

Red Deer River Naturalists Policies



Updated May 2011

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Executive and Board

1. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: If all positions cannot be filled at the Annual General Meeting, the Executive is authorized to present names of potential candidates to a regular General Meeting at anytime following.
2. *Policy (November, 1987)*: Board Members are expected to comply with "Guidelines for Board Members" dated November 1987.
3. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: The Executive shall review the policy manual in September of each year.
4. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: The Board will appoint a member of RDRN to keep a record of all members of the Society, their addresses and phone numbers.
5. *Policy (January 27, 1997)*: The treasurer will pay regular bills as they are received and report such payments for notation in the minutes to the Board at the next regular meeting.
6. *Policy (August 25, 1997)*: Any Board member who misses three consecutive meetings of the Board without permission from the Board may be deemed to have resigned his/her position on the Board.
7. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: Executive members of RDRN may speak or sign documents on behalf of the Society provided that
 - a. the Board has given prior approval to do so, and/or
 - b. the President, or designate, has granted approval, and
 - c. the content of the communication meets the objectives of the Society.
8. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: Individuals elected to an Executive position on the Board will hold such positions for a period not to exceed three consecutive terms. (Definition: **term**: the time from one Annual General Meeting to the subsequent Annual General Meeting.)
9. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: Board members must declare potential or perceived conflicts of interest when such occurrences arise.
10. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: Purchase of office supplies is permitted when authorized by two of the three persons granted signing authority.
11. *Policy (May 20, 2008)*: The secretary shall maintain two sets of minutes of each meeting to be stored in an appropriately marked binder. These minutes shall be co-signed by the President and the Secretary upon acceptance of the minutes. In the absence of either person, the Board shall designate a signatory. (Clarification: One set of minutes resides with RDRN; the second set is passed on to the Red Deer Archives.)
12. *Policy (May 20, 2008)*: The President and the Treasurer shall sign the annual audited financial statement as a guarantee of the accuracy of said statement. Notwithstanding those signatures, the Board, collectively and individually guarantees the accuracy of audited financial statement.

13. *Policy (April 19, 2011)*: No Director, officer or member of a committee of the Society shall be liable for the acts, receipts, neglects or defaults of any other Director or officer or member of a committee, employee of the Society, or for joining in any receipt or other act of conformity, or for any loss, damage or expense happening to the Society through the insufficiency or deficiency of title to any property acquired by order of the Board or on behalf of the Society, or for the insufficiency or deficiency of any security in or upon which any of the monies of the Society shall be invested, or for any loss or damage arising from the bankruptcy, insolvency or tortuous act of any person with whom any of the monies, securities, or effects of the Society shall be deposited, or for any loss occasioned by any error of judgment or oversight on their part, or for any other loss, damage, or misfortune whatsoever which shall happen in the execution of the duties of their office or in relation thereto unless the same shall happen through their own willful neglect or default, dishonesty, or bad faith.
14. *(April 19, 2011)*: The Directors and former Directors of the Board, officers and former officers, members and former members of all committees of the Society and each of them, and each of their respective heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns, shall from time to time and at all times be indemnified and saved harmless by, and out of the assets and profits of the Society from and against all costs, charges, losses, damages, liabilities, claims and expenses which they, or any of them, or any of their heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns, shall or may incur or sustain by reason of the performance of their duties or purported duty in their respective office, except such (if any) as they shall incur or sustain by or through their own willful neglect or default, dishonesty or bad faith, respectively. This indemnification is in addition to, but not exclusive of, any other rights of indemnification to which the members and former members of the Board, officers and former officers and member and former members of all committees of the Society may be entitled to at law or in equality.

Vision, Mission, Values

1. *Policy (March 26, 2001): RDRN's vision is Ecological wisdom is the norm.*
2. *Policy (March 26, 2001): RDRN's mission is to educate and involve community in responsible environmental stewardship.*
3. *Policy (March 26, 2001): RDRN's values are Hope, Wisdom, and Joy.*

Policies

1. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: The policy manual may be revised by a simple majority of the members present at a regular Board meeting after one month's notice of intention.

Use of RDRN name

1. *Policy (March 24, 1997)*: RDRN may permit the use of the Society's name by individuals or groups seeking support for projects to be carried out by those individuals or groups provided that:
 - a. the project meets the objectives of RDRN
 - b. the proposal is made in writing.
 - c. proof of solid financial circumstances and organizational capacity are demonstrated (either real or projected):.
 - d. the term of the support will be for the time specified.
 - e. there is a procedure for progress and final reports.
 - f. RDRN's contribution is acknowledged.
 - g. the Board approves the application.

