

VWR CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS

"Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching- even when doing the wrong thing is legal."

— Aldo Leopold

A. ETHICS...

1. Never discriminate unfairly by dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone whether for remuneration or not:
 - a. Be impartial
 - b. Don't accept gifts
2. Make no private promises binding on the government.
3. Keep confidentiality and don't use them for profit.

B. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT...

1. Treat all persons with respect, dignity, and courtesy. Display appropriate sensitivity.
2. Maintain a neat and clean appearance.
 - a. Identify yourself as a VWR by wearing a t-shirt or hat to lend some authority.
 - b. If in FS uniform, wear it properly with badge and name tag in the right place.
3. Act like a professional. You are considered an official employee of the Forest Service (but you are not law enforcement).
4. Respect the Forest Service process, even though you may personally disagree with some policies; professionalism over personal opinions.
5. Beware of a conflict of interest. Do not use your VWR privileges for personal gain. (Don't target shoot, fish, or hunt while on a project).
6. Dogs:
 - a. Dogs are NOT permitted in government vehicles.
 - b. In your own vehicle: before bringing a dog, consider the others on the project. Not everyone is comfortable with dogs. Use a leash.
7. Guns:
 - a. FS employees are not allowed to carry firearms. While a volunteer, YOU are an employee, therefore, NO GUNS.
 - b. No guns even when on an overnight but off the project for the night.

8. Family members
 - a. Children, spouse or significant others: If they are contributing to the project, then by all means, bring them. Otherwise, bring them on your trip designed for personal or family activities.
9. Follow "Leave No Trace" principles, including the following:
 1. Plan and Prepare Ahead
 2. Concentrate Impacts in High Use Areas
 3. Spread Use and Impact in Pristine Areas
 4. Avoid Places Where Impact Is Just Beginning
 5. Pack It In, Pack It Out
 6. Properly Dispose of What You Can't Pack Out
 7. Leave What You Find
 8. Use Fire Responsibly

Details at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/psicc/about-forest/districts/?cid=stelprdb5090480>

10. When in uniform:
 - a. Don't deviate from the project by visiting inappropriate places (bars, health clubs, public places where you do not have government business).
11. When in a government vehicle:
 - a. Travel only to and from a government facility and the project site. (deviating to the store, bar, home, school is not authorized).
 - b. Drive as if the world is watching and your name is on the door.
 - c. Drive safely and display courtesy. Don't speed or drive recklessly.
 - d. In a remote setting, when tempted to carry non-FS personnel:
 - i. Call Dispatch for guidance
 - ii. Rule of thumb is give a ride if they are disabled (They got there and planned to get back. We are not a taxi or tow service).
 - e. Do not tow, push, or jumpstart other vehicles.
 - f. Do not allow people to ride in the pickup bed.
 - g. On mountain roads, use extreme caution and remember your special training, e.g. backing, using a spotter, soft roadbed, blind corners, etc.
 - h. Use seat belts while vehicle is moving.

Note: If questionable, use the "reasonable person" yardstick to ask yourself if the behavior is proper or acceptable.

*Remember, when associated with a USFS Vehicle, wearing a FS uniform, or participating on a FS project, **the public accepts you as a Forest Service employee.** Therefore, their expectations of "public service" and a source of help are directed at you.*

C. MAINTAINING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE...

The Forest Service is committed to providing a healthy work place. The agency will insure that we have a safe, productive environment for all employees, volunteers, partners, and contractors. The region enforces a **ZERO Tolerance** policy. Some specific areas to remember and be sensitive to include:

1. **Harassment.** Harassment of any kind is wrong and will not be tolerated.
2. **Discrimination.** Discrimination on the basis of color, race, religion, sex, national origin, age (40+), disability, retaliation for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, and status as a parent.

Be aware of your actions and comments of those around you. Be sensitive to your co-workers. Open communication can often resolve unintentional forms of harassment.

D. OTHER INFO...

1. Emails & Social Media= Trappings of the Modern World
 - a. users beware- the WHOLE world is watching and listening!
 - b. think carefully about pushing the "Send" or "Return" buttons
 - c. don't put anything in an email you wouldn't say to someone in person
 - e. be conscious about what you post. It's for your own personal safety
 - f. remember information can travel almost exponentially on the Internet.
2. Hunting: basic seasons and how sections work and where to find the info:
 - a. LPNF is in 2 regions: Central and South Coast
 - b. game types are organized into Upland and Small Game (rabbits and birds) and Big Game (bear, pig, deer) and several other categories
 - c. there are Zones or locations on the map where hunting takes place
 - d. be beware of the seasons and time of year hunters can hunt specific game
 - e. best practices for when encountering a hunter:
 - safety first- make your presence known (yell, scream, whatever works)
 - immediately hit the ground or back away
 - feel out the situation, ideally have a friendly conversation
 - if they were shooting across a trail or dirt road, politely remind them that it is illegal.

More info: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations/>

3. Marijuana Issues... A "Growing" Concern in the Los Padres

a. The cartels are definitely here!

b. If you see or smell any of the following:

1. sometimes marijuana smells like a skunk on hot days
2. hoses or drip lines located in unusual or unexpected places
3. a well-used trail where there shouldn't be one
4. people standing along roads without vehicles present, or in areas where loitering appears unusual
5. grow sites are usually found in isolated locations, in rough steep terrain
6. camps containing cooking and sleeping areas with food, fertilizer, weapons, garbage, rat poison, and/or dead animals
7. small propane bottles, used to avoid the detection of wood smoke
8. individuals armed with rifles out of hunting season

c. Leave the scene immediately and report to Dispatch

1. to protect your identity, you might never be contacted by FS personnel in the future

more info: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/invo/alertsnotices/?cid=stelprdb5324909>