

GN Policies and Procedures

Policy Section: Board Governance and Meetings

Subsection: Human Resources

Topic: Abuse, Harassment and Discrimination

Status: Approved by GN Board

Date: 3 September 2013

Policy Statement

1. The Society of Grasslands Naturalists (GN) is committed to providing an environment for its members, staff and volunteers that is free of harassment, abuse or discrimination.
2. GN will take all necessary actions to address the following unwanted actions or behaviour:
 1. Abuse: physical contact intended to cause bodily harm or the use of threats, humiliation, forced social isolation, intimidation, coercing or restricting from appropriate social contact with intention of causing emotional harm.
 2. Harassment: repeated offensive comments and/or actions which demean and belittle an individual and/or cause personal humiliation. This definition includes sexual harassment involving, but not limited to, subtle pressure for sexual activity, inappropriate touching, inappropriate language, demands for sexual favours, and verbal and physical assaults.
 3. Discrimination: unfavourable treatment based on racial, sexual, political, age, nationality, religious or gender prejudice.
3. Any action or behaviour falling under one or more of the above categories is referred to as "unwarranted behaviour" in the procedures provided below.
4. Unwarranted behaviour involving communications shall be addressed under these procedures regardless of the vehicle of communication used (direct, phone, email, internet ...).
5. It is the responsibility of the GN Board to inform GN members, staff and volunteers of the Policy Statement and Procedures provided in this document.

Procedures

1. Any unwarranted behaviour involving the threat of violent conduct, where there is a reasonable belief that the safety of themselves or others may be in danger, shall be reported to the police immediately.
2. If a GN member, staff member or volunteer has been subjected to behaviour perceived to be unwarranted, he/she has the responsibility to advise the offender, directly or through a third party, that the action is unacceptable behaviour and unwelcome. It is imperative that the alleged offender is made immediately aware of any behaviour or conduct that is offensive and be given the opportunity to cease such behaviour or conduct.

3. If the behaviour or conduct does not cease, or the severity of the behaviour or conduct warrants it, the unwarranted behaviour shall be reported as follows:

- a) For the case of any activity related to the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program (MHIP), unwarranted behaviour shall be reported directly to the MHIP Chief Interpreter, unless the latter is involved in the transgression, in which case the unwarranted behaviour shall be reported directly to the GN President.
- b) For cases not involving the MHIP, unwarranted behaviour shall be reported directly to the GN President, unless the latter is involved in the transgression, in which case the unwarranted behaviour shall be reported directly to the GN Vice-President.
- c) Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate first point of contact (MHIP Chief Interpreter or GN President) shall investigate immediately. For cases involving the MHIP, the Chief Interpreter shall advise the GN President and the Chair of the MHIP Operations Committee of the investigation.

5. The complaint resolution process shall be subject to the “Resolution of Disputes” clause in the GN Bylaws and make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the confidentiality of the victim, alleged abuser and witness(es) is respected.

Associated Clause 10.1 in GN Bylaws:

“If any committee duly appointed by the Board, or Board Members, or Employees, or Volunteers, or other Members of the Society have a difference of opinion or dispute in any matter arising out of the affairs of the Society, the Executive shall discover the matter and pass opinion to the Board, which the Board may ratify.”