Logo

1. *Policy (August 25, 1997):* The Logo is protected as a trademark (Definition: TM).
2. *Policy (August 25, 1997):* The Logo of RDRN may be used with permission from the Board on official documents of RDRN.
 - a. Official documents include all of the following used on behalf of the Society: letterhead, envelopes, FAX transmissions, electronic mail and other electronic transmissions, documents prepared for internal use by the organization, documents prepared for use on behalf of the society, membership cards.
 - b. Official documents specifically do not include use on any commercial or private correspondence.
3. *Policy (August 25, 1997):* The Logo of RDRN may be used on Society documents to be duplicated by any means for legitimate distribution to others.
4. *Policy (August 25, 1997):* The Logo of RDRN may be used on business cards for use by the Board when representing the Society.
5. *Policy (August 25, 1997):* The Logo of RDRN may be used on souvenir products sanctioned by the Board.



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Media Relations

1. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: Members of RDRN do not present personal statements as representative of the Society.

Focus Groups

1. *Policy (May 27, 1997)*: RDRN supports and encourages the formation of Focus Groups within the general membership. (Note: There are procedures for starting a focus group in the handbook.)

Membership on Other Boards

1. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN will only appoint members in good standing as representatives on Boards, committees and to other organizations.

Committees

1. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: The chairperson and other members of committees can be chosen from the directors or appointed by the Executive.
2. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: The Board will maintain a finance committee which will meet at least twice a year and which will advise the Board on all matters financial. This committee will be composed of the Treasurer, the President (or designate), and one other Board member.
3. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: The Board may maintain an issues committee that will meet as required.
 - a. The committee will receive and review any communications of interest to the membership.
 - b. The chair will have the authority, after consulting with the President, or designate, to establish sub-committees to deal with issues as they arise.
4. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: The Board will maintain an education committee to arrange the January, February, March, April, September, October, and November members' meetings and to organize and carry out educational programs that the Board may initiate from time to time.
5. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: The Board will maintain a phone committee for the purpose of contacting the membership on issues that may arise, or to dispense RDRN information as required.

Financial

1. *Policy (May 20, 2008):* Under the rules of Revenue Canada, RDRN designates any one person with current signing power the authority to sign donation receipts for the purpose of income tax deductions.

Financial Support

1. *Policy (March 24, 1997 Revised March 24, 2003)*: RDRN may support requests for financial assistance by individuals or organizations for projects provided that:
 - a. the project is unique and meets the objectives of RDRN.
 - b. the proposal is made in writing.
 - c. the support will not commit the Society to an unbudgeted financial deficit.
 - d. the project will end at a specified time.
 - e. proof of solid financial circumstances is demonstrated (either real or projected).
 - f. there is a procedure for progress and final reports.
 - g. RDRN's contribution is acknowledged.
 - h. the Board approves the proposal.
2. *Policy (November 20, 2007)*: Members of RDRN who are sent by the Board as delegates to hearings, interventions, conventions or any other type of event will be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. Vehicle expenses. (Expenses within the City of Red Deer will not be covered.)
 - b. Expenses to locations less than 80 kilometres from an individual's residence will not be covered.
 - c. To other Alberta locations @ 50¢ per kilometre on a round trip basis or full bus fare.
 - d. Accommodations at \$50.00 per night approved in advance and claimed with appropriate receipts.
 - e. Meals to a maximum of \$15.00 per day and claimed with appropriate receipts.
 - f. Individuals may donate expenses back to RDRN if they so desire.
3. *Policy (September 23, 1997)*: RDRN will reimburse expenses of a general nature incurred by members when
 - a. a receipt for such expenses is supplied and,
 - b. the Board has given prior approval for the individual to incur such expenses, or
 - c. the President and the secretary or the treasurer have given prior approval for the individual to incur such expenses.
4. *Policy (October 16, 2007)*: RDRN will issue receipts for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing volunteer duties. These expenses must be invoiced to RDRN on a form provided by RDRN. RDRN will pay the volunteer and the volunteer will provide a cheque of equal value back to RDRN. A tax receipt will then be issued for the cash donation.

Donations to groups/individuals/organizations

1. *Policy (Jan 28, 2000)*: Subject to yearly budgetary approval by the Board, RDRN will make the following donations:
 - a. Alberta Wilderness Association
 - b. Sierra Legal Defense Fund
 - c. Environmental Law Centre, Edmonton
 - d. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

Recognition for individuals for field trips/focus groups

1. *Policy (Sept 15, 2009)*: RDRN provides a suitable recognition to individuals who donate time or make a significant contribution to a field trip or focus groups; the recognition at the discretion of the RDRN's coordinator and not to exceed a value of \$100.

