

The Laurel Caverns Conservancy

Principles, Policies, and Procedures

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Laurel Caverns Conservancy is three-fold. The first is to enhance the public's understanding of the history and geology of Laurel Caverns. The second is to enhance the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Park's ability to conserve Laurel Caverns State Park for future generations while allowing the present to use it for educational and recreational purposes. The third is to enhance the careers of its employees by providing them with mentored responsibilities that enrich their curriculum vitae.

I PRINCIPLES

All Laurel Caverns Conservancy policies and procedures flow from a fundamental set of six principles that frame the responsibilities, belonging to its management and employees, used to fulfill the Conservancy's Mission Statement. These principles are: integrity, accountability, sensitivity, professionalism, stewardship, and forethought. Each is defined in terms of its impact on the expectations of the public, the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks, and the employees of the Laurel Caverns Conservancy.

1. Integrity – The integration of lawfulness, honesty, honor, and fairness into a single willingness to always: obey the law, be truthful, be faithful to one's pledges, and treat others with dignity and fairness.

All programs, initiatives, and policies employed by the Conservancy must accord with federal, state, and local laws. All employee conduct must be within the law. All programs employed by the Conservancy must honor their advertised commitments to the public, and all persons within the organization must be truthful and judicious in their dealings with the public and with each other.

Integrity goes to the heart of an one's decision-making process. It speaks to one's character. One who places an emphasis on integrity does not steal, lie, falsify records, exaggerate claims, or, without unexpected necessity, disregard one's promises with respect to temporal commitments. Integrity serves both the public's need for trust in the organization and the organization's need for trust in an employee.

2. Accountability – The willingness and ability to effectively track, document, and, as required, communicate information related to one's conduct, one's financial responsibilities, one's obligations, and one's use of resources in which others have a right to know how they are used.

Accountability is an important contributor to lawfulness. All programs and persons employed by the Conservancy must be committed to its rules regarding the tracking and reporting of materials, notification of supply shortages, recordkeeping, asset management, funds-reporting, and the like. Planning requires accountability's offspring, predictability and reliability. The Conservancy's emphasis on both shows a commitment to the public's need for assurance that goods and services will be provided as promised.

3. Sensitivity – The willingness and ability to be respectful to everyone, to inclusively support the advancement of human dignity, to be gracious, and to never unnecessarily harm nature's creatures.

The Conservancy's Human Dignity Pledge is to be rigorously followed. All persons employed by the Conservancy must maintain a spirit of respect for all persons and their peaceful cultural traditions. Cooperativeness and collegiality are hallmarks of respectfulness. Unexpected events that place stress on one's normal duties are to be addressed collectively, in the spirit of teamwork.

All advertisements, whether for job openings or park attendance, are to reach as broad an audience as possible. Marginalized populations are to feel especially welcomed and given special consideration in hiring, use of Visitors' Center facilities, and participation in the Conservancy's educational activities.

4. Professionalism – The willingness and ability to meet one’s contractual obligations with dependability, decorum, proficiency, thoroughness, and the ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable information.

All Conservancy employees, assigned to a task, must be properly qualified to perform that task and willing to work to provide it with its expected outcome. Attendant to this principle is the need for certification, preparedness, timeliness, and decorum. Decorum serves the public's need for propriety and attractiveness in surrounding things. Good hygiene, proper uniform, composure, congeniality, decency, and discretion are the hallmarks of decorum. Any person accepting an assigned task must follow the dress code associated with that task and be willing and able to follow its adopted standards and operating procedures. Finally, professionalism requires that one must neatly and cleanly maintain one’s personal areas in the workplace.

5. Stewardship – The willingness and ability to properly care-for entrusted assets and direct them to the use for which they are intended.

As a leaseholder within Laurel Caverns State Park, the Conservancy must properly maintain the cave, all related tools and equipment, and all rooms entrusted to it within the park’s visitor’s center. Stewardship serves the public's right to a clean and well-maintained environment, and the Conservancy’s need to be free from the harms of waste. Relatedly, all programs, trustees, officers, and persons, employed by the Conservancy, must be committed to the use of efficient practices regarding funds, materials, tools, equipment, and energy.

6. Forethought – The willingness and ability to properly care-for the safety and well-being of others.

All programs and persons employed by the Conservancy must be committed to a meaningful concern for workplace threats to health, safety and property, immediately addressing these threats, or reporting them as fits the occasion. Forethought is actualized through careful planning and the use of the five foregoing principles. Forethought serves the human need for a sense of well-being.

II POLICIES

The Laurel Caverns Conservancy policies, as stated here, are universal, in the sense that they apply to everyone. They are to be reviewed annually. Changes are to be made by the Conservancy’s Board of Directors, in accord with recommendations from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Conservancy’s Management Team.

