

WOOD BUFFALO WILDLIFE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

INSTITUTE POLICIES

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1.0 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

The Institute relies on its member volunteers to help build the long-term sustainability of our ecological and wildlife projects and to increase the visibility of the Institute in the community. Members will share our objectives, whether they are interested in working with wildlife in their current or future career or interested in fulfilling a personal passion for the wellbeing of wildlife.

Members will have opportunities to actively participate in Institute projects. Participation involving animal handling and remote field activities will be limited to those meeting a minimum age requirement. In general, the following age guidelines apply:

- Youths under the age of 14 years are not eligible for membership and will only be permitted to observe during structured and scheduled educational events.
- Youth members who are 14 to 15 years old and accompanied by an adult (parent or guardian) Institute member may be allowed to participate and receive training, limited to what is safe for the animal and the member.
- Youth members who are 16 to 17 years old may actively participate and receive training, provided that their parent or legal guardian has signed a waiver of liability.

Members are also encouraged to actively participate in delivering some of our membership benefits to other members. Where members possess the appropriate skills and knowledge, participation may include:

- mentoring other members, providing guidance, skills transfer, and personal growth opportunities for both the mentor and the mentee;
- contributing to our community outreach program by providing webinars, training, and educational seminars;
- arranging for guest speakers and other knowledgeable persons to provide interactive information sharing sessions that allow members to expand their knowledge and skills;
- contributing information, project updates, member stories, relevant wildlife or environmental industry updates, and research best practices to social media pages and newsletters;
- contributing to the preparation of Institute articles and reports; and
- participating in fundraising activities, identifying sponsors to provide funding for Institute projects.

Members are eligible to become Directors of the Institute in order to help fulfil the mission and vision of the Institute.

The Institute offers Voting and Non-Voting (Associate) memberships. Non-Voting memberships are issued in unique situations and will be decided by the Institute Board as the need arises.

Voting members are entitled to receive notice of, attend, and vote at all Members Meetings and each Voting Member shall be entitled to one (1) vote at such meetings. The Voting Member shall have the right to elect the Directors and be elected as a Director.

Non-Voting (Associate) members are entitled to receive notice of and attend Members Meetings but shall not have any right to vote or elect any of the Directors or be elected as Directors.

Both classes of membership are valid from April 1 to March 31 and must be renewed annually through the payment of membership dues.

Membership is applied for through Better Impact, accessed through the Join Today link on the WBWR Website.

Membership Categories	Annual Dues
Adult Membership	\$25
Youth (14 to 17 years of age*) Membership	\$15
Family Membership**	\$40

* Proof of age may be requested before approval of membership

** Single membership including all named family members 14+ years of age living in the same household, at the same address. A Family Membership entitles the family to one (1) vote at Institute meetings

2.0 INSTITUTE POLICIES

The policies set out below are at the core to supporting the well-being of members participating in our programs, and of the Institute as a whole. As projects develop and the Institute matures, additional policies may be implemented. Members will receive policy updates as a normal component of Institute communications. All members are expected to comply with these policies, including as amended or introduced, as a condition of membership.

2.1 Safety Policy

The WBWRI will provide a safe and healthy environment within which to conduct its activities.

The Institute will develop and implement procedures and practices to protect the safety and health of members, and of those with whom members interact during project activities. These will vary by project and circumstances, being adaptable to the risks as they arise. Safety incidents and near misses will be reported according to procedures in place for the project. Safety performance will be assessed, including by frequent review of safety documentation, and through feedback from members participating in Institute programs.

2.2 Commitment Policy

The WBWRI is committed to providing practical hands-on training and field and data collection opportunities to its members who volunteer on Institute projects. The Institute may screen potential volunteers to assess their commitment to participate, and to determine the level of training required.

Members who have committed to volunteer in an activity but who later become unable due to illness or emergency must notify the project lead as soon as possible. All other circumstances will require advance notice, preferably two weeks, to allow sufficient time to offer the opportunity to other interested members.

2.3 Field Training and Competency Policy

The WBWRI will provide the training necessary to participate in field activities, including the training to conduct these activities safely. Members must complete the training programs that are related to their volunteer activities before taking part in those activities. Experienced and

knowledgeable members will mentor new members until such time that new members are deemed competent to perform their volunteer responsibilities. Members will not be allowed to independently perform their responsibilities unless deemed competent to do so.

Members will be deemed competent following training and mentoring, and after gaining sufficient experience. A designated WBWRI trainer will sign-off on member qualifications before the member will be permitted to independently perform field activities.

The following documentation and processes are used to assess competency, and ensure continuous learning and performance improvement:

- eligibility to obtain and hold provincial and federal permits where possession of these documents is a requirement to conduct project activities;
- training and sign-off on activities with elevated risk, such as the use of wildlife deterrents and handling wildlife; and
- review and feedback of data recorded as part of field activities.

All members are subject to continuous evaluation and performance review through the duration of their participation in field activities.

