

NEON Participation Guidelines

The National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) welcomes contributions from everyone who shares our values of unity, creativity, collaboration, excellence, and appreciation. As such, we have adopted these participation guidelines and require all NEON community members to agree and adhere to them to help us create a safe and positive community experience for all. Here, we define the NEON community as anyone who participates in a NEON event and/or otherwise engages with the NEON program. These guidelines apply to NEON staff engaging in these activities and participants external to the NEON program. NEON staff are also broadly bound to the Battelle Code of Business Ethics and Conduct.

Our aim is to support a community where all people feel safe to participate, introduce new ideas, and inspire others regardless of: background, family status, gender identity or expression, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, native language, age, ability, race and/or ethnicity, caste, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, geographic location, and any other dimension of diversity.

When and How to Use These Guidelines

These guidelines outline both expected and prohibited behaviors as members of the NEON community in all activities, both at in-person events (e.g., meetings, workshops, conferences) and online spaces (e.g., community forum, social media, virtual meetings and events). NEON event leaders are required to share the guidelines and to ask participants to review and agree to them when they sign up for an event. Participation is contingent upon following these guidelines.

Expected Behaviors

Our community exists to advance science in a manner that is inclusive to all who participate in its processes. This requires that we actively practice kindness, empathy, and humility in all that we do while being mindful of the following expected behaviors.

Be Respectful and Trustworthy

Be attentive, listen, and fully engage in community activities. Value each other's ideas, styles, and viewpoints. Address differences of opinion through respectful discourse. Be open to being wrong. Be direct, constructive, and positive. Be honest and avoid spreading misinformation. Take responsibility for your impact and your mistakes; if someone says they have been harmed through your words or actions, listen carefully, apologize sincerely, and correct the behavior going forward.

Be Direct but Professional

We must provide space for giving and receiving constructive feedback to improve our processes. We are likely to have some discussions about if and when criticism is respectful and when it is not. We must be able to speak directly when we disagree and when we think we need to improve.

Be Inclusive and Welcoming

Members of the NEON community come from many cultures and backgrounds. Be respectful of these differences and seek to understand them. Think of others' needs from their point of view. Encourage all voices, help them to be heard, and listen actively. Provide alternative ways to contribute when possible. Respect people's right to privacy and confidentiality. Be open to learning from and educating others as well as educating yourself.

Acknowledge Contributions and Celebrate Achievements

Share credit and give appreciation for contributions from the community. Collectively celebrate accomplishments and achievements that further advance the community's vision and goals.

Collaborate and Co-Create

Collaborate across the community, actively seeking diverse perspectives to spark creativity and idea generation. Work with members of the NEON community to build strong relationships and trust and to co-create programs that are mutually beneficial.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Personal Attacks

Conflicts will inevitably arise, but frustration should never turn into a verbal personal attack. It is not okay to insult, demean, or belittle others. Attacking someone or manipulating someone psychologically ("gaslighting") because of their opinions, beliefs, and ideas is not acceptable.

Derogatory Language

It is not acceptable to use hurtful or harmful language. This includes harmful language as it relates to any of the dimensions of diversity. If you are unsure if a word is derogatory, do not use it.

Disruptive Behavior

Sustained disruption of events, forums, or meetings, including talks and presentations, will not be tolerated. We will treat influencing or encouraging disruptive behavior and activities of others the same way we treat leading the activities themselves, and thus the same consequences apply.

Harassment¹

Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. We are committed to providing a work environment free of harassment. Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, genetic information, disability or other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law is prohibited. Workplace harassment can take many forms including belittling, bullying, or threatening verbal or physical conduct.

¹ These behaviors may be considered unlawful and should be reported to the Battelle Ethics Hotline (see Reporting a Violation of these Guidelines)

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature and when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Unwelcome sexual attention or unwelcome physical contact or simulated contact is not acceptable.

Violence and Threats of Violence

We prohibit and will not tolerate any form of workplace violence committed by or against an employee, manager, or third-party, including vendors and visitors. Violence and threats of violence are not tolerated - online or offline. Anyone engaged in violent acts will be reported to the proper authorities.

Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior from any NEON community member will not be tolerated. Anyone asked to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately. Violation of these guidelines may result in you being asked to leave an event or online space, either temporarily or for the duration of the event. Continued or severe infractions of these guidelines may result in being banned from participation in future spaces, events, and activities in perpetuity.

Reports of harassment/discrimination will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and appropriate measures will be taken to address the situation. Unlawful behaviors will be reported to law enforcement.

Reporting a Violation of these Guidelines

For life threatening emergencies, call 9-1-1. For non-life threatening personal safety violations or unlawful activity, first find a safe space then report the violation immediately to the Battelle Ethics Hotline using this phone number: 855.296.2232 or [online](#). If you observe violations that are not unlawful or life threatening, please talk to a NEON employee or fill out [this online form](#).

Community Feedback

Everyone is encouraged to provide feedback on these guidelines. Your input is welcome by emailing: listDEIIPPT@battelleecology.org.

Acknowledgments

These participation guidelines were adapted from [Mozilla's Participation Guidelines](#) with additional content adapted from [OpenCon's Code of Conduct](#). We thank all Battelle and NEON staff, the NEON Community Engagement Technical Working Group, and the NEON Science, Technology, and Education Advisory Committee, who participated in the development of this code.