Acceptance – The acceptance of these policies, and the duties and responsibilities they frame, is necessary for employment in the operations of the Conservancy and for the opportunity to do business with the Conservancy, either as a contractor or as an employee. No person refusing to agree to these policies may be employed by the Conservancy. However, any policy not in compliance with the law shall be considered severable.

Accessibility – Though the natural terrain of Laurel Caverns limits accessibility, the Conservancy is to do all it can to make the cave, and the rooms with the park’s visitors’ center, as accessible as possible. Accordingly, each tour shall be advertised with its level of difficulty.

Adopt-a-Highway – The Conservancy maintains litter control on three miles of Skyline Drive, from Kirby Road to the Pond Field Tower entrance. Participation in this Penn-DOT program is under the supervision of the Director of Maintenance and is to be done in accord with all Penn-DOT guidelines, particularly those related to safety.

Aggravation of a Current Health Issue – It is impossible for an employer to know the full medical state of an employee. The Conservancy is a natural area whose activities can be physically challenging. The Conservancy does not want to assign any employee to any task which could in any way aggravate a current medical problem. Any employee having a physical condition they believe can be aggravated by their job is to communicate the problem, immediately after being hired, or as soon as aware of the problem, to the Conservancy’s Director of Communication. The issue is to be handled within the parameters of the law.

Amendments – Any change to these policies must be given to every employee in writing.

Announcements – A large bulletin board is to be maintained in the staff lounge. All staff related notices, announcements, and lawfully required posters are to be placed on this bulletin board.

Approval – The structure and identification of all policies, duties and responsibilities of the Conservancy must be approved by its officers.

Assessments by Visitors – Every school field trip, group cave tour, scout troop and caving group is to be given a satisfaction survey to be placed in the suggestion box.

Background Checks – Act 114 of 2006 requires that ALL prospective employees, of organizations working directly with public and private schools, potentially having direct contact with students undergo background checks. All applicants are minimally required by law to submit three background checks:

(1) Dept. of Public Welfare Child Abuse Report (Act 151): By one's first day of work, one must produce a Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: Child Abuse History Certification valid for the current year. (Contact: Childline and Abuse Registry, P O Box 8053. Harrisburg, PA 17105-8053; PH: 1-877-371-5422; or go to www.dhs.pa.gov; or email: kids@safe.pa.gov.)

(2) State Police Criminal History Record (Act 34): By one's first day of work, one must produce a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check, valid for the current year, which shows one has no history of violence or crimes against children. (Contact: <https://epatch.state.pa.us> or phone: 1-888-783-7972 for help. Note: you might have to download and print directly from their website.) Only violence against persons is of concern; other issues are ignored and deleted by us.

(3) By one's first day of work, one must produce a Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI – FBI) Report. First, register at: <https://enroll.identogo.com>. Ph: 844-321-2101 - Use service code: 1KG6V5. This site also gives you your next step, a trip to the nearest site for fingerprinting. Take a valid ID with you.

Base Rate – The base rate is the starting hourly wage rate available to every employee to which all other remunerations are added. PA job code 74740 – pay schedule ST03, will be used as a guideline.

Bat Hibernation Season – The cave is to be closed following the last Sunday in October and is not to reopen until Earth Day, April 22nd, of the following year.

Breaks – Lunch breaks are to last no more than thirty minutes and are to be paid for all employees because visitor demands can be so erratic and tour schedules so unpredictable that it is impossible to provide precise lunch times. Further, a lunch can be interrupted by an unusual visitor demand, such as the arrival of a surprise group. The price of the paid lunch time is the expectation that every employee is willing to serve visitor demand as it arises and catch lunch on a “catch-as-catch-can” basis. The same is true for other breaks during the day. If any employee finds himself or herself deprived of, on average, a five-minute personal break for each hour worked and a total of thirty minutes for lunch, then an appeal should be made to the Director of Communication.

Bullying – Intimidation and practical jokes are unacceptable in the workplace. Statements of a private nature, personal criticisms, caricatures, or other embarrassing material naming a particular individual are not to be publicly placed anywhere on the property. All posters and public notices must be approved by management before being posted anywhere. Off-premises bullying even through on-line services by one employee against another, to the degree they are work-related, will be treated as if done at the workplace.

Bureau of Deep Mine Safety Compliance – The Conservancy is inspected twice a year by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Deep Mine Safety. The advice and direction of this bureau is a great resource for the promotion of safety. Full cooperation is to be given the inspector, and all questions are to be answered honestly. All directives from the inspector are to be given priority attention and fully carried out.

Cameras – Cameras are to be put in place where practical for purposes of security, especially with respect to off-tour passages and service counters.

Cave Appearance – All interpretive and caving staffers are to pick-up litter in the cave as they see it, and report to the Day Manager any maintenance issue they cannot address. A waste container shall be maintained at a point about mid-tour. Guides should politely mention that this convenience exists.

