

# BCHC/BLM/PCTA/USFS Partnership Policies

The best practices for communication and partnership are founded on key success factors found across a variety of programs and include ensuring good communication and honoring commitments. Honesty, respect, courtesy, tact, and diplomacy, should govern partner relationships.

The partnership between the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA), Backcountry Horseman of California (BCHC), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the US Forest Service (USFS) is committed to our shared interests in preserving and protecting the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and continuing to provide outstanding recreation opportunities for hikers and equestrians.

This document contains the following sections:

- 1) Best Practices in Communication, Operations, and Leadership;
- 2) Steps to Resolving Conflict,
- 3) Partnership Code of Conduct,
- 4) Volunteer Packer Rights and Responsibilities, and
- 5) Volunteer Training.

## **1. Best Practices in Communication, Operations, and Leadership**

Given our shared interest, the following *best practices in communication, operations, and leadership* are adopted:

*In working with and as Individuals we value integrity and excellence in all we do.*

**Integrity:** At the core of all our activity we expect honesty, accountability, congruence between words and actions, and respect for fellow volunteers, staff, and agency partners.

- Be trustworthy and accountable for your actions
- Demonstrate trust in colleagues
- Communicate honestly and respectfully
- Make decisions on the basis of fact not hearsay
- Measure and reward performance based on results and achievements rather than personality, personal traits or relationship with you

**Excellence:** We relentlessly strive for excellence by setting and achieving high goals, recognizing accomplishment, learning from mistakes and making continuous improvement.

- Expect success
- Do not identify an issue, problem or opportunity without seeking solutions
- Challenge processes to continually improve
- When confronted with an issue or problem, address it promptly and directly with the person involved and/or the project leader
- Continuously seek to learn and teach others
- Take ownership of your mistakes and failure

- Seek opportunity for growth and capacity building
- Set challenging but achievable goals and measure results
- Exhibit a positive, “can do” attitude toward our partnership and our work

*In support of our partnership we are other-centered and value teamwork.*

**Other Centered:** While each of us strives for the highest level of personal performance, we are also committed to serving our colleagues and helping them be the best they can be.

- Listen – really listen – to hear what others are saying
- Respond in a timely manner
- Strive to exceed expectations in meeting others needs
- Share what you learn with others
- Keep yourself and others safe for the benefit of their contributions
- Proactively seek input, criticism and advice from others with whom we work

**Team Oriented:** We believe more gets accomplished through teamwork than by individual effort alone. Externally and internally, we build healthy and successful partnerships that are inclusive of diverse abilities and points of view, create win-win solutions, celebrate success, and foster trust.

- Demonstrate a fundamental belief in the capacity of fellow volunteers, PCTA staff, and agency partners.
- Ensure each person understands how his/her job connects to the larger vision
- Set high expectations, monitor, measure, close performance gaps and celebrate success
- Look for and recognize achievement
- Address performance or behavioral issues directly, quickly and privately
- Encourage respectful dissent – Be intolerant of disrespect
- Share information and knowledge
- Encourage participation by all members of the team
- Talk about “we” more than “I”
- Have fun

## **2. Steps to Resolve Conflict**

The PCT Partnership conflict resolution process is designed to help volunteers, PCTA staff, and agency partners resolve concerns about unfair treatment or dissatisfaction that is related to work or the program. We strongly encourage all members to follow the steps below:

1. Talk directly to the person you are in conflict with or discuss it during a project meeting. If this is not effective proceed to step number two.
2. Contact the one of the following conflict resolution committee members to assist with resolution. If this is not effective go to step number three. Conflict Resolution Committee Members:

- PCTA:
  - Trail Operations Manager, Jennifer Tripp  
jtripp@pcta.org, 916-285-1853

- Trail Operations Director, Mike Dawson  
mdawson@pcta.org, 206-463-9087
  - BCHC:
    - State Membership Coordinator, Chip Herzig  
chryvchip@msn.com, 951-769-3781
    - State President, Dennis Serpa  
dmserpa@cwnet.com, 209- 848-4017
    - Shasta Trinity Chapter President, Sam Burrows  
sburrows@frontier.com, 530-646-7336
  - US Forest Service:
    - Shasta-Trinity NF Ken Graves  
kgravesthepacker@yahoo.com, 530- 524-1167
    - Inyo NF Packer Michael Morse  
mmorse@fs.fed.us, 760-924-5511
3. If a successful resolution isn't reached in step 2, the parties in conflict or the conflict resolution committee may schedule an appointment to discuss the matter with:
- USFS PCT Program Manager, Beth Boyst  
bboyst@fs.fed.us, 707-562-8881
  - BLM NLCS Program Leader, Mark Conley  
mconley@blm.gov, 916-978-4641
  - BCHC President, Dennis Serpa  
dmserpa@cwnet.com, 209-848-4017
  - PCTA Trail Operations Director, Mike Dawson  
mdawson@pcta.org, 206-463-9087

Teach these above reminders to your team and review the steps with them. Get the parties to see how solving the conflict is inevitably beneficial to them and the group, and get them to commit to solving it. Crew leaders, PCTA staff, and agency partners must step in to immediately address complaints that include sexual harassment, gender inequality, safety (of self and others) and any form of discrimination.

