

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR NONPROFIT PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERS

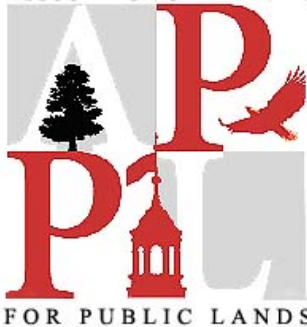
Developed by:



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ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS



The Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL) fosters stewardship and appreciation of public lands and historic sties through effective partnerships.

2401 Blueridge Avenue, Suite 303  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Phone: 301.946.9475 Fax: 301.946.9478

Web Site: [www.appl.org](http://www.appl.org) E-mail: [appl@appl.org](mailto:appl@appl.org)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organizations working in partnerships with public land agencies should regularly monitor their operations with regard to their mission, strategic objectives, annual plans, and partnership agreements. Self-assessment is tool in this monitoring process.

APPL, using input from our members and agency partners, has developed benchmarks in nine different functional areas of nonprofit management to help guide organizations in conducting self-assessments. These benchmarks are established as performance goals organizations should strive to achieve in being accountable and fiscally sound partners that effectively work with land management agencies to serve the public.

Nonprofit public land partnerships go by many names, including but not limited to: cooperating associations, interpretive associations, and friends groups. For the purpose of this document, the term *organization* is used for any type of nonprofit organization working under a partnership agreement with a public lands agency.

## **WHY CONDUCT A SELF-ASSESSMENT?**

There are many benefits to conducting a self-assessment. The costs are minimal, requiring primarily the investment of time. This method of internal review allows organizations to evaluate how well they are achieving their goals and fulfilling their mission within the context of their partnerships with public lands agencies. In addition, self-assessments are a means for organizations to determine how well they measure up to generally accepted benchmarks in nonprofit management and in the specific programmatic functions performed to support their mission. The information gathered through self-assessment helps the organization identify its strengths and weaknesses, prioritize items needing improvement, and guide future planning.

Depending on how the self-assessment is conducted, the process may also provide an opportunity to engage staff, orientate new staff, involve the board of directors, and initiate dialogue with agency partners on perceived strengths and potential areas for improvement within the partnership. Refer to *Using the Self-Assessment Templates* and *Involving Others* for more information on this aspect of self-assessment.

## **LIMITATIONS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT**

A drawback to self-assessment is that the process lacks an outside perspective, leaving the interpretation of the information gathered subject to the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of those currently affiliated with the organization. Thus, self-assessments are not as valuable in helping an organization and its agency partner(s) work through challenges related to communications, service, revenue, or changes in operations (although these issues should be identified by a self-assessment). However, a thorough self-assessment can provide essential information and serve as preparation for a peer or operational review to be conducted at a later time.

## **PLANNING FOR A SELF-ASSESSMENT**

On average a self-assessment typically takes three weeks. However, this can vary depending on the number of people involved in the assessment process, the size of the organization, and the number of agency partners.

When preparing to conduct a self-assessment make sure to answer each of the following questions before starting:

- What do you wish to get out of the review process? What are your goals?
- Who do you want to involve and when? Staff, board, agency partner(s), or all?
- Which self-assessment templates are appropriate for your organization to complete?
- Are there any additional statements that should be added/edited to personalize the templates for your organization?
- What's your timeline for conducting the self-assessment and reporting the results?
- How do you plan to use and share the results of the self-assessment?

Compiling the self-assessment responses with the appropriate supporting documents in a notebook is highly recommended to help stay organized during the process. The notebook should also include pre-assessment and summary sections. The pre-assessment section should include answers to the questions above as well as copies of any correspondences sent out to invite others to participate. The summary section is a final report of the self-assessment and should identify both the organization's strengths and weaknesses, along with recommendations for where and how the organization can improve. The finished notebook can then be used as a historic resource for the organization.

## **USING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES**

The self assessment tools are organized around functional areas of nonprofit management and operations. There are nine self-assessment functional area templates included in this document. Each functional area template includes:

- Functional area benchmark(s),
- A list of assessment statements that can be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "this is never the case" to 5 being "this is always the case," and
- A list of supporting documents to be compiled in a notebook or file.