Cave Preservation – Laurel Caverns, to the degree possible, is to be returned to, and kept in, its natural state. All graffiti, except those of special historical significance, are to be removed. All laws related to cave vandalism are to be enforced.

Chain of Decision – Employees shall express concerns beginning with their immediate supervisor. If an employee wishes to appeal a decision by a supervisor, the employee shall follow the organizational path shown in the organizational chart available in the Staff Lounge.

Collegiality – Employees are to treat each other with dignity and respect. Disparaging remarks, regarding a fellow employee of the Conservancy, whether by conversation, e-mails, or social media, are divisive and, if pervasive, could lead to a PEP. Team discussions, regarding performance evaluations, are to focus on specific acts and avoid denigration, of the person being evaluated, based on character or personal features.

Communication with DCNR Directors and Managers – The DCNR has strict rules regarding chain-of-command contacts. For example, the Conservancy President is to pass any communication to a DCNR Director through the Park Manager. Accordingly, any Conservancy employee wishing to contact a DCNR manager should give the request to the Conservancy President, who will give it to the Park Manager.

Community Representation – The Conservancy shall act affirmatively in its employment advertising and hiring decisions with respect to women and minorities. The goal is that the diversity in Fayette County is reflected in the Conservancy's employee roster.

Compliance – These policies shall be fully compliant with all Federal, state and local laws. If any provision in this document is found to be, either upon advice from legal counsel or upon notice from any duly constituted form of government, in violation of any regulation, statute, or finding of court, it shall be considered moot and the governing body of this Conservancy is hereby directed to draft a revision fully compliant with all Federal, state and local laws.

Contracts – Only the President of the Conservancy is authorized to make a contract with employees or outside parties. No one else is to tell a third party that they are authorized to make purchases.

Cooperativeness – A team spirit, emotional stability, and a sense of sharing are to be a hallmark of the organizational culture of The Conservancy.

Dating – No employee is to ask another employee for a date and no employee is to accept a date offered by another employee. All employees are hereby warned that such requests, if unwanted and still persistent, can lead to an accusation of sexual harassment and discharge. Further, couple break-ups are today's primary source of hostile work-environment claims. The acceptance of a social arrangement, by one employee with another, shall be regarded by the Conservancy as the waiving of any right by either party to file a sexual harassment or hostile work-environment claim based upon the fruits of that acceptance.

Days Off – Days off are to be fixed, by contract, with the Director of Employment. Fixed schedules are required for booking group tours. A day missed by an employee cannot be made-up, except by a request from the Director of Employment. Every employee is entitled to three paid personal/medical sick days a season. To make post Labor Day layoffs or work-day-reductions fair and objective, those selected will be based on call-off numbers.

Decorum – Every program and tour must be led by someone whose appearance and manner are marked by friendliness, respect, and professional conduct. The Laurel Caverns Conservancy is in great part a team initiative. The professional image of each member of the team is intrinsically tied to the image of the Laurel Caverns State Park. Continued employment requires strict adherence to the Conservancy's dress codes, as set by the Conservancy's management teams.

Defamation – Openly critical statements, especially in front of visitors or fellow employees, defaming the character or abilities of a fellow employee will not be tolerated. Minimally, a Performance Concern Notice shall be given. If the behavior occurs a second time a Confidential Performance Concern Resolution will be drafted.

The public defamation of a visitor will lead to immediate discharge.

Deferred Payments – Except for regional public schools on field trips, no deferred payment arrangement (billing) shall be granted to visiting organization without clearance by the Director of Outreach. A copy of any “to be invoiced” Group Receipt must be immediately placed in the Director’s mail bin.

Discharge – The word “discharge” refers to lawful obligations placed on both the Conservancy and an employee, when the employee leaves the Conservancy. A discharge may either be voluntary, seasonal, conditional or involuntary. All departing employees, shall complete, or have completed on their behalf, a form called the Employment Separation Report. This form shall serve as the complete record of voluntary, seasonal, conditional and involuntary discharges. It shall have the following: (1) a section providing for times and persons involved, (2) four divisions, one each for voluntary, seasonal, conditional and involuntary discharges with comment lines appropriate to each, and (3) statements with respect to the returning of keys, lockers, payments due, W-2 contact, recall, and the like.

Docents – All interpretive staffers, tour guides, and caving guides are to be fully knowledgeable in the history, geology, and ecology of Laurel Caverns. They are to see their primary role as that of a teacher.

Documents and Publications – The Conservancy President shall maintain a current and complete set of every document needed for, or used by, this Conservancy to conduct its programs and administer its internal policies.