### **3. Partnership Code of Conduct**

All volunteers, staff, and agency partners are expected to follow the PCT Partnership Code of Conduct. These are activities that will be considered grounds for immediate removal from a project and termination from a sponsored volunteer agreement:

- Inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol.
- Fighting, insubordination, threatening behavior, threats of violence, or verbal abuse.
- Stealing, vandalism, or damage to property.
- Sexual harassment or racism.
- Willful disregard for individual or group safety.
- Possession and use of weapons, firearms, or fireworks. **Note:** Packers are allowed to carry firearms on projects as long as they comply with local regulations and notify the crew leader.

## **4. Volunteer Packers Rights and Responsibilities**

All parties acknowledge the packers' rights and responsibilities for managing his/her pack stock. The project or crew leader is the person in charge of the volunteers and/or youth corps crew. Both the packer and the crew leader must comply with the job hazard analysis requirements and agency policies to ensure a safe and productive work project.

*As a volunteer packer, you have the right to:*

**Do meaningful and satisfying work.** We value the time and energy you are dedicating to the PCT. We understand that this is a significant commitment and your time and energy needs to be used effectively.

**Work in a safe environment.** Safety is a priority when working on the trail. You will receive appropriate training and supervision, including safety protocol and proper tool use. You should never feel pressured to push yourself beyond your personal physical limits. You should be briefed by the staff and/or the project leader on the scope of the project – trailhead location, distance and type of terrain to be packed, amount of supplies to be packed, and condition of the trail.

**Know about your volunteer packing responsibilities and the purpose of the project.** You should feel empowered to ask questions, provide feedback, and offer input to staff and crew leaders at any time. Report promptly any safety issues or concerns such as inappropriate comments/behavior from others to the crew leader. The staff and crew leaders will also provide you with feedback and input regarding your work as a volunteer to help keep you informed.

**Be treated with respect.** You are a member of a team and you should be treated as such. This means that you need to be treated fairly and you need to know that your work is appreciated.

*As a volunteer packer, it is your responsibility to:*

**Keep the staff and crew leaders informed.** You need to clearly state your background skills, experience, abilities, and expectations to the project leader before the project work begins. All parties understand that projects may require different levels of expertise in packing and that the project leader may require higher levels of packing experience on advanced projects. If issues arise while at the project, you need to communicate with the crew leaders and/or staff. Be open and honest.

**Respect your commitment.** Please remember that you are being relied on. If you need to cancel, provide as much advance notice as possible so other volunteers may have the opportunity to take your spot. If you're going to be late meeting the crew, contact the crew leaders. As a volunteer packer, you need to have the required personal gear, stock experience, and skills to be self-sufficient while working and camping outdoors.

**Treat all others with respect.** As you work with other volunteers and staff, they need to know they can depend on you. Please do not use or be under the influence of illegal drugs or

alcohol or possess dangerous or unauthorized materials. Respecting your crew also means that you will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation and not harm anyone through harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, threats, coercion or other harmful actions.

**Keep the project and campsite a safe environment.** Please abide by the instructions and directions set forth by the crew leaders; they are working to ensure that the project and worksite are safe at all times. Following safety protocol helps provide a safe work environment. This includes using tools properly, receiving the crew leader's permission before assisting with stock or using tools or equipment, notifying crew leader if you are leaving the immediate area, wearing all pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) as identified in the JHA and/or instructed by project leaders, and notifying crew leaders before you reach your physical limits or if you are injured.

Our intent is to ensure that all volunteers and crew members have the best experience possible, to this end; we reserve the right to dismiss you from a project if you are unable to meet these expectations. Your decision to participate as a volunteer is your acknowledgement that you understand and agree to abide by the Volunteer Packer's Rights and Responsibilities.

## **5. Volunteer Training**

Wildfires, wind storms, floods, gravity, and vegetation growth are constant threats to the PCT, the annual maintenance and reconstruction of the trail is a never-ending and monumental undertaking. Such work is typically done by hundreds of volunteers. These volunteers perform hard, physical labor so that others may safely enjoy the beauty and challenge along the trail.

To help our volunteers be successful in their trail work, the PCT Partnership collaborates to provide training for volunteers. The PCT Partnership:

- Collaborates to provide volunteers with trail skills training, first aid and CPR certification, crew leadership skill training, and saw certifications,
- Collaborates to provide training to volunteers and crews working with packers and packer training,
- Collaborates in skill assessment of packers within their respective organizations.