The sections on partnership, mission and planning, governance, finance and legalities, human resources, and public communications relate to any nonprofit public lands partner. Other sections, including interpretive sales, fundraising, and interpretive programs and educational services may relate to the work of only some nonprofit partners. Thus, an organization should select and complete the templates that most appropriately match its own functions.

While the series of templates has been developed to provide a comprehensive overview of an organization, another way to use the self-assessment templates is by themselves. While a thorough self-assessment is recommended at least once every three years, there may be situations where a review of one functional area of an organization would be useful. For example, the *Governance* self-assessment template can be used by boards to review their performance on an annual basis. Another example might include using the benchmarks and statements from various templates to help guide the planning of a new program or service.

## **INVOLVING OTHERS**

One way to use the self-assessment templates is for a single individual, such as the organization's executive director, to rank the statements by him/herself and gather the necessary documentation. The results can be compiled in a summary report and shared with the appropriate stakeholders.

The process can be even more valuable when staff, board members, and agency partners are involved. Including these stakeholders in the assessment gives a more balanced approach to the process and will lend to discussion at various points regarding whether your organization is viewed differently by different constituents, and most importantly, why.

For example, the templates entitled Partnership or Mission and Planning may be copied and distributed to staff, agency partners, and board members so that different individuals can rank their responses to each of the statements. The responses may then be gathered and the scores averaged for board, staff, and agency partners separately. Further averaging of the responses by site and/or agency partner may be appropriate for some organizations that have multiple partners and sites.

This method can provide a comparison identifying where differences/similarities in knowledge, understanding or perceptions exist among key groups of individuals. For example, if agency partners rank the performance of interpretive sales as lower in most areas than the board or staff ranks the organization's performance, then it is clear that discussion is needed, expectations may differ, or information is lacking among the partners.

Not all templates lend themselves to response by agency partners, nor may all sections be appropriate for ranking by board and multiple staff members. To accurately complete the sections on Finance and Legalities or Human Resources, for example, requires internal access to information and familiarity with organizational policy. However, the results of a self-assessment can still be productive for discussion with key stakeholders.

When involving others in the self-assessment process it is important to explain the purpose and goals of a self-assessment as well as the significance of the individual's role in participating. To get the most accurate responses from stakeholders it is recommended that they be able to provide their feedback anonymously, except to categorize themselves as a board, staff, or agency partner. A summary of the self-assessment results should also be shared with any individuals who participated in the process.

# PARTNERSHIP

## *Benchmarks:*

- The agency and the organization’s efforts are mission-based and focused toward a common vision.
- Senior level support and communication from both the agency and the organization enables the partnership to work effectively.
- The partnership functions in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust that is visible at all levels of operations.

## *Assessment Statements:*

Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case	Board	Staff	Agency Partner
Agreements between the agency(s) and organization are current and appropriate with regard to the functions and services provided.			
The organization and the agency comply with the terms of their agreement.			
Expectations are clear, mutually understood, realistic, and balanced with resources.			
Partner roles, responsibilities and contributions are clearly defined and accepted by both parties.			
Each of the partner’s management systems is compatible with the other's.			
Information is shared regularly and in a manner that is mutually beneficial.			
Procedures exist to deal with disagreements in timely, constructive manner.			
The agency and partnering organization hold a shared vision of what the partnership is to become.			

## *Supporting Documents:*

- Current agency agreements
- Letters of understanding or agreements with other partners

# MISSION AND PLANNING

## ***Benchmarks:***

- The organization has a clear sense of mission around which its board, staff, financial resources, and activities are focused.
- The organization’s programs, sales, fundraising, and other services effectively advance its mission and that of its agency partner(s).
- There is current and appropriate evidence of planning for the organization’s and partnership’s future.

## ***Assessment Statements:***

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Staff and board members have a clear, shared understanding of the organization’s and agency’s mission.			
Policies, procedures and resource allocation are focused on fulfilling the mission.			
Staff and board members are engaged in effective planning processes for the organization’s future.			
The agency and organization are jointly involved in planning activities with the potential to affect their mutual missions.			
Procedures are in place to regularly review and evaluate operations, goals and objectives.			
The organization and agency consistently gather information about visitors and use it to evaluate their planning.			
Organization staff, board members, and their agency partners have a clear understanding of forces affecting, or with the potential to affect, the organization’s ability to succeed.			

