

Code of Conduct for 2025 SER MWGL Chapter Meeting

Code of Conduct

The Society for Ecological Restoration's Midwest-Great Lakes (SER MWGL) Chapter is infused with the energy and passion of members and participants from throughout the United States, Canada, and South America who are engaged in the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration in the Midwestern United States. SER MWGL Chapter values the diversity of our restoration community and is committed to providing a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all participants of SER MWGL Chapter events and gathering spaces. SER MWGL Chapter welcomes and encourages participation of individuals from all races, abilities, and backgrounds, values constructive contributions from diverse socioeconomic and political perspectives, and diverse ways of being and knowing, and is dedicated to creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all.

The objective of this Code of Conduct ("Code") is to serve as guidance for acceptable behavior of anyone participating in SER MWGL Chapter events and the process for remediation should an incident of unacceptable behavior occur. The Code reflects SER MWGL Chapter's tenets of practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

All SER MWGL Chapter meeting and event participants – including, but not limited to, attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, SER MWGL Chapter Board Members, SER MWGL Chapter staff, members of the media, vendors, guests, and service providers (hereinafter "participants") – are expected to abide by this Code. This Code applies in all SER MWGL Chapter venues, including ancillary events and social gatherings, and on-line forums and discussions associated with SER MWGL Chapter events. Throughout this document, the term 'event' always includes both in-person events and virtual SER MWGL Chapter events. Organizers shall enforce this Code throughout events.

Definitions

SER MWGL Chapter's Code directly follows that of its global parent society and aims to establish a harassment-free and respectful environment at its events and is driven by the core values of equity and inclusion and the aim of creating a welcoming and respectful environment for all. The definitions given represent SER MWGL Chapter's distinctions of the terms. Conduct that does not support diversity and inclusion or that can be considered harassment may violate any rule laid out in this document.

Diversity – the quality of being different or unique as an individual or group, including but not limited to the following attributes: race, ability status, age, body size, ethnicity, gender or gender identity/expression, nationality or origin, physical appearance, political views or other affiliation, professional status, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, technology choice and/or working language proficiency.

Harassment – behavior, gestures, or speech that is not welcome or is personally offensive. Examples of harassment include deliberate intimidation, inappropriate/unnecessary physical contact, photography or recording stalking, sustained disruption of talks, or unwelcome attention.

Inclusion – the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minoritized groups.

Encouraged Behavior

Foster an atmosphere of inclusiveness and belonging, treating all participants with kindness, respect, consideration, and valuing a diversity of views and opinions (including minority, unpopular, or controversial points of view you may not share).

Interact with others in ways that reflect the uniqueness, experiences, and worth of others. If you are not sure what a person or a specific community prefers to be called, just ask: "How would you like to be addressed?"

Communicate in an open, compassionate, and positive manner by using transparent and kind communication. This can be done by avoiding negative tone and critiquing ideas rather than individuals.

Actively listen without interrupting and imposing one's own opinions.

Think before you speak. Be mindful of those around you, and choose your words with kindness, thoughtfulness, and care.

Acknowledge the opinions, skills, and contributions of others.

Provide encouragement, help, support, or mentorship to other SER MWGL Chapter participants, if needed.

Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue, hotels, SER MWGL Chapter contracted facility, or any other venue, including on-line platforms.

Respect other participant members' confidentiality pertaining to photographs and video recordings.

Unacceptable Behavior

Unwelcome or offensive verbal comments or exclusionary behavior.

Sustained disruption of talks or other events.

Physical or verbal abuse of any participant.

Unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual or verbal attention and inappropriate physical contact.

Use of sexual or discriminatory language, images, words, gestures, or concepts in physical gathering spaces or in presentations.

Real or implied threat of physical harm.

Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following.

Abuse of power (including abuses related to position, wealth, race or gender).

Racism, homophobia, or other behavior that discriminates against a group or class of people.

Harassment, intimidation, microaggressions, or discrimination in any form are not acceptable. Please note that behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so use discretion to be certain respect is communicated. Harassment intended in a joking manner still constitutes unacceptable behavior.

Invasion of privacy, including taking photos without consent, taking screenshots of conversations, or posting personal details about someone else without their permission.

In general, SER MWGL Chapter presenters (oral and poster) can expect that other event participants may choose to photograph or record parts of their presentation. SER MWGL Chapter will state any specific recording policies in event literature. As such, SER MWGL Chapter presenters are asked to declare at the opening of their presentation or clearly on their poster if they are opposed to having photographs or recordings of their presentation (e.g. in the event of pre-publication data).

Retaliation for reporting unacceptable behavior.

Immediate serious threats to public safety

Please notify venue security if you or someone else is in immediate danger, or if you see something suspicious or would like to report a security issue or emergency at an SER MWGL Chapter event. Our team of volunteers and Chapter Board Members will be happy to help you contact hotel/venue security, local law enforcement, or local support services, or escort you or otherwise assist you to feel safe for the duration of the event. We value your attendance and participation, in any capacity.

