



## The Sheltowee Trace Association's Code of Conduct Policy For Participants in Outdoor Recreation Program(s)

Policy # 006-01-2015 - Approved: January, 2015,  
Last Reviewed 8 January 2022

*By Laws Justification: Article VI Board of Directors, Section One: Management*

**This policy will not require a change to the By Laws.**

**Background:** Consistent growth in the number of participants in the STA's Outdoor Recreation Programs has forced a review of existing procedures and the need for a more formal policy that outlines appropriate behavior by participants. With that growth comes the potential for conflict among participants as they each place their set of values on the experience and their expectations may come in conflict. It is therefore, essential that the STA implement a "Code of Conduct Policy" for all participants to insure a quality back outdoor experience for everyone.

**Justification:** Rules are inconsistent with the freedom of the hills, and that spirit of freedom is an important part of the mountain experience. But as more and more participants join STA Outdoor Recreation Programs, it is important to have a "Code of Conduct" to ensure that everyone has a rewarding outdoor experience. This policy is consistent with similar policies at the Sierra Club and other trail groups.

**Implementation:** It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director to see that this policy is implemented, that the public is advised of this policy and that all forms and releases are updated. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to insure that this policy is in effect during all Outdoor Recreation Programs. Violations of this policy will be detailed in a writing to the Board as needed.

**Effective Date:** This policy is in effect from the date of approval by the Sheltowee Trace Association Board of Directors and shall remain in effect until amended, suspended, or revoked by said board. A copy shall be posted to the [sheltoweetrace.org](http://sheltoweetrace.org) webpage, shall be filed with the Board Secretary and the original on file in the Office of the Executive Director.

**This policy was approved by vote of the Board of Directors January 2015.**

**Signed;**

**Scott Templeton**

**Joy Brown**

**Steve Barbour**



**Chairman  
Director**

**Secretary**

**Executive**

## **SHELTON TRACE ASSOCIATION**

### **“Code of Conduct” for Participants**

#### **in STA Outdoor Recreation**

#### **Programs**

**Applicability:** This Code of Conduct applies to all persons participating in outdoor recreation activities of The Shelton Trace Association. Violation of these rules may result in removal of a participant from a particular outing and/or revocation of the privilege to participate in future outings.

**Authority of the Leader:** The authority of a program facilitator / STA Staff is nearly absolute. The facilitator / STA Staff is the sole judge of the qualifications of participants when they assemble for the outing. Participants must comply with the orders and instructions of the facilitator or STA staff. “Code of Conduct” incidents will be reported in writing to the Executive Director within 12 hours of occurrence. The Executive Director will advise the board as needed on incidents of violations of the Code of Conduct.

**Eligibility to Participate:** All STA Outdoor Recreation Programs are open to both STA members and non-members. Eligibility restrictions, if any, should be stated in the program guidance. Sponsoring entity themes should be regarded as a clue to the ambiance to be expected rather than a restriction on participation. Participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian or approved group leader.

**Qualification to Participate:** Program guidance typically gives information about the physical challenge involved (distance and elevation gain) and the skills, equipment and experience required for successful participation. Some trips require prospective participants to provide information about their conditioning and experience to the facilitator/STA Staff for screening in advance of the trip. Other trips may simply ask participants to screen themselves before showing up at the trailhead. In either case, you should be honest with the facilitator. If you participate in a trip for which you are really not qualified, you won’t enjoy the experience and you may make the experience less enjoyable for other participants. Facilitators will give good faith consideration to accommodations requested by potential participants who are disabled.

**Liability Waiver:** All participants are required to sign a liability waiver. This is an important legal document which limits your right to sue the Shelton Trace Association or its leaders in the event of injury on an outing. Your participation in an outing is a voluntary recreational activity. If you are not willing to sign a waiver, you will not be able to participate in the activity.

**Travel Procedures:** Participants are to remain with the group unless the facilitator / STA Staff gives permission to leave, adhere to routes designated by the facilitator, refrain from "short cutting" switchbacks on trails, and remain behind the leader and ahead of the trail sweep if designated.

**Leave No Trace:** The Sheltoewe Trace Association supports Leave No Trace principles, including minimizing the environmental impact of travel and camping, disposing of waste properly or packing it out, leaving natural objects as you find them, using stoves for cooking, limiting campfires to a single small campfire where permitted, respecting wildlife, storing food and garbage securely and being courteous to other visitors.

**Compliance with Laws and Regulations:** Sheltoewe Trace Association Outdoor Recreation Programs are conducted in compliance with applicable laws and regulations (local, state, federal, National Parks, Forest Service), including requirements for entry permits, campfire restrictions, campsite location restrictions, waste handling rules, parking restrictions, use of illegal drugs and alcohol, etc. Rangers and other law enforcement personnel are to be treated with respect.

**Impaired Behavior:** Participants should not be impaired at any time for any reason during an STA outdoor adventure program or activity. Participants may become impaired through excessive fatigue, dehydration, use of alcohol, improper use of prescription drugs (including not taking prescribed medication), improper management of a diabetic condition, allergic reaction or other factors. Impaired behavior places the participant at greater risk for injury and may cause injury or suffering to others. The STA recommends that all participants take the proper steps to avoid impairment due to an existing medical condition and any pre-existing medical conditions that shall possibly become an issue on the trail should be reported to the program leader of STA staff prior to the beginning of the activity.

**Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information is prohibited. Sexual harassment of STA members, volunteers or others who participate in STA-sponsored activities is prohibited. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual suggestions, physical contact, offensive sexual language or images, or use of STA contact information to make unwelcome sexual suggestions.

**Animals:** Animals (other than guide dogs) are prohibited unless a specific announcement that animals are allowed is included in the trip program guidance. The leader may permit a disabled participant to bring a guide dog as long as the group safety isn't jeopardized or local land agency rules or regulations are not violated. When animals are allowed they must be kept on lead or under the voice control of the owners, be current for rabies vaccinations and exhibit temperament appropriate to being around people and other animals. Aggressive (to people or pets) or constantly barking dogs cannot participate in STA activities.

**Firearms:** While Federal and State laws may permit the carrying of firearms at certain times, the STA for reasons of liability prohibits the carrying of firearms on sponsored outdoor programs. If a participant has a valid Concealed Carry Permit, they may carry a concealed weapon consistent with state laws and Forest Service or National Park Service policy.

**Cell Phones:** Both leaders and participants are encouraged (but not required) to carry cell phones because they may be a useful resource in an emergency. Inappropriate or excessive use of cell phones for non-emergency communications can be annoying to participants. Facilitators have the authority to restrict or regulate the use of cell phones.

**Hand-held Transceivers:** May be carried but used only if permitted by the facilitator/ STA Staff and subject to further leader restrictions.

**Radios and Sound Listening Devices:** May always be used at camp if equipped with earphones for private listening. On the trail, use may be restricted or prohibited by the leader in the interest of safety.

**GPS Receivers:** Generally permitted and recommended. If a participant is engaged in a specific navigation skills adventure (requiring the use of compass, maps, and landmarks, etc.), then GPS devices may be prohibited.

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