## ***Supporting Documents:***

- Mission statement, date last reviewed
- Strategic plan, business plan, and/or annual plan, date last reviewed by board

## ***Agency Information:***

- Agency site mission, interpretive themes, and other relevant planning documents
- Visitation statistics for the past 3-5 years
- Related budgetary or planning information, such as fee revenue

# GOVERNANCE

## *Benchmarks:*

- The organization operates from a firm foundation of carefully conceived and regularly revisited bylaws and related core documents.
- The governance structure and processes effectively advance the organization’s mission.
- The board and staff have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and a commitment to the mission of the organization and its agency partner(s).

## *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.</b> <b>1 = This is never the case</b> <b>5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
The organization’s documentation adequately establishes its structure, function and delegation of authority.			
Bylaws and other policy documents are reviewed frequently and updated as necessary.			
The organization periodically conducts a comprehensive assessment of its operations.			
Board members understand their roles and responsibilities in administering a public trust.			
Board members are personally committed to the mission of the organization and public lands agency(s).			
The composition of the board represents the diversity of constituencies served by the organization and also a diversity of perspectives, skills, and resources that meets the needs of the organization.			
The board has an effective process to select, recruit, and provide orientation for new members.			
Term limits for board members are established and observed.			
The number of current board members is consistent with what is required in the bylaws or state statutes.			
The board’s committee structure addresses major aspects of governance. Committees have clear descriptions and goals which they fulfill.			

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
The director and chair of the board work effectively together.			
The board exercises prudent fiscal oversight of the organization.			
The board meets on a regular basis, at least three times per year. Meetings are well-planned, with the agenda and information for decision-making sent to members in advance.			
The decisions of the board give the organization a solid basis to move forward.			
Decisions are recorded and records maintained in the minutes.			
The organization maintains a conflict of interest policy that all board members and staff review and sign to acknowledge compliance.			
The board evaluates its own performance and makes improvements based on its evaluation process.			
The board has a systematic, fair, and supportive process for evaluating the executive director on a regular basis.			
Board members help raise significant resources for the organization and make a donation themselves.			

***Supporting Documents:***

- Bylaws
- List of board members, with their terms and officer positions and committee assignments indicated
- Board orientation materials, including terms, position descriptions and committee structure
- Code of ethics/ethics policy
- Conflict of interest policy/statements
- Minutes from past year's meetings

# INTERPRETIVE SALES

## *Benchmarks:*

- The interpretive sales function provides quality products that enhance public understanding and appreciation of the resource.
- Interpretive sales support the educational and interpretive mission of the public lands agency(s).

## *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
A merchandise plan exists and is periodically reviewed and updated.			
The items for sale reflect the scope of sales and interpretive themes of the site.			
The organization identifies its target audiences and provides merchandise accordingly.			
Sale practices are consistent with agency policies in terms of the organization's agreement with the agency.			
A point of sales system is established to record sales and monitor inventory.			
Adequate inventories are maintained and excess or obsolete inventories are cleared.			
The organization has adequate sales area(s).			
Merchandise is attractively and appropriately displayed.			
There is a secure online store where individuals can purchase items.			
If the organization produces its own products, the success of those products is measured against established criteria.			
The interpretive sales function is monitored in terms of return on investment and other pertinent measures appropriate to your sales outlet(s).			

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.</b> <b>1 = This is never the case</b> <b>5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
The organization has a coordinated system in place to monitor and reduce instances of theft, and personnel are trained in using this system accordingly.			
Marketing plans and practices raise awareness of the store(s), encourage people to shop there, and inspire repeat business.			

***Supporting Documents:***

- Scope of sales or interpretive merchandising plan
- Inventory statements
- Financial ratios and trends
- Theft prevention plan/policy
- On-line store Web address
- Point of sales system(s) used with explanation of back-up protocols in place

# INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

## *Benchmarks:*

- Interpretive programs and services extend the agency(s)' capacity to provide quality interpretive and educational experiences for the public.
- Continuous evaluation ensures the relevancy and viability of all program offerings.