Dress Code Policy – A dress code is required to allow visitors to be able to distinguish between the employees of The Conservancy, who are their host, and their fellow visitors who are not their host. The Day Manager is to send anyone home who comes to work in non-compliance with the following dress code:

1. Name Tags: All employees whose job for the day requires them to interact with the public must wear a name tag. The Director of Employment is to choose, order, and supply appropriate name tags. All must be worn at that place on one’s shirt or jacket, as worn by PA state park employees.
2. Uniforms: Uniforms are to consist of Laurel Caverns jackets, vests, polo-shirts, sweatshirts, collared-shirts, and cargo pants. These are to be worn for all cave tours, and service-desk appearances. Coveralls and hiking boots serve as the uniform for caving trips. The cost, of all uniforms, is paid by the Conservancy. Two or three sets are to be provided to each employee depending upon job description.
3. Unprofessional apparel: Excessive jewelry, oddly colored hair, clothing expressing vulgar themes, torn blue jeans and all other apparel indicating an unprofessional lack of maturity on the part of the employee is prohibited. Shorts are not to be worn. Socks and appropriate shoes and slacks are required.

Drug Testing – At the time of hiring all new-hires shall be required to show a valid driver’s license. If the new-hire has no valid driver’s license, interest in the public’s safety will require the employee to be evaluated by the Fayette County Drug and Alcohol Commission (FCDAC) to determine whether-or-not the new-hire requires monitoring and/or enrollment in a drug and alcohol remediation program. Continued employment will be wholly determined by the findings of the FCDAC and the willingness and ability of the new-hire to comply with any directives given them by the FCDAC.

Drug or Alcohol Possession – No drugs, prohibited by law, are to be brought into the workplace. Alcohol is not to be consumed by any Conservancy employee within the Visitors’ Center or cave.

Due Process – The written policies and procedures of the Conservancy shall be the ground for all hiring, mentoring, and discharge. All concerns and appeals must be made in writing. The steps, within the organization’s performance Enhancement plan (PEP) process, must be followed. If a dispute cannot be settled through a PEP, the Conservancy will pay the cost of hiring a mutually agreed upon attorney whose finding will be binding upon both parties.

Effectiveness – The outcome of every program and tour must be positive. Evaluations by park visitors will serve as the measure of effectiveness.

Efficiency – The waste of time, energy, and materials is to be avoided.

Employee Payment – Conservancy staffers are paid on a biweekly schedule. The pay period begins on Sunday and ends on the Saturday of the following week. The hours are to be reported to the professional payroll provider no later than the first day the payroll provider is open following the end of a payroll period. Paychecks are direct deposited into a checking account

Employment Categories – There are two. *Fulltime employees*: those available for employment, at least four days a week, beginning from the time of hire or call-back through the last week of the season. *Parttime employees*: Those only available for work three days or less, or who choose a four-hour workday. The latter requires a 10:00 am until 2:00 pm contract. In both, new-hires must have attained their 18th birthday.

Employment Contract – Any contractual arrangement between the Conservancy with respect to duration of employment, assigned responsibilities, and the like is subject to these policies and all relevant employment laws. In the absence of such a contract, the Policies and Procedures of the Laurel Caverns Conservancy, as well as its operating times, shall serve as the employment contract.

Endangered Species – All Conservancy employees are to conduct themselves with respect to endangered species in a way that first addresses the safety and health of the park’s visitors and staff while doing what can be reasonably done to protect those species.

Equal Opportunity – All policies relating to employment retention and advancement within the workplace shall be written in such a way as to promote equal opportunity.

Equal Rights – A right granted to one employee is considered granted to all employees except where special privileges are granted based on criteria that are potentially available to every employee, e.g. time served in the Conservancy; where the right is tied to a specific set of responsibilities within a job description; or where factors common to every human being are involved, e.g., that no person under the age of 18 be hired for employment.

Failure to Report – An employee’s knowledge of an on-going violation of a security policy, especially one related to safety, coupled with a failure to report to the proper supervisor will result in a PEP.

Fire Extinguishers – Fire extinguishers are to be wall mounted and prominently displayed in the Visitor’ Center at distances no greater than fifty feet apart. All extinguishers are to be professionally inspected, annually, and any problems or defects noted in this equipment between inspections should be reported immediately to management. Oversight of the fire extinguishers belongs to the Director of Safety.

Free Passes – No employee is to be charged for participating in any Laurel Caverns tour program while off duty. Additionally, each season, after eighty hours of employment, every employee will receive four free passes for the family guided tour. However, beyond this, no employee is to make a family member or friend a free “guest” of the Conservancy even though it is realized that employees are often pressured by friends and relatives to do so. The purpose of this rule is to allow you to draw the line. Distribution and tracking of the passes is to be handled by the Director of Communication.

