

Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct

8 October 2019

1.0 Introduction

Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NEPARC) 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. NEPARC is an inclusive network, covering all aspects of herpetofaunal conservation and welcoming all who have a passion for conserving amphibians and reptiles. NEPARC is an entity that values inclusion and collaboration; proactivity; responsive and adaptive approaches; scientific integrity; biodiversity; and optimism.

NEPARC is committed to providing a safe, productive, and welcoming environment for all meeting participants. All participants including, but not limited to, Steering Committee (SC) members, attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC) members, service providers, and others are expected to abide by this NEPARC Meeting Code of Conduct. This document relies heavily on the code of conduct used by the Ecological Society of America (Favaro *et al.* 2016), PARC (2018), Midwest PARC (undated) and Southeast PARC (undated). *The majority of this document is adapted from PARC Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct (2018).*

The purpose of this document is to define expected behavior at NEPARC functions and to describe 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 the NEPARC Chair and/or Co-Chairs (see Section 6.1) know. Your opinion is important to us!

2.0 PARC/NEPARC Code of Ethics

PARC/NEPARC will strive to foster a safe and respectful environment for our colleagues and professional contacts. NEPARC members will observe and uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and professional behavior accordingly. All members of the network will practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities within the NEPARC network and will endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or other unprofessional demeanor. NEPARC network 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, electronic (text, email, social media, conference presentation slides), and phone communications.

3.0 NEPARC Meetings Code of Conduct

NEPARC is committed to fostering open dialogue, exchange of scientific ideas, and equal treatment of all participants. All those who take part in NEPARC activities are required to abide by this Meeting Code of Conduct policy.

3.1 Expected behavior at NEPARC Meetings

3.1.1 Participants will:

- Treat all participants with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Be collaborative.
- Communicate openly with respect for others, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Avoid personal attacks directed toward others.
- Be mindful of their surroundings and of their fellow participants. Alert NEPARC Chair and/or Co-Chairs (see Section 6.1) if they notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress.
- Respect the rules, policies, and property of the meeting venue/lodging (on and off site).
- Adhere to State and Federal laws, including wildlife regulations.
- Make sure field equipment used for outings (*e.g.*, field trips) is properly cleaned and disinfected using recommended protocols (recommend NEPARC 2014).
- Treat any live animals or preserved specimens with care and proper handling, and conform to site laws, rules, and regulations for exhibited animals or specimens, including but not limited to proper licensing and precautions for the venue.

3.2 Unacceptable Behavior

3.2.1 Participants will not:

- Harass, intimidate, or discriminate others in any form.

- Engage in physical or verbal abuse.
- Disrupt oral or poster presentations.
- Improperly handle or abuse animals or specimens; remove specimens governed by local laws, rules, or regulations; and/or display live or dead animals without proper paperwork and permissions.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, or national origin; inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces or in presentations; unwanted sexual attention; harassing photography or recording; and threatening or stalking behavior; as well as retaliation for reporting unacceptable behavior.

3.2.2 Participant behavior related to social media use

- Attendees may share snippets of information about presentations, including photos, through social media platforms, such as Twitter. This has the benefit of expanding the footprint of the meeting, so that people who cannot attend the meeting can still learn from the presentations. However, presenters may not want to have pictures or other information from their slide or poster presentations shared (*e.g.*, if they show maps of threatened or endangered species locations; although including information such as this in presentations or posters is discouraged). Please obtain permission from the presenter first before posting online any of their presentation material.
- Presenters should inform the audience orally and/or visually if they wish to hold any of the presentation in confidence. While NEPARC policies may govern NEPARC's use of the material, we cannot assume all members of the audience will follow those policies.

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 malicious intent or that are knowingly false will be viewed as a Code violation.

Violations of the Meeting Code of Ethics should be reported by the complainant to any NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair 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 NEPARC 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 Steering Committee Members.

No Retaliation: No NEPARC member who in good faith reports a violation of the Meeting Code of Conduct shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse consequence from the NEPARC Steering 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.

4.2 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 a NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair. If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior while currently attending a NEPARC 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 NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair. If necessary, a meeting will be arranged between the complainant and members of the NEPARC Ethics Committee. The NEPARC 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 NEPARC meetings.

4.3 Procedure for Addressing Meeting Code of Conduct Violations after a Meeting

The NEPARC 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 NEPARC Ethics Committee, to notify the police if they believe an offense violated the law.

- An allegation of misconduct against a member of the NEPARC network may be filed by contacting NEPARC's Chair and/or Co-chair (see Section 6.2) in writing.
- Upon receipt, the NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair shall transmit copies of the allegation and all supporting materials to all NEPARC Ethics Committee members.
- Within 30 days of receiving all materials, the NEPARC Ethics Committee will make a decision by consensus or majority vote if a reported allegation constitutes a violation of the Meeting Code of Conduct.

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

5.0 Consequences

The NEPARC 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 the first violation. Following the second violation, 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 NEPARC Ethics Committee may proceed directly to Removal, Rescission, or Barring Participation.

5.1 Two Strikes Policy:

- **Strike 1: A Warning for First Violation**
 - 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: Warning, Removal, Rescission, or Barring Participation for a Second Violation**
 - Upon egregious violation, or following the Two Strikes policy (*i.e.*, two violations have been recorded), NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair or venue security may take any action deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal from the meeting without warning or refund.
 - NEPARC's Chair and/or Co-chair reserve the right to prohibit attendance at any future meeting.
 - NEPARC reserves the right to block any person from posting to any NEPARC social media platform for conduct violation.
 - NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair reserves the right to prohibit participation in any future NEPARC working groups or participation/development of NEPARC products or related activities.
 - NEPARC Chair and/or Co-chair may remove the offender from any position within NEPARC, including a Chair, Co-chair, Steering Committee or Work Group position.
 - NEPARC may rescind any awards or endorsements the person or their projects may have received and NEPARC will not consider Code violators who have committed two violations for such awards, endorsements, leadership, or project assignments.

6.0 Contact Information

6.1 NEPARC Chairs contact information

neparc@northeastparc.org

6.2 NEPARC Ethics Committee Positions:

- Chair and/or Co-chair of the NEPARC Steering Committee
- Chair and/or Co-chair of PARC's JNSC
- 1-2 members of NEPARC's Steering Committee
- 1-2 members of PARC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Team

7.0 References:

Ecological Society of America (ESA) Code of Conduct for ESA Events. 2018.

<https://www.esa.org/events/code-of-conduct-for-esa-events/>

Favaro, B., S. Oester, J.A. Cigliano, L.A. Cornick, E.J. Hind, E.C.M. Parsons, and T.J. Woodbury. 2016. Your science conference should have a code of conduct. *Frontiers in Marine Science*. 3(103): 1-4.

[MWPARC] MWPARC Meetings Code of Conduct. Undated.

<https://www.mwparc.org/meetings/2017/MWPARC-Meetings-Code-of-Conduct-FINAL.pdf>

[NEPARC] Northeast Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservaton. 2014. Disinfection of field equipment to minimize risk of spread of chytridiomycosis and ranavirus.

http://www.northeastparc.org/products/pdfs/NEPARC_Pub_2014-02_Disinfection_Protocol.pdf

[PARC] Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. 2018. Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct. 5 pp. http://parcplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/PARC-Ethics_Code-of-Conduct_July-2018-1.pdf

[Southeast PARC] SEPARC Meetings Code of Conduct. Undated.