## *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Educational goals are clearly articulated and appropriate to the mission, audience and resources.			
Information about audience interests is effectively gathered and included in the organization's educational planning efforts.			
Programs are regularly evaluated and adjusted based upon results.			
Programs generate revenue or are subsidized according to plan by other resource-generating activities or grants.			
Programs maximize the commitment, skills and resources of all partners.			
Interpretive programs meet agency standards, and staff or volunteers receive appropriate training and evaluation.			
Classroom-based programs align with appropriate educational standards for teaching and learning.			
Any health, safety, or liability issues are adequately addressed.			
Program marketing plans exist for all programs and are updated regularly based upon new information.			

## *Supporting Documents:*

- Program purpose and scope
- Participation figures
- Program catalogs, announcements, and registration materials
- Evaluative materials
- Fees, revenue and expenses

# FUNDRAISING

## *Benchmarks:*

- Fundraising provides a means for people to become involved and express their support for public lands.
- Fundraising practices adhere to nationally accepted standards and to public lands agency policies.
- Fundraising provides revenue for identified needs, and advances the mission of the organization and agency(s).

## *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Agency agreements and fundraising plans are in place and appropriate to the scope of fundraising efforts.			
The organization has registered with proper state authorities for fundraising.			
There is a case for support (case statement) for the organization and for major projects and programs.			
A financial plan predicts income and expense requirements, and the plan identifies dollar amounts which must be raised annually for identified needs.			
The budget adequately supports an effective fund raising program.			
Board members contribute as well as engage in fundraising endeavors.			
Funds raised for activities are consistent with the organization's mission and plan.			
The organization demonstrates accountability to donors through communications, i.e. annual and periodic reports.			
Adequate donor database, management, and accounting systems are in place to maintain communications, donor history, and financial records.			
Fundraising materials provide informative, accurate, and truthful information.			
Donor rights and confidentiality are observed.			
Contributions/grant funds are used for the purposes for which they were donated (restricted funds are not used for operating expenses or other purposes).			

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
A gift acceptance policy exists that clearly defines the types of gifts and assets the organization will accept.			
Employees/fundraising consultants are not compensated based on a percentage of funds raised.			
Online contributions are processed through a secure site.			
Gifts are acknowledged in a timely and appropriate manner and receipts include the required IRS and state disclosure information.			
A donor recognition plan exists and donors are recognized appropriately for their support			
Benefits of membership programs are appropriate, cost effective and valued by constituents.			
A feasibility study is conducted before major capital campaigns are initiated.			
Overall costs of fundraising are measured and monitored, with a goal of maintaining fundraising costs at 20% or less of funds raised.			

***Supporting Documents:***

- Case statement
- Gift acceptance policy
- Promotional materials, brochures, pledge cards
- Sample solicitation letter
- Sample acknowledgement letter
- Fundraising agreement(s)
- Membership statistics (number of members, membership dues and income)
- Total amount of revenue from fundraising over the last five years and total spent conducting fundraising activities

## FINANCE AND LEGALITIES

### *Benchmarks:*

- The organization follows generally accepted accounting procedures and complies with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Resources are developed, managed, and allocated in a manner that advances the organization's mission and sustains its financial viability.

### *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
The organization complies with applicable local, state and federal regulations.			
The board and executive director are aware of IRS requirements for maintaining tax-exempt status and continually evaluate the organization's activities to ensure compliance.			
The organization's financial position and planning meet its current and future needs.			
The budgeting process is linked to institutional goals and planning, and the annual budget is approved by the board.			
Financial reports are prepared on a timely basis and are reviewed by the board.			
The board has an identified finance committee.			
The organization is supported by diversified sources of revenue.			
The organization possesses 4-6 months of reserves that are invested and obtaining a fair market rate in line with the organization's investment policy.			
Administrative and fundraising expenses account for 20% or less of overall budget (80% or more is spent on program services).			
Expense growth is commensurate with revenue growth (i.e. if revenue grows by 5%, expenses should compare favorably unless other circumstances apply).			