Friendliness – Friendliness and patience are to mark every interaction by an employee of the Conservancy with park visitors. Friendliness is to a person what proportion is to a painting; its absence ruins everything else. An inability on the part of any Conservancy employee to be friendly and welcoming will be judged by the Management Team. If it cannot be corrected, it will result in discharge.

Grievance Procedures – Grievance procedures are simply the steps one takes to seek a fair resolution to a complaint or concern. A complaint or concern is to first be submitted, in writing, to one’s immediate supervisor or director. If the concern or complaint is still not resolved, it may be appealed to the Management Team. If this cannot resolve the problem, the employee and management are to mutually agree upon a local attorney as a fair third-party arbitrator, one not currently representing either the Conservancy or the employee, to review the grievance. In such a case, the Conservancy agrees to pay all legal fees involved. If lawful, the decisions and remedies of the third-party arbitrator shall be binding upon both parties.

Hostility-Free Work Environment – It is a fundamental policy of the Conservancy that its employees and visitors shall not be subject to either harassment or hostile behavior. All instances of such behavior are to be reported to the appropriate supervisor.

Human Dignity – Every employee must have in their employment file a signed copy the following human dignity pledge (© David Cale 1998) – I pledge to uphold the dignity of every human being I encounter, through my association with this organization, in the context of my work environment, regardless of place or circumstance. I pledge to never disparage or denigrate another individual, most especially, based on race,

religion, gender, physical ability, physical appearance, intellect, age, education, sexual orientation or place of origin. I further pledge to never engage in any conduct which will create unnecessary barriers to another's pursuit of the fulfillment of their day, create unnecessary discomfort, or detract in any way from the measure of respect which I would have from others.

Illiteracy – It shall be the policy of the Conservancy that every employee be literate. The safety of the public or staff might be compromised by an employee's inability to read. If this policy is challenged by any applicant, it shall then be the policy of The Conservancy to immediately turn the issue over to a mutually agreed upon third party, knowledgeable in the law whose fees shall be paid by the Conservancy, for a binding decision on whether the applicant's limitation poses a threat to the right of employees and the public to a safe environment.

Injury and Illness – All Conservancy employees are covered by a worker's compensation policy which serves to protect employees from income loss due to work related injuries and illnesses. All employees are to annually complete a form called – Injury, Illness and Accommodation Requirements Report. This report shall have the following provisions – (1) a section providing for times and persons involved; (2) a section stating the nature of the physical demands associated with employment; (3) a section inviting the employee to report any known medical conditions which might be aggravated by these physical demands; (4) a section requiring a physician's response as to what the Conservancy can do to accommodate the employee so that the Conservancy's work environment will not aggravate either the employee's known physical condition or other medical problem discovered by the physician and (5) a signature section for the employee and the physician.

Injury and Illness Report – All injuries, illness or concerns with respect to an aggravation of a prior injury or illness are to result in an immediate cessation of activity and be reported to the Director of Communication at the earliest opportunity to do so. At that time a new Injury, Illness and Accommodation Requirements Report shall be completed and a determination, mutually agreed upon by both the involved manager and the employee, shall be made as to whether the employee needs professional medical attention. In cases where the need for such attention is immediately apparent, the earliest possible medical help is to be obtained and the paper work held to a more reasonable time. If the need for immediate medical attention seems ambiguous, all are to err on the side of caution and obtain the earliest possible medical attention. The report of any injury or illness reported as a work-related injury or illness, but which occurs outside the Conservancy's work environment, shall be regarded as insurance fraud and will result in discharge proceedings.

Interpreter / Interpretive Technician – See docent.

Ladder Safety – All OSHA rules regarding ladders and scaffolding are to be followed. Auto belays and harnesses are to be used where there is the threat of a fall.

Land and Cave Preservation – Employees shall conduct themselves in a way that preserves as much of the natural environment of the park property as possible. Defacement of any kind can result in dismissal.

Leave – In the event an employee takes a leave of absence without written notice the Conservancy can only assume the employee has quit without notice. Otherwise, any leave of absence will be handled according to the rules of law relating to jury duty, the Family and Medical Leave Act, maternity leave or military service.

Lockers – Every employee shall be entitled to a locker capable of being locked. Each employee shall supply their lock.

Lost Checks – Every employee is responsible for their paycheck and the payroll information attached. Paychecks are direct deposited into a checking account.

Non-Discrimination – The Conservancy is committed to social justice. We encourage those in protected classes to apply for employment and do not discriminate based on race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. No policy, written or unwritten, shall be permitted which discriminates against any individual based on race, gender, religion, marital status, physical ability, national origin or any other factor which comes to an individual beyond the control of their will, except in protecting minors.

