

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

General Administration

Part 212 Ethics

Chapter 7 Scientific Code of Professional Conduct for the Service

212 FW 7

7.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter establishes a uniform code of professional conduct for all employees in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who engage in, supervise, manage, or apply the information resulting from scientific activities.

7.2 What are the objectives of this chapter? Our objectives are to:

A. Increase awareness of the importance of scientific information and science as a method of discovery to maintain and enhance our effectiveness in fulfilling our mission and in establishing credibility and value with the public and conservation community nationally and internationally.

B. Assist our employees in performing their duties with excellence and professionalism and in avoiding misconduct or the perception of misconduct when performing their duties.

C. Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that information we produce through scientific activities is reliable, objective, repeatable, and available.

7.3 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter applies to:

A. The professional conduct and management of scientific activities by and on behalf of the Service, and

B. All our employees when they engage in, supervise or manage, or apply the information resulting from scientific activities.

7.4 What are the authorities for this chapter? The authorities for this chapter are:

A. Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, Office of Science and Technology Policy (65 Federal Register 76262).

B. 370 DM 752.1, Discipline and Adverse Actions.

7.5 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Conflict of Interest is any financial or other concern that might interfere with the actions or judgments of an employee when conducting or applying science because it could:

(1) Significantly impair the employee's objectivity,

(2) Create, or give the perception of, an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization, or

(3) Result in personal or financial gain by individuals working for or on behalf of the Service.

B. Employees Who Engage in Scientific Activities are individuals who:

(1) Conduct or supervise scientific activities on behalf of the Service, and

(2) In their official capacity as Service employees, compile, translate, and apply scientific information into formats we use to formulate management and regulatory decisions.

C. Science:

(1) Is a body of knowledge and a set of processes for advancing that knowledge;

01/28/08

New

ETHICS

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

(2) Is information obtained and tested through use of the scientific method in a rational, systematic, testable, and reproducible manner; and

(3) May also include observing and classifying facts to establish verifiable knowledge derived through induction and hypothesis.

D. Scientific activities are conducted in a manner specified by standard protocols and procedures and include any of the physical, biological, or social sciences, as well as engineering and mathematics, that employ the scientific method.

(1) Scientific activities include:

(a) Inventorying,

(b) Monitoring,

(c) Experimentation,

(d) Study,

(e) Research,

(f) Modeling, and

(g) Scientific assessment.

(2) Inspections for regulatory compliance, such as those that occur under the Lacey Act Amendments, and resulting records are not scientific activities for the purposes of this policy. These activities are covered by separate requirements. (See 441 FW 1.)

7.6 What is the general scientific code of professional conduct? To the best of their abilities, employees must:

A. Act to advance science and produce the highest quality and most reliable scientific information for the Service.

B. Comply fully with applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding the development, conduct, application, and disclosure of science.

C. Treat colleagues, other scientists and professional contacts, and the public respectfully.

D. Place reliability and objectivity of scientific activities, reporting, and application of scientific results ahead of personal gain or allegiance to individuals and organizations.

E. Acknowledge the ideas and work of others, take care to avoid misrepresentation, and respect the intellectual property rights of others.

F. Neither hinder the scientific activities of others nor engage in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, coercive manipulation, or other scientific or research misconduct.

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

General Administration

Part 212 Ethics

Chapter 7 Scientific Code of Professional Conduct for the Service

212 FW 7

G. Offer professional opinion, advice, and guidance only on subjects for which they are qualified (through professional education, training, or experience) and about which they are informed.

H. Distinguish between positions that are rooted in scientific information and assessments and those rooted in organizational values, and make this distinction in written and oral presentations.

I. Adhere to accepted standards (e.g., those of the National Science Foundation) for treatment of animals and plants used in science and scientific management of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

7.7 What conduct must employees demonstrate when using or applying scientific information? To the best of their abilities, employees must:

A. Know, understand, and adhere to standards of reporting the results of scientific activities.

B. Be responsible and accountable for the quality of any data they collect, interpretations they make, and the integrity of conclusions they draw in the course of their scientific activities.

C. Review, report, apply, and communicate the results of scientific activities:

(1) Honestly,

(2) Thoroughly,

(3) Objectively,

(4) Without conflict of interest, and

(5) In a timely manner.

D. Advocate the use of rigorous scientific methodology, thorough analysis, and logical inference to promote transparency and produce reliable information for management decisions affecting fish and wildlife and their habitats.

E. Differentiate among facts, scientific principles, mathematical or statistical estimates based on data, hypotheses, professional judgments, and personal opinions to the extent possible and practicable in reporting the results of scientific activities to others, including scientists, decision makers, and the public.

F. Strive to understand and accurately interpret, report, and apply scientific information to support management decisions affecting fish and wildlife and their habitats.

G. Respect, to the fullest extent permitted by law, confidential and proprietary information.

H. Disseminate scientific information to the scientific community and the public to promote understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

7.8 What must employees do to maintain scientific professionalism? To the best of their abilities, employees must:

A. Welcome constructive criticism of their scientific activities,

B. Participate in appropriate peer reviews,

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

General Administration

Part 212 Ethics

Chapter 7 Scientific Code of Professional Conduct for the Service

212 FW 7

- C. Critique others' work in a respectful and objective manner and substantiate review comments that they make with the same care with which they report their own scientific work,
- D. Support and participate in professional societies and engage in scientific exchanges with their members,
- E. Regularly pursue additional education, training, and professional development, and
- F. Keep current with the scientific literature.

7.9 How should employees treat uncertainty in their scientific activities? Employees must:

- A. Recognize and acknowledge that uncertainty is inherent in science and in using scientific information to manage fish and wildlife and their habitats,
- B. Consider and acknowledge uncertainty in decisionmaking, and
- C. Be forthright and honest about the scientific foundation used for possible policy options and the uncertainties associated with any resulting prediction of consequences for fish and wildlife and their habitats.

7.10 What administrative requirements must employees meet for their scientific activities? Employees must:

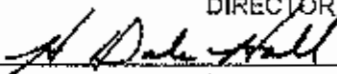
- A. Be diligent in the creation, use, preservation, documentation, and maintenance of collections and data records;
- B. Adhere to established quality assurance and quality control programs;
- C. Follow our policy for records retention (see Parts 282 and 283 of the Service Manual);
- D. Comply with Federal laws and established agreements related to the use, security, and release of confidential and proprietary data; and
- E. Provide relevant contractors and volunteers working on behalf of the Service with a copy of this policy and assist them to conduct their scientific activities in accordance with it.

7.11 What happens to employees if they do not follow this policy? We intend for this policy to improve the internal operation and management of the Service. It does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law by any person against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any other person.

- A. We will treat any violation of this policy as a finding of scientific or other misconduct (see Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 Federal Register 76262, December 6, 2000).
- B. If we verify misconduct we will take action in accordance with our human resources policy (see 227 FW 2) and, where applicable, contracting policy.

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01/28/08
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ETHICS