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.</b> <b>1 = This is never the case</b> <b>5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Available cash is greater than or equal to the total of temporarily restricted, permanently restricted, and custodial accounts (the organization is not using restricted money for operating).			
Financial records are saved for at least 7 years or as directed by auditor.			
The organization has three-year financial projections, and new sources of income are explored as appropriate.			
The accounting system provides an understandable, up-to-date financial picture of the organization and meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.			
There are internal controls on financial transactions which prevent people in the organization from misusing funds.			
There are methods in place for employees to report financial misconduct, which are followed up with by investigations.			
The board is aware of and complies with the document destruction provisions and whistle blower protections mandated by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.			
If the budget is above \$300,000, or if grants require it, then the organization has an annual audit by an independent CPA. The audit is reviewed by the board, and its recommendations are implemented.			
All required reports, tax returns, and other federal and state filings are completed and up-to-date.			
The organization's exemption status, determination letter and IRS 990 form are available for public inspection and copying.			
The organization has adequate insurance coverage including general liability and Directors and Officers liability.			
An annual report that includes a financial accounting and reporting of program services is prepared for the public.			
The organization adheres to written policies and procedures for fiscal operations (including payroll processing, purchasing, cash holding, A/P, A/R)			

***Supporting Documents:***

- Articles of incorporation
- IRS 501(c)(3) letter
- State(s) tax-exempt documentation
- Audited financial statements from the two most recently completed fiscal years
- Un-audited financial statements for period from last audit to present
- Copy of organization's most recently filed IRS Form 990
- Appropriate federal, state, and local filings
- Approved budget for current year
- Three-year projections
- Investment policy
- Current signature cards
- Internal control procedures, including document retention and whistle blower protection policies
- Purchasing practices
- Annual report

# HUMAN RESOURCES

**Benchmarks:**

- The organization’s staff and volunteers have the appropriate education, training, experience, and support to accomplish their work.
- Staffing is adequate to meet work expectations and needs.
- Responsibilities and reporting lines are clearly defined and understood.

*Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.</b> <b>1 = This is never the case</b> <b>5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Staffing meets the needs of the organization and its agency partners in terms of number of staff, responsibilities and training.			
The organization and its agency partner(s) provide training opportunities to help build staff capacity and expertise.			
The organization has comprehensive personnel policies addressing compliance with major employment laws.			
Salaries and benefits are comparable to similar job positions and markets.			
Written job descriptions exist and are current for employee and volunteer positions.			
If any workers are paid as independent contractors, the organization complies with federal standards that govern how to distinguish between contractors and employees.			
Volunteers adequately meet the needs of the organization/agency in terms of number, diversity, and responsibilities and training.			
Positive employee/volunteer relationships are nurtured and problems are dealt with quickly.			
Systems exist to recognize and evaluate staff and volunteers.			
Systems are in place for employees/volunteers to address grievances and problems.			
Volunteers demonstrate a clear understanding of the organization and the agency’s mission.			

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5.</b> <b>1 = This is never the case</b> <b>5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
Staff and volunteers who interact with the public receive customer service training and evaluation.			

***Supporting Documents:***

- Organizational chart
- Staff list
- Position descriptions
- Resumes or bios of executive staff
- Staff handbook or policy manual
- Sample performance evaluation form
- Volunteer policies

## PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

### *Benchmark:*

- The organization is responsive and pro-active in reaching out to its constituents with relevant information.

### *Assessment Statements:*

<b>Rank each statement on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = This is never the case 5 = This is always the case</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency Partner</b>
The organization understands and values the role of marketing and has identified distinctive groups or segments that make up its constituencies.			
The organization's stakeholders and target populations are well informed about its work.			
The organization receives the coverage it needs in the media that reach its target populations. It tracks this coverage.			
The organization has a clear understanding of its image in the community(s) it serves.			
The organization uses technology, including e-mail to streamline communications.			
The organization asks for and receives feedback from the people it works with, and then acts upon that feedback.			
The organization participates in alliances and collaborative groups which advance the organization's goals and expand its influence.			
The Web site is updated on a regular basis.			
The organization has designated an individual to deal with questions from the media and all media requests are referred to that person.			
Procedures exist for use of organization's name and emblem.			