Offensive Pictures, Publications, Posters, Postings, and Recordings – No employee is to bring to the property images, publications, posters, recordings or any other material which has, in any other place, offended

someone based on anything covered in the human dignity pledge. The introduction of such material in any form where they can be seen or heard by a visitor or fellow employee shall initiate a PEP. If the employee continues to introduce such material, they shall be discharged.

Operating Hours – The advertised hours for guided tours and programs shall be from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. However, in fairness to those who get lost or misjudge the driving distance, the 4:00 p.m. time is never to be the start time of the last tour. The location of the caverns requires a fifteen-minute grace time, so they will not be deprived a tour over a matter of being a few minutes late. Any desk staffer turning away a visitor before 4:15 p.m. for the traditional tour, will be given a PEP.

Overtime – One hourly wage rate (WR) goes to 1.5WR for all hours worked over 40 hours per week. All overtime other than that created by an extended workday must be pre -approved by the manager. No one is to create overtime pay for themselves through self-scheduling.

Parties – No parties are to be held during the Conservancy’s operating hours or in the Conservancy’s leased area, except as approved by both the Conservancy President and the Park Manager.

Performance Assessment – All programs, instructors, guides, and other Conservancy employees are to be annually evaluated’ based on their adherence to the Conservancy’s principles, policies, and procedures.

Performance Enhancement Plan – The goal of a PEP is to enhance, not hurt, an employee’s professional future. A “PEP” is outlined in a form to be completed for policy failures, both universal and task specific, which do not involve zero -tolerance behavior. This plan can cover everything from insensitivity to a failure on visitor satisfaction surveys. It shall have the following structure – (1) a section providing for times and persons involved, (2) a section showing the assessment categories affected and the specific observation which indicated the need for the plan, (3) a section noting a communication, if any, from the Conservancy to the employee apart from written principles, policies, and procedures, (4) a section telling the employee’s interpretation of the failure, (5) a section offering the employee tangible and measurable performance goals, while identifying any training, mentoring or other assistance needed by the Conservancy, (6) a section identifying any recommendations to management and the officers of the Conservancy for policy changes or corrections, (7) a section identifying the reasonable date by which the plan is to be fully implemented and reviewed as well as the consequence to the employee if the employee’s responsibilities to the plan are not met, (8) a section providing for the employee’s acknowledgment of receipt of the plan. One copy of this report is to be placed in the employee’s personnel file and another given to the employee.

Performance Monitoring – Performance, unless otherwise provided for in an employment contract, is to be monitored through three venues: visitor assessments, media assessments, and supervisor assessments.

Personal Use of Conservancy Assets – No one is to remove any asset of the Conservancy from the property without permission from management. No one is to divert the use of an asset of the Conservancy to one’s personal use, no matter how noble the use, e.g. using a copier to make copies of a program for one’s church.

Phone Use – No one is to spend one’s time talking on the desk’s phone with one’s friends or relatives while on company time. Incoming personal calls on any Laurel Caverns phone are to be limited to emergency calls only.

Policy Review – These policies shall be reviewed once every three years by legal counsel familiar with employment law to both assure compliance and adequacy with respect to federal, state and local laws. They shall be reviewed annually by the officers to assure adequacy with respect to the realities of the Conservancy’s operations. Finally, suggestions by the Laurel Caverns State Park Manager are always welcomed.

Policy Understanding – Any employee who has difficulty following the wording of this policy manual should request the opportunity to have it reviewed for them by a supervisor.

Posters – All Federal and State posters and legal notices required by law are to be permanently and prominently displayed on or by the bulletin board in the staff lounge. Minimally the following posters are to be displayed – OSHA Notification, Equal Employment Notification Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Unemployment Law notice. Any observation that a particular poster is missing should be reported to the Director of Communications.

Preparation – All instructors scheduled for group tours or programs are to have the scheduled room set up prior to the group’s arrival with all materials needed to run the program. After the program, the room is to be cleaned and prepared for the arrival of the next group.

Privacy – No policy may be made which permits the dissemination of personal information beyond the purposes for which it was provided. To insure privacy, personnel files are to be kept off-premise. Additionally, no employee shall: Enter the changing room or restroom of the opposite sex; neither shall they create viewing apertures into any public or private changing room or restroom; listen in on phone calls; unnecessarily invade another’s work area such as their desk; open another’s mail; open another’s locker; enter, without permission, another’s vehicle or other personal materials; either request or offer access to an employee personnel file except for reasons of government, discipline, an accreditation benefiting the employee, or remuneration. All access must be approved by the Director of Employment. A voluntary disclosure of one’s own wage rate or contractual information shall not be construed as privacy misconduct and is not prohibited.

Probation Period – The equal opportunity policies of the Conservancy encourage it to be as lenient as possible during the hiring process. However, those who do not learn the basic functions of the position for which they are hired, within six weeks, or consistently fail to appear for work during the times they agreed upon, will be released from employment.

