, and outreach efforts.

## **Conservation Future Scholarship Considerations**

1. Annually, the Washington Conservation Society will award one scholarship in the amount of up to \$1,000. The annual scholarship is subject to the availability of funds.
2. This scholarship is not available to relatives of the WCS Conservation Future Scholarship Selection Committee.
3. This merit-based scholarship supports college students (entering and current) with a demonstrated commitment to natural resources conservation through their coursework and/or community involvement.

## **Eligibility requirements:**

1. The applicant must be a resident of Washington State at the time of application.
2. The applicant must be:
  - a) A full-time high school senior; or
  - b) Entering their freshman year of college; or
  - c) A returning college student.
3. If the applicant is enrolled in college, preference will be given to applicants who are enrolled in an accredited college or university in Washington State.
4. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in:
  - a) Conservation and the environment; and
  - b) Planned employment in the broad field of natural resources.

## **Scholarship Application Process**

Applicants must submit an application packet comprised of:

1. Completed **application form**.
2. **Essay** of 500 to 1000 words telling the Society about your interest in conservation. Preference will be given to applicants who can describe in detail an example of a conservation related activity or service project in which you were involved.
3. **References**. Please include two reference letters with your application. These letters should be from people who know you through your academic or employment experience, or your community leadership and participation. Relatives shall not be accepted as references.
4. **Transcript**. Your full transcript from the school you are currently attending can be enclosed with your application or mailed directly to the address below.
5. **Deadline**. Applications will be accepted annually from January 1 through May 31. Send the fully completed application packet to:

**Heather Wendt, WCS Secretary/Treasurer  
1724 E. Superior Street**

**Pasco, WA 99301**

[heather-wendt@conserveva.net](mailto:heather-wendt@conserveva.net)

### **Selection Process**

1. The WCS shall appoint annually a Conservation Future Scholarship Selection Committee.
2. The Selection Committee will be provided annually a copy of all application packets.
3. The Selection Committee will meet in person or by phone to review, rank and select one student to recommend to the WCS for that year's scholarship award. At the discretion of the Selection Committee, a personal interview, in person or by phone, may be conducted.
4. At the summer meeting of the WCS, the WCS board shall consider the recommendation from the Selection Committee.
5. As soon as possible after WCS board action, the scholarship recipient shall be notified by letter. Applicants not selected shall be notified as well.

### **Payment**

1. Payment of the scholarship award will be made directly to the institution in the recipient's name.
2. Payment will be submitted following receipt of verification of enrollment.

This Policy was approved on September 9, 2020 by the Washington Conservation Society.

**CONSERVATION FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ WA, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**If a Current High School Student--**

Name of High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Cumulative GPA (4.0 Scale): \_\_\_\_\_, Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

At which college are you planning to use your scholarship? \_\_\_\_\_

(Include a copy of your acceptance letter if you have already applied and have received your confirmation.)

**If a Continuing College Student**

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of City and State in Which College is Located: \_\_\_\_\_

Current GPA (4.0 Scale): \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe school activities, awards and accomplishments (use additional pages if necessary):

Please describe your work experience (use additional pages if necessary):

Attach an essay (500 to 1000 words) telling us about your interest in conservation and describe examples of your community involvement, especially any leadership roles, in conservation issues.

**Verification.** I affirm that the information included with my application is true and accurate in all respects and that I intend to pursue a post-secondary degree. I understand that if selected, the awarding of funds is contingent upon my full-time enrollment in an accredited institution, and that the funds will be paid directly to the institution and used toward the cost of my education.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_