Membership in other organizations

1. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN will, subject to yearly resolution, join Nature Alberta, Canadian Nature Federation, and/or the Alberta Environmental Network.

Support of Issues

1. *Policy (March 24, 1997)*: RDRN may become involved in an issue if
 - a. a written request is received, and
 - b. the issue is clearly identifiable within the confines of the objectives of RDRN, and the costs involved are within the limits as set by Board resolution, and
 - c. there are human resources available and willing to do the necessary research, writing of submissions, and attending of meetings and hearings to make the support worthwhile, and
 - d. the Board approves the involvement.

2. *Policy (October 27, 1997)*: RDRN may participate in issues of concern in the following priority:
 - a. local (including the City of Red Deer, all regions of the County of Red Deer, and
 - b. all regions of the County of Lacombe);, the Red Deer River Drainage Basin, Provincial, National, and International.

2. *Policy (September 28, 1999)*: RDRN does not advocate or condone any act of violence or activity dangerous to people or property.

Newsletter

1. Policy (September 22, 1997): RDRN will publish a newsletter during the months from September to May each year.
 - c. The executive or Board will appoint an editor(s) for the newsletter.
 - d. The Executive or Board may appoint other members as assistants to the editor as deemed necessary.
 - e. The Editor will report to the President or designate.

Addendum: The Annual President's Report will be printed in the Newsletter. All other reports will be posted on the website.

Donations from groups/individuals/organizations

1. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN will accept donations (financial and/or in kind): provided that:
 - a. the donation places no obligation on RDRN to support or condone in any manner, financial, moral or otherwise any activity, request, intervention, or any other action by the donor.
 - b. the terms of the donation are made in writing.
 - c. no conflict of interest is demonstrated for any member of the Society.

Support in Principle for other environmental organizations

1. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Alberta Environment Network.
2. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Alberta Native Plant Council.
3. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Alberta Wilderness Society.
4. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Canadian Environmental Network.
5. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.
6. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Castle Crown Wilderness Society.
7. *Policy (October 27, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle and maintains membership on the Board of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists.
8. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Kerry Wood Nature Centre.
9. *Policy (September 22, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Kerry Wood Nature Centre Association.
10. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN provides support in principle to Nature Canada.
11. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Sierra Legal Defense Fund.
12. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the Society for Environmentally Responsible Livestock Operations (in Alberta).
13. *Policy (April 28, 1997)*: RDRN provides support in principle to the World Wildlife Federation.

Privacy of information collected

1. *Policy (March 24, 2003)*: RDRN and members of RDRN are not permitted to use or publish personal information, including but not exclusively confined to names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, personal website information, or any other information gathered by the organization except as required by the organization or with prior authorization by the individual.

Speakers for General Meetings

1. *Policy (January 9, 2013)*: RDRN uses these guidelines for booking speakers for our general meetings in February, March, April, September, October, and November:
 - a. Travel expenses for speakers is \$0.50 per kilometer.
 - b. Supper is provided for the speaker. If spouse accompanies a meal will be offered for that person.
 - c. One hotel/motel room will be provided if required. Reasonably priced accommodations are used.
 - d. An honorarium of \$200 is offered to each speaker.
 - e. The speaker budget can be exceeded in cases where necessary to obtain the services of a certain speaker.

2. *(Policy: April 17, 2012)* When hiring a speaker/facilitator, the person hired shall have personal knowledge that will contribute to the advancement of the objectives of RDRN and shall be qualified in at least one of the following categories:
 - a. Possesses a Masters or Doctorate from a recognized University.
 - b. Is currently a candidate for a Masters or Doctorate from a recognized University.
 - c. Is a published author.
 - d. Is an advanced amateur in a given field and is vetted by members of RDRN.
 - e. Has had an experience through travel, personal research, or otherwise gained specialized knowledge of interest.

