What is the Purpose of the Code?

• Professional codes of ethics have multiple functions:
  – to identify “core” beliefs that clarify the role and objectives of a profession and identify desired character virtues of a professional;
  – to clarify ethical obligations to guide action in perplexing cases; and, hopefully
  – to inspire members to achieve higher ethical standards.
Preamble

• An essential purpose of SAF’s Code of Ethics is to bond and inspire members
• Provides the primary inspirational message
• Not the enforcement mechanism
Principle and Pledge 1

• “no matter what I do, trees will grow back”
• does not require detailed cost-benefit analyses
• does not prohibit land-use conversions
• defines members’ obligation to manage forest resources for the long-term benefit of society – across landscapes
• This pledge calls for members to use their professional **knowledge** and **judgment** to balance the long-term resource-related needs and values of society with the needs, rights, responsibilities, and values of the landowner.
Principle and Pledge 2

- foresters acknowledge limits to the rights and responsibilities of landowners and society
- charges members to be aware of and act according to laws, regulations, and standards that are applicable to the location and nature of their activities
- should keep current on research and promote best practices
- the professional’s obligation is to inform the landowner of the short- and long-term consequences of alternative actions and to advocate a high standard of practice
- if a member implements a practice for a landowner that violates Principle 1 without making the landowner aware of the consequences of that action, the member could be found in violation of the Code of Ethics
Principle and Pledge 3

• this pledge commits SAF members to a continuing quest for greater professional knowledge and skill.
• it does not allow foresters to rest on past academic achievements.
• members must honestly appraise their personal capabilities and limitations
Principle and Pledge 4

• neither science nor social values alone should guide public policy related to forests
• SAF members to actively communicate their professional knowledge of forestry-related subjects to a range of audiences, including the general public, lawmakers, media, other professionals, and landowners.
• Members also are expected to take the initiative in correcting inaccurate and misleading statements about the profession and practice of forestry.
• Members should not distort or inaccurately or selectively portray facts when they are challenging or correcting untrue statements or when they are attempting to influence policies or laws.
• Members also must consider the probable effects of statements and the ways they will be perceived.
• Not for organizations, only applies to individuals.
Principle and Pledge 5

- treat confidential information appropriately
- accurately and fairly portray facts about issues and individuals
- avoid conflicts of interest
- Full disclosure to all parties involved is the first and most critical step in resolving a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- as with the Code as a whole, the intent is to protect the reputation and credibility of the profession and each of its members.
Principle and Pledge 6

• this principle states members’ fundamental obligations to be truthful, evenhanded, and law-abiding;
• to operate in good faith
• to give credit where credit is due
• acknowledges the right to disagree with other viewpoints, as well as the rights of members and others to express their views
• requires civil and professional behavior
• it means challenging the position, not the person
Is Compliance Enough?

• if all the Code can produce is the ability to split hairs to “comply,” . . .
• the profession could fail to live up to its own ideals and its promises to the public
• the Ethics Code is about improving forest practice and professional behavior
• it is not about finding ways to rationalize what is convenient, popular, or momentarily profitable