

Standard 9: Ensuring Sound Transactions

Recordkeeping Policy

GOAL:

The goals of the Utah Open Lands' filing and record management procedures are to make sure that:

- Utah Open Lands recognizes that maintenance of consistent, complete, secure, and authentic records is essential to achievement of its conservation mission.
- The Recordkeeping Policy is developed to ensure compliance with the intentions of UOL donors, including conservation easement donors, to document and sustain the conservation values of protected lands under conservation easement or in fee ownership, and to secure UOL's public charitable status.
- Utah Open Lands has the information necessary to complete its conservation projects and to manage and monitor its ongoing conservation easement obligations.
- All documents and important materials related to conservation easement projects are securely kept and relatively easily retrieved or reproduced when necessary.
- Anyone unfamiliar with a project or file can understand the history and status of the project.
- The Recordkeeping Policy supports and is integral to other UOL policies. All Utah Open Lands files are the property of UOL, not members of the staff or Board of Directors.

To meet this goal, both paper and electronic files are kept on all Utah Open Lands land protection projects. Paper files are kept in the Salt Lake City office. Electronic files are kept as shared files—with remote access availability—on the network. And the electronic backup is kept off-site.

Originals of all irreplaceable items are stored in the PERMANENT FILE with working copies in the PROJECT FILES. The Permanent File is located in a fire safe on location, and not accessed on a daily basis as there is duplicate information stored in the Project File. Project Files are in the project binders on site. All information included in the Permanent as well as Project File have a corresponding electronic copy on the network, and a back-up off site. A MISCELLANEOUS information file exists for each project that may have any ancillary but not irreplaceable or essential documentation.

The Permanent and Project Files

typically include:

- Completed document summary/planning/checklist (i.e.: *UOL Comprehensive Form EZ*)
- Recorded deed or conservation easement or summary;
- Active contracts (leases, etc.) or summaries;
- Maps (aerial, parcel, topo, etc.);
- Photos;
- Baseline data or summary;
- Updated resource data or summary;
- Management/monitoring plan or summary; and
- Periodic monitoring reports or summary of monitoring visits made.
- Documentation of understandings;
- Title report/insurance
- Closing documents;
- Survey report, with maps and legal description;
- Appraisal;
- Board resolutions and reports;
- Government reports—such as IRS Form 8283 for acquisitions, IRS Form 8282 for transfers
- Baseline data;

Organizational documents to be kept in fire safe on location:

- Articles of Incorporation
- IRS designation
- Option Agreements, Leases, and other original documents related to interests in real property
- Gift Deeds, Warranty Deeds, Transfer Agreements, Access Easements
- Automobile Titles

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- Promissory Notes, mortgages and other security instruments

Financial Records

As a public charity and an organization responsible for easement defense in perpetuity, Utah Open Lands must manage its finances and assets in a responsible and accountable manner. To that end, it is the policy of Utah Open Lands to maintain complete, accurate and credible documentation of its financial management activities.

UOL staff will follow generally accepted non-for-profit accounting principles to ensure clear and credible financial records. Additionally, it is crucial that an internal control system is established and followed to prevent misappropriations and to inspire confidence (See Standard 6 file: *Operations Process and Procedures*). Also, to that end, an annual independent review by a certified public accountant will be performed. The auditor's report will be made available to funders, members, and donors, upon request.

The types of financial records maintained by the Deputy Director under the supervision of the Executive Director include UOL's accounting software; monthly, quarterly, and annual reports; balance sheets; budgets; reconciliations and cancelled checks; invoices and receipts of payables; copies of checks deposited; copies of donor restrictions.

Access to these records is limited to the Deputy Director, the Executive Director and Board of Directors, due to the confidential nature of certain contents (i.e. payroll). Specific reports that do not contain confidential information will be made available to staff and volunteers as needed (e.g. past event expenses). The accounting software is password protected, as are certain digital financial reports.

