

# Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh

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## CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



### Guidelines on Conflict of Interest

February 4, 2005

**Preamble:** (*Credit Rob Butcher—Ph.d*)

The purpose of a conflict of interest policy is to remind decision-makers of their responsibility to the organization and to ensure the maintenance of public trust in the organization.

An overly restrictive conflict of interest policy can impede excellent decision-making by excluding from decision making certain individuals on the basis of their other relationships.

The underlying idea in this conflict of interest policy is that if everyone knows of a conflict interest all participants in the decision-making are able to take that into account as they deliberate

A conflict of interest is a situation where one's primary duty to act in the best interests of the organization one serves comes into conflict with another interest or duty. Such other interests or duties include personal, family, business or financial interests.

**General Guidelines:**

Members of the board and committee members should take care to avoid such conflict of interest where possible.

If it is not possible to avoid a conflict of interest the conflict should be declared at the start of the meeting of the board or committee

Perceptions of conflict of interest can be as damaging to the organization and to personal reputation as actual conflicts themselves. We all should err on the side of caution and disclose perceived as well as actual conflicts of interest.

The member should refrain from participating in decisions where he or she has a conflict of interest.

The Chair of the board or committee has the authority to determine, in any particular decision if a member is in a conflict of interest and should therefore refrain from participating.

***Guidelines for Committee Chairs and the Association President:***

Ask whether an outside observer would question the ability of the individual to make a proper decision despite possible considerations of private or personal interest.

Alternately – ask whether the public would believe that the trust relationship between the relevant parties could possibly be maintained if they had accurate information on the potential sources of conflict of interest.

Both approaches should be employed. If the answer to either question is “yes” measures to address the conflict of interest should be imposed.

***Guidelines for Members of Committees and Directors:***

Make all decisions with reference to the best interests of the organization and community.

Treat all information as privileged and confidential.

Recognize the potential for conflict of interest in oneself and others.

Disclose actual and perceived conflicts on interest.

Decline to participate in decisions where you are in conflict of interest.