Habitat Stewardship

1. *Policy (April 28, 2000)*: The Red Deer River Naturalists require the following criteria for the designation of an area under the Habitat Stewardship program:
 - a. Ecological Integrity: The property should be in a natural or near natural state, with forests, wetlands, or native grasses and/or a combination thereof. This property should have low levels of disturbance (for example: grazing, pesticides, human impact, etc.):
 - b. Diversity of Habitat: Desirable features may be a variety of plant and animal life, resulting from variable landforms, soil types and geography. Diversity in habitat will allow for feeding and breeding sites, wildlife movement and/or over-wintering grounds.
 - c. Size: Historically, a 5-acre (2 hectare): minimum has been place on properties in the Red Deer River Naturalists Habitat Steward Program. However, it is recognized that smaller land parcels are important and contribute to the preservation of plants and animals.
 - d. Semi-permanent to permanent wetlands of any size with a buffer that contains evidence of cattails, sedges and/or willow and remain uncultivated are eligible.
 - e. Smaller treed and grassland areas having features that a landowner believes are worth preserving will be reviewed.
 - f. Unique and Special Features: Some properties may have special or unique features. These properties may include areas that are:
 - i. Remnants of larger natural communities such as grassland, forest and/or wetland
 - i. Rare plants and animals
 - ii. Species of educational or interpretive interest
 - iii. Areas of unique natural beauty

2. *Policy (March 27, 2000)*: The Red Deer River Naturalists accept the following as Terms of Reference for the Habitat Stewardship Program:
 - a. The RDRN Habitat Steward Program criteria (as outlined in the RDRN policies): will pertain to all of the following programs where relevant:
 - i. RDRN Habitat Stewardship Program
 - ii. Education
 - iii. Fundraising
 - iv. Partnerships with other steward programs
 - v. Local, national and international liaison with other naturalist groups and programs
 - vi. Pertinent legislations
 - vii. Land acquisition
 - viii. Alberta Government Volunteer Steward Program
 - b. The RDRN Habitat Steward Program
 - i. Purpose: This is a recognition program to promote and encourage the preservation and conservation of biodiversity on natural landscapes and to ensure its long-term ecological integrity.
 - ii. Objectives:
 - Follow the RDRN Habitat Steward program criteria as set out in the RDRN policy handbook.
 - Actively seek new stewards via the media, displays, promotion,

- RDRN newsletters, and through current stewards.
 - Increase awareness of the importance of habitat protection.
 - Maintain contact with steward through phone calls, newsletters and field trips.
 - Maintain and update record of Habitat steward information.
 - Tour Habitat Steward properties at the request of the landowners.
 - Respond to Habitat Steward concerns and provide information.
- c. Education
- i. Purpose: To increase knowledge and understanding of conservation measures that deal with our environment, wildlife and natural resources.
 - ii. Objectives:
 - Promote all of the listed programs
 - Provide information on various concerns through the use of newsletters
 - Host/organize field trips/workshops/presentations
 - Maintain a habitat preservation committee link on future RDRN websites
- d. Fundraising:
- i. Purpose: Actively seek funds to facilitate all these programs, as the need arises.
 - ii. Objectives:
 - Investigate potential funders such as foundations, corporations and agencies
 - Submit funding proposals and/or make presentations to potential funders.
- e. Partnerships with other steward programs
- i. Purpose: To encourage a stewardship program of lands in association with other agencies
 - ii. Objectives:
 - To assist in monitoring lands as requested.
 - To facilitate and exchange of information on conservation methods.
- f. Local, national and international liaison
- i. Purpose: To establish liaison with any local, national, international natural history group with interests and objectives similar to those of RDRN.
 - ii. Objectives:
 - Establish and maintain a list of similar natural history groups.
 - Use all media available to communicate with these groups.
- g. Pertinent legislation:
- i. Purpose: To influence legislation relevant to the objectives of the committee.
 - ii. Objectives:
 - To be aware of legislation pertaining to land stewardship programs
 - To respond to such legislation.
 - To follow up proposed changes to such legislation.
 - To provide the committee's viewpoint to RDRN
- h. Land acquisition:
- i. Purpose: Participants agree to preserve their habitat in perpetuity.
 - ii. Objectives:

- To acquire land through purchase or donation to RDRN as per the objectives of the Society.
 - To acquire interest in land through the donation of conservation easements.
- a. Alberta Government Volunteer Steward Program
- 1) Purpose: To liaise with Alberta Government Volunteer Steward Program.
 - 2) Objectives:
 - a) To encourage members and nonmembers to participate in the program.
 - b) To have updated lists of locations where stewards are needed.
 - c) To maintain a list of RDRN members who are also volunteer stewards.
 - d) To ensure that at least one RDRN member is a representative at the yearly Volunteer Steward Program conference and to report back to the committee.
 - e) To be aware of legislation pertaining to protected public lands

Evaluation of Legislation

1. *Policy (September 28, 1999)*: RDRN, in reviewing environment protection legislation, evaluates such legislation with these guidelines. Other guidelines may pertain to specific pieces of legislation. The legislation:
 - a. states the purpose for setting aside certain areas. If a single piece of legislation covers a range of protected categories, a statement of purpose must be given for each.
 - b. states the range of activities permitted and those not permitted in each category.
 - c. provides the mechanisms, including that for public consultation, for the establishment and disestablishment of protected areas.
 - d. names each area and establishes its boundaries.
 - e. states which authorities are responsible for management, administration and enforcement.
 - f. states that all policies, guidelines, plans, etc. appended to the legislation must comply with and apply the law without exceptions.