Personnel Records

Personnel files contain each employee's personal information and work-related information. Personnel records are maintained for each employee and will be held confidential. To that end, access to personnel files is limited to the Executive Director, except as provided immediately below. Employees will be given access to their individual files, except that some password-protected documents may be restricted to the Executive Director. The Deputy Director, due to the nature of the position, will have access to certain staff information, such as payroll and emergency medical information. Physical personnel records will be stored in the office of the Deputy Director in a locking file cabinet. The digital copies of confidential personnel records are available only to the Executive Director under password protection.

Fundraising Records

As a public-supported charitable organization, Utah Open Lands is committed to raising funds in an ethical and accountable manner. Quality recordkeeping of the fundraising program will demonstrate that UOL complies with charitable solicitation laws, accurately represents its claims and intended use of funds, and uses restricted funds as specified by donors. To that end, it is the policy of UOL to maintain accurate and complete records regarding fundraising activities.

Administrative Records Management

In order to practice sound business procedures, it is the policy of Utah Open Lands to maintain records of its business activities, board meetings, and office administration, and to carefully maintain these records in a secure manner. It is also UOL's policy to diligently protect and secure all digital records and the organization's computer system through use of current and complete security tools and equipment.

Record Retention Schedule [and file location]

It is the policy of UOL to retain organizationally related files as follows:

Indefinitely

- Audit reports by accountants [top drawer legal file cabinet, Catherine's office]
- Capital stock and bond records [3 ring binder, Catherine's office bookshelf]
- Effective Contracts and leases [Vendor files, top drawer, letter file cabinet, Catherine's office]
- Correspondence: legal and important subjects [related project file, perm. File, and electronic file]
- Deeds, mortgages, option agreements [related project file, perm. File, and electronic and electronic backup files]
- Financial statements including p/l's, balance sheets, general journals, budgets and payroll [Quickbooks, electronic backup]

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- Insurance incident records [bottom drawer, letter file cabinet, Catherine's office]
- Significant and restricted Donations [historical donation/deposits files, back room, north east corner cabinet, Quickbooks, & electronic backup; current: bottom left desk drawer, Catherine's office]
- Minute books [top drawer, back room, ne corner cabinet, electronic and electronic backups]
- By-laws [historical Wendy's office top horizontal cabinet, current version, Catherine's office bottom drawer, legal cabinet]
- Certificates of Incorporation [historical Wendy's office top horizontal cabinet, current version, Catherine's office bottom drawer, legal cabinet]
- Tax returns and supporting documentation [Catherine's office top drawer, legal cabinet]
- Vehicle titles [na]

For Seven Years

- Accident reports and claims for settled cases [na]
- Accounts payable and receivable ledgers [historical backroom ne corner cabinet, current, Catherine's office, vendor files, top letter file cabinet]
- Cancelled checks [historical Catherine's office file cabinet, not applicable current]
- Contracts and leases that have expired [vendor files backroom, ne corner cabinet]
- Past Employee W-4 forms [Employee files, Wendy's office, horizontal filing cabinet]
- Notes receivable ledgers [current, Catherine's desk, historical in donations/deposits, back room, ne file cabinet]
- Payroll and related records [payroll quickbooks, and backup / payroll reporting information, bottom drawer, Catherine's office legal file cabinet]
- Timesheets [historical employee files, Wendy's office horizontal file cabinet; top drawer; current: electronic and electronic backup]

For Five Years

- Internal audit reports [na]
- Bank reconciliation [historical: vendor files, backroom, ne corner cabinet; current: top drawer, letter file cabinet, Catherine's office]
- Duplicate deposit slips [historical donation/deposits files, back room, north east corner cabinet, Quickbooks, & electronic backup; current: bottom left desk drawer, Catherine's office]

For Three Years

- Employment personnel records (after termination) [Employee files, top drawer, horizontal file cabinet, Wendy's office]
- Expired Insurance policies [vendor files, backroom, ne corner file cabinet]
- Volunteer records [Arthur's file, arthur's office; Catherine's file, Catherine]

Destruction of business records after the prescribed holding periods expire shall be completed by the Deputy Director under the direct supervision of the Executive Director. Said expired business records shall be shredded to ensure the privacy of records.

Warning: All permitted document destruction shall be halted if the organization is being investigated by a governmental law enforcement agency, and routine destruction shall not be resumed without the approval through a board action.