Probationary Employment Termination – If a new-hire’s supervisor concludes that the new employee cannot, even with reasonable accommodation, fulfill the requirements of the tasks the employee was hired to perform, or has health issues that might be aggravated by those tasks, then probationary employment termination is invoked and it shall be done so without prejudice to the employee’s right to draw unemployment insurance.

Probationary Status – The probationary status is the standing held by an employee who has accumulated less than 160 hours of work history with the Conservancy since being hired. The wage rate during the probationary period shall be the base rate.

Professional Payroll Preparation – The Conservancy shall retain the services of a professional payroll provider to assure that an adequate payroll record is available to both employees and interested government agencies.

Proficiency – Every program and tour must be led by someone who has a full grasp of the material to be presented and is able to convey that material.

Purchasing – Purchases are to be made only from suppliers approved by the Director of Finance, and any purchase exceeding \$100 must have that Director’s approval. No individual is to make purchases on behalf of the Conservancy except as stated in a job description.

Quitting – A two-week notice is appreciated from anyone planning to quit. If an employee takes a leave of absence without written notice the lack of notice will be taken as quitting without notice.

Quitting During Training – Because employment at Laurel Caverns places newly hired individuals into an exciting and unfamiliar environment, occasionally, newly hired employees accept employment tentatively, some even as a matter of curiosity rather than as a commitment to employment, then quit after being given the high-adventure experiences that come with the familiarization process. This practice is understandable, but very unfair to the applicants not hired. Accordingly, the first three days of training will be paid only when matched by three days of service to the Park’s visitors.

Right to a Four-Hour Workday – The nature of serving group tours and programs often means that public demand may only require four hours from an employee. Those with children in school are often deprived of employment due to eight-hour workday rules. All Conservancy new-hires and existing employees may have this right if requested.

Safety Concerns – All safety concerns are to be reported immediately to the Day Manager. If an on-going safety concern is not addressed within a reasonable time, following an oral report, the report shall be put in writing and sent to the President of the Laurel Caverns Conservancy. If, after a reasonable time-period, it is still not addressed, then the steps outlined in the OSHA poster in the staff lounge should be followed.

Saturday Work Requirement – Because Saturday attendance often accounts for 40% of a week’s attendance, equal treatment demands that the willingness and ability to work Saturdays is a bona-fide requirement.

Scheduled Times Adherence – All employees are expected to arrive at their scheduled times. A failure to do so will result in a PEP. If the PEP fails, the employee is to be dismissed only if no other employee has as many incidences of late arrival. Unusual circumstances forcing a late arrival are to be excused if a timely notification is made by phoning 724-438-6090, 724-438-3003, or 800-515-4150.

Scheduling – All scheduling is to be done by the Director of Employment. All changes to the fixed schedule must be approved by the Director. Except in an injury-related emergency, no one shall be paid for self-assigned work not approved by the Director.

Secure Wage Rate – No employee may suffer a cut in current hourly pay rate due to a change in assignments.

Service Counters – All service areas and gift shop displays are to be maintained in a clean and attractive way under the supervision of the Director of Hospitality. The following stewardship policies are to be followed: (1) Employees are to keep their lights, personal items, food and beverages in the staff lounge, not on the service counters or in the display counters. (2) Display and counter areas are to be kept free dust and “debris” that gives them a messy appearance.

Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Where the harassment arises from a guest the employee is to leave the guest, if possible, and report the incident to the nearest Director or Manager who shall be obligated, by this policy, to provide the guest with another service provider. If the Director or Manager feels the employee is overreacting, they must still make the substitution and, later, deal with a deeper investigation into the employee’s concern. Where the harassment arises from a fellow member of the Conservancy, the harassed employee is to first address the concern with the offending individual. If this does not resolve the problem, grievance procedures are to be followed. If these procedures find the harassment is a consequence of a violation of the non-dating policy, the Conservancy, having no right to involve itself in the personal lives of its employees, must recuse itself from involvement. No employee shall, in any way, suffer any loss of wages or change in status from the filing of a sexual harassment report.

Signage - All signage is to have a professional appearance.

Smoke Detectors – Smoke detectors are to be installed in every storage area having more than 50 square feet and in all classrooms, sales areas and offices of the Visitors’ Center. Batteries are to be replaced, and the detectors inspected every March, July and November. Any problems or defects noted in this equipment between inspections should be reported immediately to the Director of Maintenance.

Smoking – The Visitors’ Center is to be a smoke free area.

Staff Lounge – A staff lounge, having a refrigerator, micro-wave oven, tables and lockers shall be provided to all employees. The Floor Manager has oversight of the Staff Lounge.

Suggestion Box – A locked suggestion box is to be placed and maintained near the service counter.

Team – A group of individuals sharing common responsibilities. One person can serve on two or more teams.

