

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Social Media Policy

Adopted by PVAS Board of Directors March 2026

Purpose

This policy guides the responsible use of Potomac Valley Audubon Society's (PVAS) social media accounts by staff, board members, volunteers, and PVAS members. It ensures that all online communications reflect the PVAS mission. Social media is an important tool for PVAS to connect with our community, promote programs and events, and inspire people to connect with nature.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Official PVAS social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube, LinkedIn). Only staff members authorized by the Executive Director may create new accounts on other social media platforms.
- All content posted on behalf of PVAS or during PVAS-sponsored events.
- All PVAS staff, board members, interns/AmeriCorps Members, and volunteers who create, post, or manage content on official PVAS social media accounts.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for:
 - Creating and posting content aligned with PVAS's mission, value, and brand voice
 - Ensuring accuracy of information before posting
 - Monitoring comments, messages, and mentions and responding in a timely, professional matter
 - Raising sensitive or controversial issues to the Executive Director
- Executive Director (or designee) provides oversight, approves new platforms, and serves as the final decision-maker for sensitive content or crisis situations.

General Guidelines

- **Be Respectful:** Treat all users with kindness and professionalism. Avoid inflammatory, discriminatory, or offensive language.
- **Stay On Mission:** Share content that aligns with PVAS's goals—habitat and wildlife conservation, nature education, and community outreach.
- **Be Accurate:** Verify facts, including dates, times, locations, and working links, before posting. If errors occur, correct them promptly and transparently by editing the post to correct the error and make a note at the bottom of the post, denoting the original post and why it was corrected.
- **Protect Privacy:** Do not share personal information about staff, members, donors, or participants without consent.
- **Use Visuals Responsibly:** Ensure photos and videos are high-quality, relevant, and used with proper permissions or credits, including crediting the photographer whenever

possible (e.g., Photo by PVAS Staff Member or Photo by PVAS Staff Member Laurel Schwartz, or image created by AI).

Content Strategy

- **Educational Posts:** Highlight wildlife species, habitat conservation tips, and environmental news.
- **Event Promotion:** Share details, registration links, and highlights from PVAS events.
- **Member Spotlights:** Celebrate volunteers, staff, and community partners, including community partner news.
- **Calls to Action:** Encourage donations, memberships, and participation in programs.
- **Political/Advocacy:** PVAS is not an advocacy organization, so only positions/messages of a political or advocacy nature approved by the Board of Directors may be shared. PVAS will not endorse or oppose political candidates or parties. Care will be taken that AmeriCorps members are not mentioned in a message or in a related photo since they are mandated to be nonpartisan.

Crisis & Controversy Management

- **Stay Calm:** Respond to criticism or misinformation with facts and empathy.
- **Raise Awareness When Needed:** Refer sensitive issues to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.
- **Avoid Debates:** Do not engage in arguments or political disputes on PVAS channels. If someone is expressing frustration or anger towards PVAS in a comment, invite them to move the conversation to email to better discuss the issue.

Community Engagement and Comment Moderation

PVAS welcomes respectful dialogue on its social media platforms.

Comments may be removed if they:

- Contain hate speech, harassment, or threats
- Are discriminatory or abusive
- Include profanity or obscene content
- Promote violence or illegal activity
- Spread misinformation
- Are spam or promotions unrelated to PVAS

Account Security

- Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication.
- Limit access to authorized personnel only.
- Remove access for past PVAS employees on the last day of their employment.
- Annually review admin roles across platforms and revoke access when necessary.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Track engagement metrics to assess impact.

- Review content quarterly to ensure alignment with PVAS goals.
- Update this policy annually or as needed.

Enforcement

Violations may result in:

- Removal of content,
- Revocation of posting privileges, and/or
- Further disciplinary action as determined by PVAS leadership.

Use of Personal Social Media Accounts

- Clearly distinguish personal views from PVAS positions, e.g., add a statement in your bio saying that opinions on my personal page are my own and do not reflect that of my employer.
- Do not post confidential or proprietary PVAS information.
- Do not use PVAS logos or branding on personal accounts without permission.
- Parties are free to express opinions on their personal accounts without censorship or restraint by PVAS.
- Please be aware that what you say on social media may reflect on PVAS as an organization.
- Social media is not the place to air grievances about PVAS. If an employee has an issue with the organization, they need to go through the proper channels of discussion with their supervisor, Executive Director, or Board of Directors.
- We expect parties to adhere to policy after separation from PVAS.

Policy Review and Compliance

Failure to follow this policy may result in corrective action, up to and including removal from social media access or other disciplinary measures.

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in platforms, best practices, or organizational needs.