2.4 Volunteering Alone Policy

Volunteering alone means to conduct volunteer activities alone at a project site or travel to a project site in circumstances where assistance is not readily available in the event of an injury, illness, or emergency. Volunteering alone does not mean volunteering by oneself or apart from others if assistance is readily available. The Institute will not allow any member to volunteer alone.

However, members may be asked to travel alone when driving is included as part of volunteer activities. A journey management plan will be required in the event that a member is asked to drive alone for longer than one hour. This journey management plan will include a safety contact, a person who will be aware of the member's location, activities, and travel plans, and available to respond should the member not communicate as expected. An effective means of communication must be available for the member to maintain regular communications with the designated safety contact.

2.5 Communication & Spokesperson Policy

The Institute strives to always convey a respectful professional image. Members are to ensure their communications are respectful, professional, clear and accurate, in an appropriate tone that reflects positively on the Institute.

The WBWRI President will serve as Institute spokesperson, except in the instance when the President formally delegates this responsibility to another Institute member. Members cannot, under any circumstances (including on a "no-name" or "off the record" basis) speak on behalf of the WBWRI unless authorized to do so by the Institute President. As relating to the Institute, members cannot initiate contact with the media, respond to media requests, respond to inquiries from the public, or make any commitment on behalf of the Institute to any party. Members who are asked to make statements or speak on behalf of the WBWRI are to refer all such requests to the President (or a Board member if the President is unavailable).

2.6 Photography Policy

Photographs may be taken while participating at an Institute event, providing that approval to take photographs has first been approved by a WBWRI project lead. Taking of photographs must not interfere with the ability to complete volunteer obligations and must not cause undue stress to any animal being photographed.

Photographs taken at an Institute event will be the property of the WBWRI and must be shared with the WBWRI. These photographs may be used for promotional purposes, including posting on the WBWRI's social media pages, with due credit given. Posting of photographs on personal social media accounts must be approved by a WBWRI project lead or Institute Board member. Approved photographs posted to personal social media accounts must be tagged as @WBWRI or as any other protocol used by the social media site that identifies the WBWRI.

Under no circumstances will videos be allowed to record any animal or activity, at any time, during any WBWRI event. Abuse of this photography policy may result in termination of volunteer opportunities, and possible revocation of membership.

2.7 Privacy Policy

Institute members are entitled to the rights of personal privacy and the confidentiality of personal information. Members are under no obligation to reveal their race, religion, political alliances, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status, disability, source of income, the receipt of public assistance, or any other personal characteristic that the WBWRI does not require to facilitate volunteer opportunities or membership.

Personal information provided to the WBWRI will be limited to that required to maintain a safe, healthy and effective relationship between the Institute and its members, and this information will be held in confidence, compliant with legislative requirements.

The WBWRI maintains a membership list with contact information that is used for internal administrative purposes including compliance with Institute By-laws, and for communication with members. Institute communications will strive to protect a member's personal information. Institute email distributions to members will use the blind CC: option to avoid unnecessary disclosure of member email addresses.

2.8 Respectful Conduct Commitment

The WBWRI is committed to providing positive experiences and a professional atmosphere that encourages openness and tolerance for all its members, and an environment in which all members are treated with dignity and respect. The maintenance of such an environment is a responsibility shared by everyone.

While acting in any way associated with the Institute, members must respect that the WBWRI values an inclusive and diverse environment. All members are required to read and sign the WBWRI Respectful Conduct Policy and Procedures, to acknowledge their understanding of this policy and of their requirements within it.

The WBWRI is committed to treating each concern with sensitivity and will take any required actions, including education, investigation, and reporting to enforcement authorities as appropriate.

2.8.1 Respectful Conduct Policy and Procedures

While acting in any way associated with the Institute, members must not engage in any form of Violence, Discrimination, Bullying, or Harassment, sexual or otherwise. This includes any unwelcome conduct and abuse by WBWRI members directed towards another person, or such conduct by another person directed towards an Institute member. Violations of this policy may result in immediate termination of a member's membership and volunteer opportunities.

The WBWRI prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a report pursuant to this policy or participates in any investigation. Retaliation against an individual for making a report under this policy, or for participating in an investigation is a serious violation of this policy and may be subject to termination of the member's membership and volunteer opportunities.

2.8.2 Definitions:

"Discrimination" means any unwelcome or objectionable conduct, comment, display or behaviour that is directed at an individual; that is made on the basis of the individual's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place or origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation, or any other prohibited ground of discrimination under applicable human rights legislation, that detrimentally affects the environment or leads to adverse consequences for the individual. Harassment is a form of discrimination.

"Harassment" means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a member, or adversely affects the member's health and safety.