Terroristic Threats – A terroristic threat is a communication which conveys to an individual intent by the offender to do harm to either their body or property. Where the communication arises from a guest, the employee is to immediately report the threat to the nearest Director or Manager who shall be obligated, by this policy, to politely ask the guest to leave. If the guest poses a threat which cannot be handled by a polite request, then the Park’s security officer is to be called. If the threat is from an employee, the Director or Manager is to make that decision which leads to the safest possible outcome for all concerned, then report the matter to the President.

Testing and Certification – All testing and certification requirements are to be followed as identified in one’s job description. Employees are to be paid their regular hourly wage while participating in any on premise test or certification procedure. However, no off-premise testing or certification, unless specifically identified by management for employment retention, is to be paid for. Red Cross certification fees will be paid for by the Conservancy, however, any off-premise hours spent acquiring this certification will not be reimbursed except with written arrangements with the manager.

Timeliness – All programs and tours are to begin and end at their scheduled times unless the group is running late or has changed the scheduled times. All efforts must be made to satisfy the groups whether on time or late.

Time Records – Hourly earnings shall be based on timecards as electronically recorded. No hours will be paid, not electronically reported, except for work done off the property. Payment for those times shall be based upon the completion of a written time report which shall show the date, starting and completion times, and activity.

Tipping – For many reasons the Conservancy has a no-tipping policy. In its place, there is a 10 cents per ticket-stub bonus for tour guides and a \$5,000 merit-reward fund, apportioned by visitor votes for exceptional service, to reward employees. Employees are not to request, encourage, hint at, or post signs requesting a tip from visitors.

Tools – The Conservancy is to provide the necessary tools and equipment needed for every task. This equipment is neither to be used for personal use nor removed from the park unless approved by management.

Training – Training, testing, certification, mentoring, performance assessments and performance enhancement plans are all to be considered as part of an on-going process of learning and career development.

Tours and Programs – All tours and programs are to be designed to achieve well-defined learning objectives, combining activity with learning in interesting “hands on” ways.

Under-the-influence – No one is to report to work in that state called by law “under the influence” in that they might pose a safety threat to themselves or others. No one judged to be in this state should be permitted to leave the property and the Conservancy shall pay any transportation cost needed to get the employee home safely. The employee’s Day-Manager’s prima facie judgment in deciding the issue will be backed by the Conservancy. Three such appearances within a sixty-day period will require a letter from a physician, or social services agency advising the Conservancy as to how to proceed, so that both the employee’s best interest is upheld.

Unwritten Policies – Because it is humanly impossible for the framers of these policies to think of every possible situation which might arise, and because individuals are by nature inclined to assume policies and procedures in the absence of written guidelines, any behavior, activity or initiative not specifically permitted by these by-laws, policies or procedures is to be regarded as prohibited under the zero tolerance provisions of this Conservancy. Especially sensitive areas are those which are criminal in nature; those intended to create fear in another person, those which lead to someone’s embarrassment, pain, or insult; those which are deliberately intended to create unnecessary work for another; and those which involve the destruction of property.

Vacations – Vacation schedules, like days available, are left up to the employees in the hopes that there will always be enough individuals available to meet visitor service demands. However, when large numbers of staff all take off at the same time and shortfalls occur, the response of the Director of Employment is to increase the size of the employee base, degrading average incomes. To keep the size of the employee base down, it is suggested that employees attempt, as much as possible, to self-regulate their days off.

Visitor Needs – The Conservancy exists to serve the public; thus, all managers on duty have the task of seeing that the immediate service and accommodation needs of the on-premise public are met. Visitor needs take priority over all other activities within the park; so, requests for help by a manager are to be honored. If any individual feels put upon by such a request, the request is to be honored and then followed by a written statement of grievance to the Management Team, which will provide fair compensation. The ignoring of any request from a manager on duty, which negatively impacts visitor experience, will result in a PEP.

Visitors’ Center Appearance – All leased rooms are to be maintained in a clean and attractive way.

Weapons – No lethal weapons are to be introduced to the park, by employees, except under conditions approved by management. Depending upon severity, a violation of this policy could result in immediate discharge.

Wildlife – No one is to hunt, chase or search for any natural creature as a matter of having something to do while on duty. No one is to handle any form of wildlife with bare hands. All wildlife is to be treated compassionately.

Zero Tolerance – The Conservancy shall have a zero-tolerance policy for all acts of an unlawful nature as well as any act that promotes discrimination, bullying, intolerance or any blatant disregard for the safety of guests or employees. The Management Team shall be the deciding voice as to policy violation. Zero-tolerance policy offenses shall result in immediate dismissal. If a zero-tolerance discharge is disputed, the Conservancy will pay the cost of hiring a mutually agreed-upon attorney whose finding will be binding upon both parties.