

Long Tom Watershed Council
Internal Social Media Policy
Required for Employees; Requested of Board and Volunteers
Approved by Board of Directors: Feb 5, 2015

The Long Tom Watershed Council's (LTWC) social media communications strategy encourages employees, board members and volunteers to engage with our official Facebook page from their personal pages. LTWC's staff, board and volunteers do an amazing job of using the council's resources and working with our partners to better the watershed in an impressive diversity of ways and should take pride in their accomplishments. Our communications efforts, including social media campaigns, support this work by telling our story to the watershed community in a timely manner and justifying our calls for support. The more that staff and board help share our story by interacting with official LTWC social media, the more people it will reach and the more successful it will be.

In recognition of the importance of the boundary between professional work and personal lives, social media participation from personal accounts is not compulsory. We fully respect and support the free speech of our employees, board members and volunteers. However, because social media communications take place in a public space, even private comments and behaviors by our employees reflect on the organization. In order to protect the reputation of the LTWC and its ability to carry out its mission, we have developed the following social media policy for all employees of the organization. We ask that our board members and volunteers adhere to the same guidelines.

The policy covers all forms of online publication and commentary, such as blogs, comments sections of websites, wikis and social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest and YouTube. The social media policy adds to and complements our existing communications policies without superseding them.

Employees own and are solely responsible for the content of their own blogs, comments, posts and feeds and are free to comment and publish on these platforms. This policy covers posts and comments on platforms both owned by employees and by third parties to the extent that users identify themselves as or are identifiable as employees or representatives of our organization.

We hold such social media use to the ethical standards required in the workplace, including those stated in the Employee handbook and generally accepted standards. This includes acting in a civil manner and remembering your role as an ambassador of the organization. Obscenity, personal insults, slurs of any kind, defamatory comments and/or offensive comments are unacceptable. Please refrain from hostile or provoking comments and behaviors, commonly referred to as trolling, which have the goal or result of causing dissention and controversy online rather than furthering thoughtful discussion.

Please treat all social media conversations with the same level of professionalism you give to other forms of communication for the organization. This includes researching and fact-checking your work before posting to verify accuracy and using proper grammar and spelling. Do not plagiarize published or unpublished content.

We ask that employees limit private social media social use during work hours to break times, as they would any other non-work related communications. However, employees are encouraged to participate in our social media campaigns during work hours on a voluntary basis.

We encourage employees to participate in online conversations regarding our organization and issues important to us as long as they respect the following guidelines. However, please keep brevity in mind overall as this platform is not the place for conversation that goes back and forth more than a few times or covers any complex content. When in doubt, please ask for guidance from the Communications Lead, which is currently the Operations Manager, and defaults to the Executive Director if the Communications Lead is not identified or not able to serve.

- **Transparency** - Employees must identify their connection to our organization when posting or commenting on issues affecting the organization or our mission. This not only protects our reputation but gives your posts and comments added authority. However, please be clear when you are commenting as an individual (e.g. “In my personal view, ...” or “My take on this is...”) and when you are authorized to act as a spokesperson for the organization (e.g. “At LTWC, we usually say...”).
- **Copyright** – Please consult the Communications Lead before using the organization’s logo, name or other information that comes under copyright protection. Please respect the copyright of other individuals and organizations and cite the original sources of any content created by others.
- **Confidentiality** - Employees may not share the organization’s confidential information, such as unreleased details of current and future projects. Please consult your supervisor if unsure whether information you wish to discuss online is confidential.
- **Financial information** – Our development team works very hard to create and maintain relationships with our donors and funding agencies that promote the maximum level of support for our organization. To support their efforts, employees may not discuss matters relating to the organization’s finances – including grants applied for or received, donations or donor identity, fund balances and funding shortfalls – without prior approval from the development director. Commenting on financial information already released to the public by the organization is acceptable.

Comments and posts that fail to follow this policy have real potential to damage our organization’s standing in the community and ability to accomplish its mission and goals. Violations of the social media polices will be treated on a case-by-case basis by the employee’s supervisor after consultation with the communications team and the executive director.

Consequences may include verbal or written reprimands, negative performance reviews and reassignment from duties dealing with the public. Extreme abuse of the policy rendering an employee “unfit for further service” under the legal guidelines established by the National Labor Relations Act may result in an employee’s dismissal.