



UPPER PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY

Policy 1C: Community Engagement *Standard 1C, 2021 Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices*

Board Approved: **September 11, 2018**

Board Revision Approved: April 12, 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to develop an inclusive organization culture with opportunities to engage community members in areas which UPLC works. This policy outlines requirements for accompanying procedures, so that they align with Land Trust Alliance **Standard 1C:**

Community Engagement

- 1. Develop an inclusive, welcoming organizational culture that respects diversity*
- 2. Seek to engage people who are broadly representative of the community in which the land trust works and foster opportunities to connect them with the land*
- 3. Develop an understanding of the land trust's community, and communicate the land trust's work, services and impact in a manner that resonates with and engages that community*
- 4. Building relations with community leaders and other stakeholders in the land trust's community*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of community engagement is pivotal for a well-functioning organization and enables better understanding of communities' needs and aspirations. Learning more about the community in which UPLC works promotes board, staff, and volunteers to think creatively about ways to use UPLC's mission to help address other issues people care about, such as education, clean water, and health. Building relationships between communities and the organization will engage individuals and groups to conserve land to achieve healthy, balanced, and vibrant communities.



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DEFINITIONS

Diversity: *includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the various characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital/relational status, language, and physical appearance. Our definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives, and values. We also recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.*

Equity: *is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society. Equity is not the same as equality. People may be given equal opportunities, but if they start from different places or have different barriers to overcome, they will not have the same opportunity to succeed. [Cultural Organizing](#) provides excellent background on this concept.*

Inclusion *is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It's important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn't always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or 'implicit' bias helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.*

POLICY

Summary:

It is the policy of the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy to:

1. Develop an inclusive, welcoming organizational culture that respects diversity
2. Seek to engage people who are broadly representative of the community in which we work and foster opportunities to connect them with the land



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3. Develop an understanding of our community, and communicate our work, services and impact in a manner that resonates with and engages our community
4. Build relationships with community leaders, indigenous communities, and other stakeholders in our community.

Principles of Community Engagement

Engaging effectively with communities is the cornerstone to improve community engagement. Community engagement sets the stage for transparency, which is a critical element to building lasting, meaningful partnership with tribal members, stakeholders, citizens, and interest groups. Genuine community engagement requires the following principles:

- Respect - Cultivating an inclusive and productive environment in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Collaborate - Eliciting inclusive community participation and collaboration with stakeholders
- Empowerment - Empowering community members to hold a sense of communal responsibility
- Relevancy - Shift with community interest and issues as necessary to incorporate traditional knowledge and diverse perspectives of local community and indigenous people.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

It can be difficult to measure if you are a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization. Below are some characteristics of success modified from a list identified by the National Council of Nonprofits. The UPLC staff is directed to develop procedures that address these community engagement goals:

- Leadership and staff have shared understandings of, and appreciation for, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- UPLC's board recruitment and staff hiring processes intentionally identify and include talented candidates from underrepresented groups.
- UPLC is transparent about the steps it is taking to become more diverse and encourage inclusive practices.
- UPLC communicates to the public that it values diversity, strives for equity and that its practices are inclusive. Communication methods will reflect the fact that not all people have sight or hearing.
- UPLC publishes its values on a website or otherwise shares them publicly so that someone interested in a paid or volunteer position can understand them.



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- UPLC recognizes and affirms the diversity that already exists in the workplace or among the organization's stakeholders.

Communications Strategy

To promote UPLC programs, education, and outreach, we may promote those opportunities in a range of communication channels. UPLC shall complete an annual audit of the organization's printed and electronic materials to evaluate the appropriateness of images and language. UPLC staff must be conscious of the language used in print material, mailings, brochures and other fundraising and outreach materials to ensure it utilizes inclusive verbiage, graphics, and photos. In addition, UPLC's communication methods must consider the fact that not all people have sight or hearing. In addition, UPLC board, staff and volunteers must aim to find new ways to ensure that people from all backgrounds feel welcome.

Program Assessment

Questions to consider when evaluating UPLC's program conservation impact.

- Who would you say benefit directly from your current conservation and programming work?
- How many UPLC owned/managed properties are being used to connect people to land/water or serve a community need?
- How well has UPLC listened to the community to identify what different people really care about?
- How many people are being served or engaged through our community conservation work?

REVISIONS

This policy should be reviewed by the Fundraising and Outreach Committee on an annual basis. Any amendments must be approved by vote of the Board of Directors and will require a simple majority to be changed.

This policy may be amended or repealed, and new related policies may be adopted, from time to time by the Board of Directors of the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy (the Board/The Conservancy), except that no change in the policies will affect obligations accepted by the Conservancy for funds or properties donated prior to the change, unless such change is approved in writing by the donor or donors of such properties, interests, or funds.

The Board may make reasonable exceptions to the policy in particular cases by Board vote with simple majority, and will document the reasons accordingly in the minutes of the meeting where the decision was made and copies will be placed within the appropriate files in accordance with Recordkeeping policies.



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