### *Supporting Documents:*

- Promotional materials, brochures, flyers
- Web Site address
- Marketing plan
- Most recent newsletter

## RESOURCES

### **Association of Partners for Public Lands**

[www.appl.org](http://www.appl.org)

301-946-9475

APPL provides customized training, consultation, and assistance with organizing and conducting a functional review of nonprofit operations and public lands partnerships. In addition to the self-assessment template, APPL provides guidelines for conducting functional reviews involving external review teams. Training, consultation and on-site reviews are coordinated on a fee-for-service basis.

### **Association Self-Auditing Process**

<http://www.nonprofitcenter.com/>

The 48-page manual by Robert C. Harris, CAE guides users through an inventory and assessment of information, documents, insurance, risks, systems and operations – covering everything from boards and committees to finances and marketing. The latest edition also includes a technology section and promotes voluntary compliance with Sarbanes Oxley Geared to the broader association community. Order by check for \$45 each.

### **Benchmarking Your Organization's Development**

<http://www.icl.org/toolkits/benchmarking.php>

This workbook is designed for organizations with a small to mid-sized staff, to help them assess practices against 46 best practices benchmarks, identify the most important benchmarks to improve, and set next steps for becoming stronger and more effective. The workbook can be used by individual leaders or as part of a group activity, and includes 21 indicators to track progress in areas including vision and planning, programs and campaigns, fundraising and resources, budgeting and accounting, the board, human resources, public communications and alliances. Price is \$20 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling.

### **US Forest Service Partnership Assessment Tool**

[http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/tools/documents/partnership\\_capacity\\_assessment\\_tool.doc](http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/tools/documents/partnership_capacity_assessment_tool.doc)

This tool is designed to help the Forest Service manager or unit (e.g. field office staff, ranger district, forest level, or other team) to: assess strengths that enable the team to conduct a partnership or develop a collaborative working relationship with non-Forest Service groups; think through areas that may need attention; and identify clear actions to maintain strengths or enhance areas for further development.

### **Maryland Nonprofits Standards for Excellence**

<http://www.marylandnonprofits.org/html/standards/index.asp>

The program is based on a code of conduct called the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. The Web site outlines these Standards, and provides an overview of the certification program, which APPL successfully completed in 2006, receiving the Maryland Nonprofits Seal of Excellence. Standards for Excellence program offers a variety of services to assist nonprofits with implementing the Standards in order to improve their governance and management.

## FUNCTIONAL REVIEW TYPES

### Self Assessment

Self assessments are internal reviews that associations undergo to determine how their organization measures up against generally accepted benchmarks, or best practices, in not-for-profit management and in the specific programmatic functions performed to support their mission (i.e. interpretive sales and product development, fund raising, educational outreach, etc).

### Peer Review

Peer review is a confidential, consultative process involving an external reviewer or team of reviewers that an association requests for the purposes of sharing information, testing assumptions, and exploring potential new ways of operating that might improve performance. This process can also provide the association's staff, board, and agency partners with ideas on how it might address current challenges and suggested resources which might aid in that effort. As with self assessment, the process draws from best practices in the field. Peer reviews may focus on one or more aspects of an association's operations, depending upon need.

### Operational Review

An operational review is a confidential, consultative process jointly requested by the association and its agency partner(s) to assess how well the partnership is achieving its goals. Operational reviews involve a team of external reviewers selected for their expertise related to various aspects of the partnership (i.e. nonprofit management, interpretive services, budget and finance, retail sales, fundraising, etc.). The reviews typically involve requested information such as financial statements, interviews with association board and staff representatives and agency representatives, consultation, and a written report. As with self assessment and peer reviews, operational reviews compare current practices against generally accepted benchmarks for nonprofits and partnerships. The focus is on the central purpose(s) for the partnership between the association and the public lands agency(s).



### ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS FOR PUBLIC LANDS

*Supporting Education and Stewardship*

2401 Blueridge Avenue, Suite 303  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902  
Phone: 301-946-9475 • Fax: 301-946-9478 • E-mail: [appl@appl.org](mailto:appl@appl.org)  
[www.appl.org](http://www.appl.org)