

Policy Title:	Human Resources Policy and Procedures
Policy Type:	Governance
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Approved by:	Nova Scotia Nature Trust Board of Directors
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust (the Nature Trust) is committed to fostering a positive organizational culture and working/volunteering environment, which is inclusive, fair, and respectful to all our staff, volunteers, contractors, donors, stakeholders, and the community. We recognize that the success of the Nature Trust depends on its people, and we value and appreciate them. Our organizational culture helps to foster and enhance our roles and our work. We act and respond in a respectful, professional way, with open, two-way communication, which fosters these relationships.

2.0 AUTHORITY

The Nature Trust Board of Directors has overall authority and responsibility for all aspects of the organization including establishing and maintaining governance-level human resources policies, including the organization's Human Resources Governance Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Governance Policy, Conflict of Interest Governance Policy, and Organizational Code of Conduct.

The Board may establish a Human Resources Committee drawn from members of the Board, including the Board Chair. Non-board members may be included, at the discretion of the Board. This committee is responsible for those human resources matters delegated to it by the Board.

The Board may hire an Executive Director to assist it in carrying out the work of the organization. The Executive Director is accountable to the Board of Directors. The Board oversees the work of the Executive Director and provides an operating framework and parameters in which to work.

The Executive Director may hire staff to assist in implementing the organizational plans and day-to-day operations, but the Board has only one employee, the Executive Director. Additional human resources hired by the Executive Director, whether staff, volunteer, or contractor, work under the direction of and are accountable to the Executive Director only (or a supervisor delegated by the Executive Director). Board members may not direct the work of staff and requests for staff support/resources should be made via the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the organization including all aspects of employee, volunteer, and contractor management including human resources matters, succession planning, hiring, management, and termination.

Responsibility for operational policies and procedures related to human resources are delegated to the Executive Director, who will inform the appropriate board committee of any substantive change of relevance to the board.

3.0 COMPLIANCE

The Nature Trust will ensure that all legislative requirements regarding employees and employment relationships are followed including but not limited to: Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code, Occupational Health and Safety, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The following actions will be taken to ensure compliance: policies and procedures will be put in place to guide behaviour and ensure understanding of requirements; orientation and training will be provided to leaders and team members; policies and rules will be enforced, and appropriate actions taken to ensure compliance expectations are met.

Relevant Governance Policies Maintained and Implemented by the Board:

- Human Resources Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures
- Privacy Policy and Procedures
- Code of Conduct

Relevant Human Resources Operating Policies and Procedures Maintained and Implemented by the Executive Director:

- Compensation, Benefits, Time-in-Lieu, Overtime, Holidays, Vacation, Leave, Reimbursable Expenses
- Performance Review, Training/Professional Development

4.0 COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, JUSTICE, ACCESSIBILITY AND BELONGING

The Nature Trust embraces the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, accessibility, and belonging and ensures that such a lens is used in all aspects of Human Resources, from recruitment to employee management.

The staff team creates and maintains a set of Guiding Principles that define the organizational culture, practices, and ways of interacting that are valued by and committed to by the staff team and management. The team regularly reviews these guidelines and updates them as appropriate.

To build and sustain a welcoming, supportive, diverse, and inclusive culture, we ensure our Guiding Principles and organizational Code of Conduct are sustained during our recruitment processes and all subsequent day-to-day interactions and operations. No potential employee is denied employment based on grounds identified in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. All people are to be treated with respect and are to display inclusive and accepting behaviours toward each other, and to those outside the organization with whom they interact on behalf of the organization. All activities within the organization are to be performed in a fair and transparent manner to ensure an unjustified advantage is not created for any individuals or groups of individuals within or outside of the organization. Upon recruitment, any conflict of interests are identified and resolved, and reviewed annually.

5.0 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND TRAINING

The Nature Trust recognizes that the fair treatment of all employees is an integral part of working relationships, policies, practices, and procedures. These include the objective assessment of pay and benefits as well as access to training, development, and opportunities for promotion. The organization commits to maintaining up-to-date compensation and performance review policies and procedures.

The Nature Trust aims to ensure that compensation (salary, benefits) as well as perks and other benefits are fair and at a level which compare favourably with the wider employment market; the intent being to attract and retain staff, reduce staff turnover, and maximize retention of key staff who have valuable operational experience and historical knowledge of the organization. This needs to be achieved within a budget that the Nature Trust can afford and sustain. Salaries and salary bands are reviewed annually for both the staff (by the Executive Director) and for the Executive Director (by the Board Chair and/or delegated committee).

The Nature Trust is committed to providing a working environment that encourages people to learn and develop existing skills and knowledge. Training and development opportunities are offered to all employees (subject to funding availability).

5.2 EMPLOYMENT LETTER

To clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations on the part of both the Nature Trust and the employee, each employee will be provided with an employment letter, including a written job description and statement of terms of employment, at the time of hiring.

In addition to the duties outlined in the written job description, an employee may be assigned other duties. Such other duties are to be consistent with the operational needs of the Nature Trust and the level of qualifications and experience necessary to do the job for which the employee was hired. Where such other duties add significantly to an employee's workload, the employee's supervisor will work together with the employee to modify priorities and expectations to ensure an appropriate overall workload. Where such other duties encompass a higher level of accountability or specialization, and are long-term assignments, compensation will be reviewed at appropriate intervals to determine if compensation adjustments are to be considered.

If an employee is serving in an Acting Role for a different position, taking on full responsibility for all or most aspects of this other role, a new employment contract will be issued and compensation adjusted appropriately based on the particular circumstance, experience/skills of the employee, and the extent to which the employee is able to fulfill the entire roles and responsibilities.

