



**Sample Board Manual Table of Contents**  
**Based on *Land Trust Standards and Practices***

The following table of contents is a template for a board manual. Board manuals provide each board member with the information they need to fulfill their responsibilities and include policies and other important documents for the organization. This board manual's table of contents is based on *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, as it provides a useful guide for organizing documents and can help the organization track implementation of the standards.

Board manuals are often constructed using tabbed three-ring binders, but they can take other forms, and even be electronic if all board members have ready computer access. Sections or pages of the manual should be updated periodically, or as documents are created or revised. Not every organization will have all the items listed in the table of contents, so a board using this format should identify which items it has, what documents need to be created, and which items listed might not be appropriate for the organization (such as fee ownership policies if the organization only holds conservation easements.)

**I. Standard 1: Mission**

- A. Mission Statement
- B. Strategic Plan
- C. Outreach Materials
- D. History of Organization
- E. Ethics Statement
- F. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Standard 2: Compliance with Laws**

- A. Bylaws
- B. Articles of Incorporation
- C. 501(c)(3) Determination Letter
- D. Policies on Records Management
- E. Information on Maintaining Tax Exempt Status
- F. Most Recent Federal Form 990
- G. Most Recent State Reports
- H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**III. Standard 3: Board Accountability**

- A. List of Board Members
- B. Biographies of Board Members
- C. Board Member Job Description

- D. Organizational Chart
- E. Committee Lists and Descriptions
- F. Policies on Delegation of Decision Making
- G. Policies on Board Approval of Transactions
- H. Board Member Evaluation Form
- I. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Standard 4: Conflict of Interest**

- A. Conflict of Interest Policy
- B. Policies on Board Compensation
- C. Policies on Transactions with Insiders
- D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Standard 5: Fundraising**

- A. Sample Fundraising Materials (description of “contributor” levels and benefits)
- B. Fundraising Plan or Calendar
- C. Policies on Fundraising and Donor Accountability
- D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**VI. Standard 6: Financial and Asset Management**

- A. Annual Budget
- B. Previous Year Financial Statements (reviewed or audited)
- C. Fiscal Controls
- D. Policies on Investments, Endowments and Restricted Funds
- E. Lists of Endowments and Restricted Funds
- F. Policies on Disposal of Assets
- G. Insurance Information
- H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**VII. Standard 7: Volunteers, Staff and Consultants**

- A. Volunteer Job Descriptions or Recruiting Material
- B. Senior Staff Job Descriptions
- C. Training Guidelines
- D. Personnel Policies (or summary)
- E. Board / Staff Lines of Authority
- F. Contractor Bid Requirements
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**VIII. Standard 8: Selecting and Evaluating Projects**

- A. Project Selection Criteria
- B. Strategic Land Protection Plan or Focus Areas

- C. Land Conservation Fact Sheets
- D. Property Inspection / Evaluation Checklist
- E. Project Planning Template
  - Identifying public benefit and conservation values
  - Determining the best conservation tools
  - Evaluating risks
- F. Public Issues Selection and Involvement Criteria
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**IX. Standard 9: Ensuring Sound Transactions**

- A. Contact Information for Land Trust Transaction Attorney
- B. Policies on Legal Review for Land Trust and Landowner
- C. Acquisition Policies and Checklists
  - Environmental due diligence
  - Roles and responsibilities of parties
  - Records creation and storage
- D. Disposition Policies and Checklists
- E. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**X. Standard 10: Tax Benefits**

- A. Copy of IRS Section 170(h)
- B. Policies on Appraisals
- C. Policies Regarding Communications with Landowners on Tax Benefits
- D. Policies Regarding Signing Federal Form 8283
- E. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**XI. Standard 11: Conservation Easement Stewardship**

- A. Policies on Stewardship Funds
- B. Baseline Documentation Checklist
- C. Policies on Monitoring and Sample Forms
- D. Policies on Enforcement
- E. Landowner Contact / Relationships and Requests Procedures
- F. Policies on Amendments
- G. Policies on Backup / Contingency Holders
- H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**XII. Standard 12: Land Stewardship**

- A. Policies on Stewardship Funds
- B. Land Stewardship Principles
- C. Policies on Land Management, Monitoring and Administration
- D. Policies on Public Access
- E. Policies on Contingency Holders

F. Other \_\_\_\_\_