2. *Policy (September 28, 1999)*: RDRN believes that good protective legislation will achieve/call for:
 - a. broad consultation, comprehensive planning, and legislation governing all public lands and their uses in Alberta.
 - b. legislated protected areas - not just policies and plans - with legal boundaries, permitted and forbidden uses.
 - c. legislated protection for ecologically valuable areas.
 - d. regulated access and public accountability for grazing leases.
 - e. restrictive regulations on the use of off-highway vehicles.
 - f. non-reliance on historical and traditional uses of lands.
 - g. protection for endangered species and their habitat.
 - h. industrial roads are not necessarily made available to the public.
 - i. a good standard of protection from industrial development and mechanized recreation in areas large enough to sustain whole ecosystems and withstand natural occurrences such as fire, insect population explosions, and other naturally occurring events.
 - j. protection from new industry and/or commercial development in parks, wilderness areas and Special Places once existing dispositions expire.

Awards

1. *Policy: (May, 1999)*: RDRN believes that outstanding work done by a member of the Society in helping to realize the objectives of the Society should be recognized in a tangible way at the Annual banquet in September by awarding a plaque, certificate or other suitable memento.
 - a. Selection criteria:
 - i. Identifiable work done for a period of at least five years
 - ii. No philosophical or hands on contribution.
 - iii. Selection by a committee of three.
 - iv. Membership invited to submit names and rationale before July 1st of each year.

Participation on Committees

1. *Policy (February 15, 2005):* RDRN will serve on government committees (provincial or national) that meet the following conditions:
 - a. The mandate of the committee states clearly its purpose, goals, objectives, time-lines and the parameters and the legal mandate and regulatory context within which it will function.
 - b. There must be a balance in representation of interests with at least one-third of the chairs occupied by environmental representatives.
 - c. Decisions must be made by clearly defined consensus.
 - d. There must be government agency accountability.
 - e. Expenses (travel, meals, accommodations, etc) for volunteers must be paid by the government.
 - f. The Government must pay honoraria to the volunteer's organization reflecting the amount of work time required to fully participate.
 - g. The government agency will provide all relevant information with written materials provided in advance of any meeting.
 - h. Meetings must be conducted in an open and transparent fashion; reflective minutes must be kept and provided to participants in a timely fashion.

2. *Policy (February 15, 2005):* RDRN will serve on municipal government committees that meet the following conditions:
 - a. The mandate of the committee states clearly its purpose, goals, objectives, time-lines and the parameters and the legal mandate and regulatory context within which it will function.
 - b. There must be a balance in representation of interests with at least one-third of the chairs occupied by environmental representatives.
 - c. Decisions must be made by clearly defined consensus.
 - d. Expenses (travel, meals, accommodations, etc) for volunteers must be paid by the municipality if meetings are held outside a 50 km radius of the volunteer's home.
 - e. The municipality will provide all relevant information with written materials provided in advance of any meeting.
 - f. Meetings must be conducted in an open and transparent fashion; reflective minutes must be kept and provided to participants in a timely fashion.

Advertizing

1. *Policy (April 19, 2005)*: RDRN does not advertize for commercial or political ventures.

Police Background Checks

1. Policy (*May 17, 2011*): Any member of Red Deer River Naturalists, volunteer, or contractor acting on behalf of Red Deer River Naturalists who is the primary organizer of and/or conductor of an activity directly or indirectly sponsored by Red Deer River Naturalists and primarily directed toward a person or persons under the age of eighteen (18) is required by Red Deer River Naturalists to submit to the Red Deer River Naturalists Secretary a police background report before assuming the duties required to carry out said activity. Such police checks must be renewed every five years if said individual continues to be the primary organizer of and/or conductor of an under-18 year-old activity.
2. Policy (*May 17, 2011*): Any member of Red Deer River Naturalists, volunteer, or contractor acting on behalf of Red Deer River Naturalists to conduct an activity directly or indirectly designed for Red Deer River Naturalists and directed toward a person or persons under the age of eighteen (18) shall ensure that a minimum of two (2) adults be present at all times during said activity.

Rental of Equipment

1. Policy (*Jan 19, 2012*): RDRN will rent the PowerPoint projector for personal use by members of RDRN at the rate of \$25 per hour used.