Incident Reporting Guidelines

Please reach out to a SER MWGL Chapter volunteer and/or Board Member if someone makes you or anyone else feel unsafe or unwelcome, or if you have any concerns about inappropriate behavior by any participant. SER MWGL Chapter volunteers and the Board Members are willing to assist anyone experiencing inappropriate conduct to help enable them to feel safe for the duration of the event.

The following options are provided to serve as avenues for reporting unacceptable behavior:

Online: Reporting the behavior via the dedicated email address (dei.sermwgl@yahoo.com) for reporting incidents anonymously at both virtual and in-person events.

In-Person: At an in-person event, SER MWGL Chapter volunteers and Board Members can be identified by their badge holders and can be contacted if a situation requires urgent attention.

Email: You can also email your concern to directly to dei.sermwgl@yahoo.com

Please note that in case of an anonymous report, we cannot follow up with you directly, but we will fully investigate the incident and take whatever action is necessary to prevent a recurrence.

All reports will be treated confidentially and seriously, and will be responded to promptly. Volunteers are simply a contact for initial receipt of a complaint and if a complaint is reported to a volunteer they will immediately alert a Board member of the complaint and remain with the individual until the Board member arrives. When taking an in-person report, our Board Members will ensure you are safe and cannot be overheard. Additionally, the Board Member will involve one other Board member to ensure your report is managed properly. Once safe, you will be requested to tell us what happened. You will not be asked to confront anyone and we will not disclose your identity to anyone.

Investigation and consequences

Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately.

SER MWGL Chapter leadership or security may take any immediate action deemed necessary and appropriate, including removal from the meeting or event without warning or refund.

SER MWGL Chapter will consult with SER's standing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for guidance in determining the appropriate corrective actions to be taken following a complaint.

The matter may be referred to the SER MWGL Chapter Board of Directors for consideration of further consequences, which may include prohibition from attending future meetings and events, or suspension/cancellation of membership within the Society.

Once a report is made, for those reports that **do not** involve the SER MWGL Chapter Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary) then the Executive Committee will conduct a prompt investigation with the intent of providing quick action on complaints. If the Executive Committee determines – to the best of their ability and at their sole discretion – that a participant has violated any tenets of this Code, appropriate action may be taken by SER MWGL Chapter to the effect of a warning to the offender or immediate expulsion from the event (including online forums) with no refund. Conversely, for those reports that involve the SER MWGL Chapter Executive Committee, then the report will be investigated by the SER's standing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, who then will advise on appropriate actions to be taken by the SER MWGL Chapter.

When appropriate, the SER MWGL Chapter Executive Committee may discuss with the complainant options for informally resolving the complaint, including restorative justice practices.

If absolutely necessary and at their discretion, SER MWGL Chapter Board Members and/or Event Volunteers may contact venue security and/or appropriate support agencies.

To protect all parties involved, SER MWGL Chapter will generally not make any detailed public statements about Code of Conduct incidents.

Retaliation is prohibited

SER MWGL Chapter prohibits retaliation against those who engage in reporting activity. (Reporting activities may include but are not limited to the following: complaining or threatening to complain about alleged discrimination, racism or harassment, resisting unwanted advances of any kind, requesting reasonable accommodation dependent on ability status or religion.)

Conduct that would likely deter an individual from reporting or supporting a claim of harassment or discrimination may constitute retaliation.

Confidentiality

All information received in connection with the filing, investigation, and resolution of a SER MWGL Chapter event harassment, discrimination, racism or retaliation complaint is treated as highly sensitive. The SER MWGL Chapter is committed to protecting the privacy of all reporting parties involved in an incident report. SER MWGL Chapter Board Members and volunteers who receive and investigate a complaint are responsible for evaluating requests for confidentiality. It is also expected and anticipated

that all parties involved in complaints will observe the same standard of sensitivity. It is emphasized that this practice is in the best interest of all parties; however, depending on the next steps confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that it does not compromise the rights of others and may not be guaranteed.

The complainant must understand that SER MWGL Chapter's ability to meaningfully investigate the allegation and pursue the disciplinary action against the responding party may be limited in some situations. Therefore, SER MWGL Chapter will weigh the request of complete confidentiality against SER MWGL Chapter's obligations to provide a safe, nondiscriminatory environment for all participants, presenters, vendors, and staff, including the complainant.

Grievance, appeals and questions

In the event that the individual is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, they may appeal to the SER MWGL Chapter Executive Committee who will then consult with the SER Global DEI Committee for further mediation and, if needed, additional investigatory measures.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to dei.sermwgl@yahoo.com

This is a living document

The Code is a work in progress, created with the sincere intention to promote diversity and inclusion. We expect cooperation from all participants to help ensure a safe, equitable, supportive, and collaborative environment for all. Please note that this Code is intended to supplement, but not replace, the SER Code of Ethics.

SER MWGL Chapter intends for these policies to meet the needs of our participants to have positive experiences at our events and in our online community spaces. We welcome comments and suggestions from the community. Please contact dei.sermwgl@yahoo.com if you would like to provide feedback.

This Code is a working document managed by the SER MWGL Chapter Board members and is subject to change and may be revised without further notice.