

North American Bluebird Society, Inc.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The North American Bluebird Society, Inc., (hereinafter referred to as “NABS” or “the Society”), is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated in the State of Maryland. NABS is grounded in the tradition of public service and is operated in the public interest. The Society, its information and its material goods are held as a benefit for the public and its services are provided as a benefit for the public. Persons having important responsibilities in formulating and/or administering policies and procedures governing NABS and its programs have a duty and obligation to preserve and protect the public interest by operating the Society in accordance with ethical and applicable legal standards. Those persons include all Officers, other Board Members and persons who chair NABS committees, (hereinafter referred to as “NABS officials”). This Conflict of Interest Policy is intended to provide guidance for NABS officials and other persons who may accept NABS responsibilities.

A conflict of interest situation exists when the interests or concerns of any NABS official or their immediate family and any entity to which they have allegiance, may be seen as competing or conflicting with the interests or concerns of NABS. NABS officials should be keenly sensitive to any interpretation of their actions which could create the appearance of a conflict of interest situation and should seek to avoid any such appearance.

NABS officials must avoid situations in which their personal interests would be served, financial benefits would be gained or personal material advantages would be derived from their connection with the Society, at the expense of NABS, its purposes or the situation. NABS officials shall discharge their duties in light of their fiduciary responsibility to promote the public good rather than act for individual or personal gain. NABS officials shall not misuse the Society’s name, reputation, property or services, nor shall they compromise the Society’s good will in the community. NABS officials shall make no personal use of NABS property or services in a manner not available to a comparable member of the public with the exception of computer equipment and software which has been acquired primarily for the benefit of NABS.

NABS officials shall not be precluded from doing business with, for or on behalf of the Society as long as it can be reasonably established that such enterprise does not constitute an advantage for the NABS official, that it does provide an advantage for NABS and that the conduct of such business does not prejudicially influence the judgement of the NABS official in relation to NABS policies or programs. NABS officials shall not be precluded from advertising in the NABS journal, *Bluebird*, unless such advertisement might otherwise be deemed inappropriate and as long as the advertisement is paid for at the same rate as would be available to any other advertiser.

NABS officials are often involved in leadership capacities with other organizations. If NABS is deciding whether to take a position on an issue in which another organization is also involved, NABS officials shall disclose their affiliation with such other organizations as a potential conflict of interest.

NABS officials who have leadership roles in other organizations only have actual conflicts of interest, and must therefore recuse themselves from the Society’s decisions, if their loyalty, duty or obligation to the other organization might interfere with their loyalty, duty or obligation to NABS, including the duty to make independent judgments in the best interests of

NABS which may conflict, contend or compete with the other organization. This is true even if the individual's opinion or view about the issue precedes or is independent of any competing organizational role. NABS officials should recuse themselves from the Society's decision making policy on an issue if, as a result of their duty of loyalty to other organizations which have positions on the issue, they are expected to adopt a particular view on the issue, regardless of how they came to adopt this view.

If a NABS official or their spouse has a paid position with another organization which has a position on a matter to be decided, NABS will presume that a potential conflict of interest exists, because the individual's financial interests might be influenced. If the position with other organizations is as a volunteer, the potential conflict of interest will not be presumed to exist unless the person is in a leadership role, such as president or primary leader, spokesperson or representative on the issue in question. Merely participating in the decision making process of the other organization will not create a presumption that a potential conflict of interest may exist. An actual conflict of interest would only exist if loyalty, duty or obligation to another entity might interfere with their loyalty, duty or obligation to NABS and would not exist if the interests of NABS and the other entity were precisely the same, such as most circumstances when the NABS official is also an official of one of NABS Affiliates having comparable missions and goals. Volunteer roles of spouses do not constitute a conflict of interest.

Every person elected or appointed to a position of authority in an organization has a duty of loyalty to the interests of that organization. A conflict of interest situation exists when someone's loyalty is divided between NABS and another entity. No one should be faulted merely because a conflict of interest situation exists. A problem only arises when someone takes inappropriate action related to the conflict of interest situation. Those in a conflict of interest situation may act appropriately by recognizing their divided loyalty or may act inappropriately by violating it. It is only the action and/or behavior with respect to such situation which may be deemed appropriate or not. However, NABS officials have the right to provide the Society with any and all relevant information they may have concerning such a matter, and should on request do so.

Personal opinions do not constitute a conflict of interest. It is not appropriate to claim that someone has a conflict of interest simply because of their opinions on a subject. Conflict of interest questions must be evaluated in terms of financial interests or loyalties, obligations and duties to other organizations or entities.

NABS officials shall have an obligation to abstain from making any public statement on behalf of the Society on any issue with which they may have a potential conflict of interest unless specifically authorized to do so by the Officers or the Board after disclosure of such potential conflict. All NABS officials shall refrain from public comment about conflict of interest issues except as authorized by the Board.

By their actions and statements, NABS officials must clearly distinguish their personal philosophies and attitudes from those of the Society and should acknowledge, respect and support majority decisions of the Board even if they personally disagree. It is a goal of the NABS organization to function as a team enterprise and toward that purpose, all official actions should be taken as a Board, committee or subcommittee. All such actions shall be conducted in conformance with the NABS Bylaws and Constitution as well as established policies of the Society and resolutions of the Board.