- Harassment includes any conduct, comment, bullying or action because of an individual's race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation or any other protected ground under applicable human rights legislation.
- Harassment does not include any reasonable action taken by the WBWRI, relating to the management and direction of the WBWRI, its members, or management and direction of its project sites. Conflicts may arise due to differences in personalities, lifestyles, opinions, or simple misunderstandings. Differences of opinions, personality conflicts, and minor disagreements among members are not considered Harassment.
- Harassment includes **"Sexual Harassment"**, which is one of the most common forms of Harassment. Sexual Harassment is coercive and one-sided, and encompasses a wide range of unwelcome, deliberate and unsolicited sexually directed comments or behaviours. Sexual Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or between members of the same sex. Sexual Harassment may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as uninvited touching, offensive comments or innuendos, that have the purpose or effect of adversely impacting the individual's performance and/or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

"Bullying" is defined as a repeated pattern of negative behaviour aimed at a specific person or group, and can involve Harassment or Discrimination. Although it may include physical abuse or

the threat of physical abuse, Bullying often involves rudeness, hostility, and intimidation. For the purposes of this policy, Bullying is a form of Harassment. Bullying and Harassment can happen: face-to-face, by letter, by email, by phone/texting, or by any other social media venue. Bullying may, but does not always, involve a superior misusing or abusing influence or authority over another individual.

“Violence”, whether at a project site or related to WBWRI work, is defined as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct (physical force) by a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm. For the purposes of this policy, “Violence” includes Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence, which are defined as follows:

- **“Domestic Violence”** is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom the person has, or has had, a personal relationship, including dating, marriage, adult interdependent partnerships, custody, blood relationships and adoption, as well as relationships stemming from these situations. This can range from subtle, intimidating behaviours to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Domestic Violence becomes a hazard, not a limited personal issue, when it occurs at, or spills over into, a project site or where the WBWRI conducts its business, putting the targeted member at risk and posing a threat to other members.
- **“Sexual Violence”** refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a member’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a setting where the WBWRI business is conducted. Sexual Violence exists on a continuum which can range from anything from obscene name-calling to sexual assault and includes online sexual violence including internet threats and sexual exploitation.

2.8.3 Responsibilities:

The Institute will:

- Take steps to eliminate or control the hazard of Harassment and Violence to prevent harm to members.
- Investigate incidents and take corrective actions, when required.
- Provide training to members on:
 - The contents of this policy, procedures and control measures.
 - Recognizing conduct prohibited by this policy.
 - How to obtain assistance.
 - Reporting incidents and investigation procedures.

Project Leads must:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Ensure that members comply with this policy, which includes ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, that none of the members under their supervision are subjected to or participate in conduct prohibited by this policy.
- Train members on the contents of this policy, as necessary.
- Encourage reporting by members.
- Participate in any training.
- Participate in any investigation of an incident under their supervision.

Members must:

- Not cause or participate in Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying or Violence.
- Use this policy to address incidents of alleged Harassment, Violence or retaliation with the Institute.
- Participate in any training.
- Participate in any investigation of an incident.

2.8.4 Complaint Procedures

A member who believes that they have been subjected to Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment, Violence or retaliation, where possible, is encouraged to clearly and firmly make it known to the alleged offender that their conduct is objectionable and must stop.

The Institute encourages the reporting of all incidents of Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment, Violence or retaliation, regardless of the respondent's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct contrary to this policy who are unable to address the issue with the alleged individual or where the individual does not cease their conduct must report the incident to the President of the Institute. Where the complaint involves the President, it should be directed to the Board of the Institute.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective methods of resolving actual or perceived incidents of Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment and Violence. The Institute will attempt to resolve allegations of Harassment and Violence quickly and fairly to stop the conduct.

Once a complaint has been filed, it will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially. The investigation will be initiated immediately and completed within 90 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Institute will notify the alleged respondent of the status of the investigation. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the Institute will inform the complainant and the respondent of the results of the investigation.

2.8.5 Outcome of Investigation

Where Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment, Violence or retaliation has been substantiated, the Institute will take appropriate action. The results and actions will be reviewed with the complainant and alleged offender. Corrective action may include training or monitoring. Other action may include terminating the member's membership.

Where Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment, Violence or retaliation has not been substantiated, no action will be taken against a member who has made a complaint in good faith. Where a complaint is proven to be fraudulent or malicious (as distinct from unfounded or unsubstantiated), the member who made the complaint may face immediate termination of volunteer opportunities and have their membership revoked.

2.8.6 Confidentiality

The Institute will not disclose the identity of the complainant, the respondent, any witnesses or the circumstances of the complaint, except where disclosure is required to investigate the

incident or take corrective action, communicate the outcome of the investigation, by law, or where disclosure is necessary to warn members of a specific or general threat of violence or potential violence. Only the minimum amount of personal information necessary will be provided to warn members.

2.8.7 External Complaints

If the circumstances warrant at any time following the report of Harassment, Violence or retaliation, the Institute may refer the complainant to the police or another appropriate authority.

Nothing in this policy is intended to discourage or prevent a member from exercising any other legal rights pursuant to any other law, including filing a complaint with occupational health and safety or any other administrative body or authority.

End of document.