Employees generally begin their employment with a probationary period as outlined in the employment letter. This initial period gives new employees an opportunity to become familiar with their job and to demonstrate their ability to assume the duties and responsibilities.

5.3 PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

To provide a means of regular communication and feedback between staff and their supervisors, the Nature Trust is committed to providing an ongoing performance review process for all employees. The annual performance review process includes goal setting, work planning, regular check-ins, and a formal

performance review at least annually. Performance appraisals will be conducted at the end of any probationary period and thereafter at least on an annual basis or when otherwise deemed necessary, by the employee's supervisor (by the Board Chair and/or delegated board members/committee for the Executive Director). Employees will have opportunity to comment on the appraisal, to discuss them with their supervisor and to provide written comments for inclusion in their personnel file should they disagree with or wish to add to any aspects of an appraisal. The review will also provide opportunities for employees to provide feedback on and for the organization. In addition to formal review, supervisors and employees are encouraged to communicate regularly. Where appropriate, coaching, additional training or resources, or a performance management plan may be provided to help an employee improve performance and meet expectations for their role.

To ensure that human resource matters are continually reviewed and considered, the Executive Director will report to the Executive Committee (or Human Resources Committee if delegated by the Executive Committee) on a timely basis any serious performance or personnel issues that may exist. On an annual basis the committee will report to the Board on the status of human resource matters.

5.4 PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel records are maintained for all employees. While they are the property of the Nature Trust, any employee may access their own personnel record, accompanied by the Executive Director or another individual delegated by the Executive Director (including the employee's immediate supervisor).

5.5 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Any activity that is, in the judgment of the Executive Director (or in the judgment of the Board Chair or delegated committee in the case of the Executive Director), not in accordance with work requirements, not compatible with the image and public relations of the Nature Trust, or any activity that is considered misconduct, insubordination, or failure to abide by policies and procedures, may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action is, in most cases, a progressive process which may include (but is not limited to) encouragement to change a behaviour, verbal and written warnings, suspension without pay, or termination. During the process of a review and any disciplinary action, confidentiality will be maintained, and the employee will at all times be provided with appropriate support and treated with respect and dignity.

5.6 ISSUE RESOLUTION AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The Nature Trust has a process in place should an employee have a grievance such as sexual, racial, ethnic, or verbal harassment; discrimination of any kind; inappropriate language, gestures, or intimidation; unfair treatment by a supervisor; or any action on the part of an employee or the organization which impedes or prevents an employee from performing his/her regular duties. The employee may also appeal any disciplinary action other than termination. When an employee has a grievance or wishes to appeal a disciplinary action, there are steps available to the employee for seeking resolution. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the employee may proceed to the next step in sequence, in a timely manner:

1. Informal discussion with immediate supervisor

2. Formal, written request/complaint to immediate supervisor
3. Informal discussion with the Executive Director (letting supervisor know the employee is taking this next step to contact the Executive Director)
4. Formal, written request/complaint to the Executive Director
5. Formal, written request/complaint to the Chair of the Executive Committee or Human Resources Committee (with a copy to the Executive Director, letting the Executive Director know the employee is taking this next step to contact either the Board Chair or Human Resources Committee Chair).

The decision of the Executive Director, Executive Committee (or Human Resources Committee if delegated by the Executive Committee) is final, including a decision that the matter is not one for further consideration. The Executive Director or Committee shall make every reasonable effort to respond within thirty days. Such a response may contain a decision or set forth the process which the Executive Director or Committee intends to follow to proceed with resolution of the grievance or appeal. The decision is to be made on a timely basis and appropriately communicated to the parties.

When the Executive Director has a grievance or wishes to appeal a disciplinary action, the sequential steps for seeking resolution are as follows:

1. Informal discussion with the Chair of the Executive Committee or Chair of the Human Resources Committee.
2. Formal, written request/complaint to the Executive Committee (who may delegate the matter to the Human Resources Committee) or to the Human Resources Committee.
3. Formal, written request/complaint to the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

The Chair or Board shall make every reasonable effort to respond within thirty days. Such a response may contain a decision or set forth the process which the Board intends to follow to proceed with resolution of the grievance or appeal. The decision is to be made on a timely basis and appropriately communicated to all parties.

5.7 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

All employees must provide written notice of resignation. The Nature Trust asks that employees provide as much notice as possible of an intention to resign. While the employee must provide at least the notice outlined in the Labour Standards, employees are encouraged to be as transparent as possible, and to provide notification as early in their transition planning as possible.

The Nature Trust will provide written notice of termination (or payment in lieu of notice), as specified by the Labour Standards Code (unless additional notice is included in the employee contract). If there is cause for the termination of employment, including but not limited to any breach of an employment contract, the employment contract ceases immediately, and the Nature Trust is not required to provide notice or to pay in lieu of notice.

If an employment contract is terminated, the employee must reimburse all monies owing to the Nature Trust and return any Nature Trust property. The employee acknowledges and agrees that the employer may deduct any monies owing from his/her last pay or vacation period.

During the process of any termination, confidentiality will be maintained, and the employee will at all times be provided with appropriate support and treated with respect and dignity.

6.0 POLICY APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Employees of the Nature Trust including part-time, full-time, casual, and contract employees.

All employees and Board members will be provided with a copy of this Human Resources Policy and Procedures as part of their onboarding process and will attest to reading, understanding, and agreeing to abide by it.

Nova Scotia Nature Trust

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Nature Trust's Human Resources Policy and Procedures (Governance Policy).

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: *This acknowledgement may be modified and combined with other policy acknowledgements in an employment contract or other similar document.*