

Achieving Synergy

Balancing Risk,
Efficiency, and Nonprofit
Governance

VaULT 2026

Welcome to the JUNGLE

**How a 4 letter word
changed everything**



Piedmont Environmental Council

Conserving and Restoring the Piedmont's Lands and Waters

- Accelerating land conservation
- Enhancing wildlife habitat
- Ensuring clean water
- Expanding public access

Shaping and Advancing Virginia's Clean Energy Future

- Supporting a smarter, cleaner, more distributed energy system
- Developing staff expertise and capacity to engage and collaborate

Creating Stronger, More Sustainable Communities

- Planning for now and the future
- Fighting bad projects and incompatible land uses
- Improving livability and strengthening communities

Setting an Example Through Land Ownership

- Protecting and enhancing natural, cultural and historic resources
- Showcasing sustainable land management practices

The Piedmont Protected Land



- Land Protected in 2025
- Conservation Easements
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Non-Profit Lands
- Service Districts & Growth Areas



LEIGH ROSS

Background in legal support and nonprofit work.

Records management

LTA accreditation renewal

Board liaison / Corporate Governance

Conservation team support

Best practices

"I'm an indoor cat."



**Legal Assistant & Records
Manager**

CONTENTS

- 01. Case Study Overview

- 02. Approach

- 03. Q & A

Board of Directors

**Land Conservation
Finance
Risk Management
Advancement
Governance
County Advisory
Executive**



Bylaws

*"The Executive Committee shall have and may exercise **all the powers of the Board of Directors** subject to general policies established."*

Conservation Policies

*"All PEC land transactions shall be subject to approval by the PEC Board of Directors, **which may be through the Executive Committee and/or Land Conservation Committee**, acting in accordance with PEC by-laws."*

Delegation Policy

*"...approval of a conservation transaction means **any approval to acquire, sell, amend, transfer, gift, or accept a gift of a conservation easement or fee interest in land...**"*

DEEPER DIVE

BYLAWS

- (a) all proposed **gifts** to PEC of conservation easements and interests in land.

- (b) all proposed **purchases** of easements or interests in land by PEC.

“...which approval may be through the PEC Executive Committee and/or PEC Land Conservation Committee, acting in accordance with PEC by-laws.”

CONSERVATION POLICIES

KEEP READING

BYLAWS

4

*(a) all proposed **gifts** to PEC of conservation easements and interests in land.*



*While the LCC may refer consideration of any proposed gift to the **FULL** Board of Directors, the Committee shall have the authority to accept on behalf of PEC donations of conservation easements and of fee interests in land...*

*(b) The LCC shall make recommendations to the PEC Board regarding final decision on whether PEC should purchase or dispose of an easement or fee interest in land, and all decisions regarding such transactions shall rest with the **FULL** Board.*

DEEPER DIVE

CONSERVATION
POLICIES



*"...which approval may be through the PEC Executive Committee and/or **PEC Land Conservation Committee**, acting in accordance with PEC by-laws."*

1. **PROCESS**

2. **STAKEHOLDERS**

3. **GOALS**

GOALS

1. Ensure compliance
2. Eliminate contradictory rules
3. Standardize terminology
4. Improve clarity

Risk Management Committee

Board of Directors

Administration

Acquisition Staff

Finance Department

Partners

Lawyers

Service Providers

Stewardship Team

Governance Committee

Landowners

Executive Committee



PROCESS

1. Identify Project Leads
2. Comment Period
3. Review and Refine
4. Hand Off

PROCESS

Document Category	Document Name	Last Revision Date	Owner
Policy	Conservation Policies	2016	
Standard/Guideline	LTA Standards and Practices	2018	
Procedure/Process	SOPs	varied	
Charter/Operating Model	Mission Statement / Strategic Plan	2023	

Policy sets the **WHY**

Standard sets the **WHAT**

Procedure sets the **HOW**

PROCESS

Bylaws Track

Compliance

Virginia Code and
Regs

Legal Review

Efficiency

How many layers of
review is enough?

Opportunity

Waiver of secret
ballot.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Policies Track

LTA Standards &
Practices

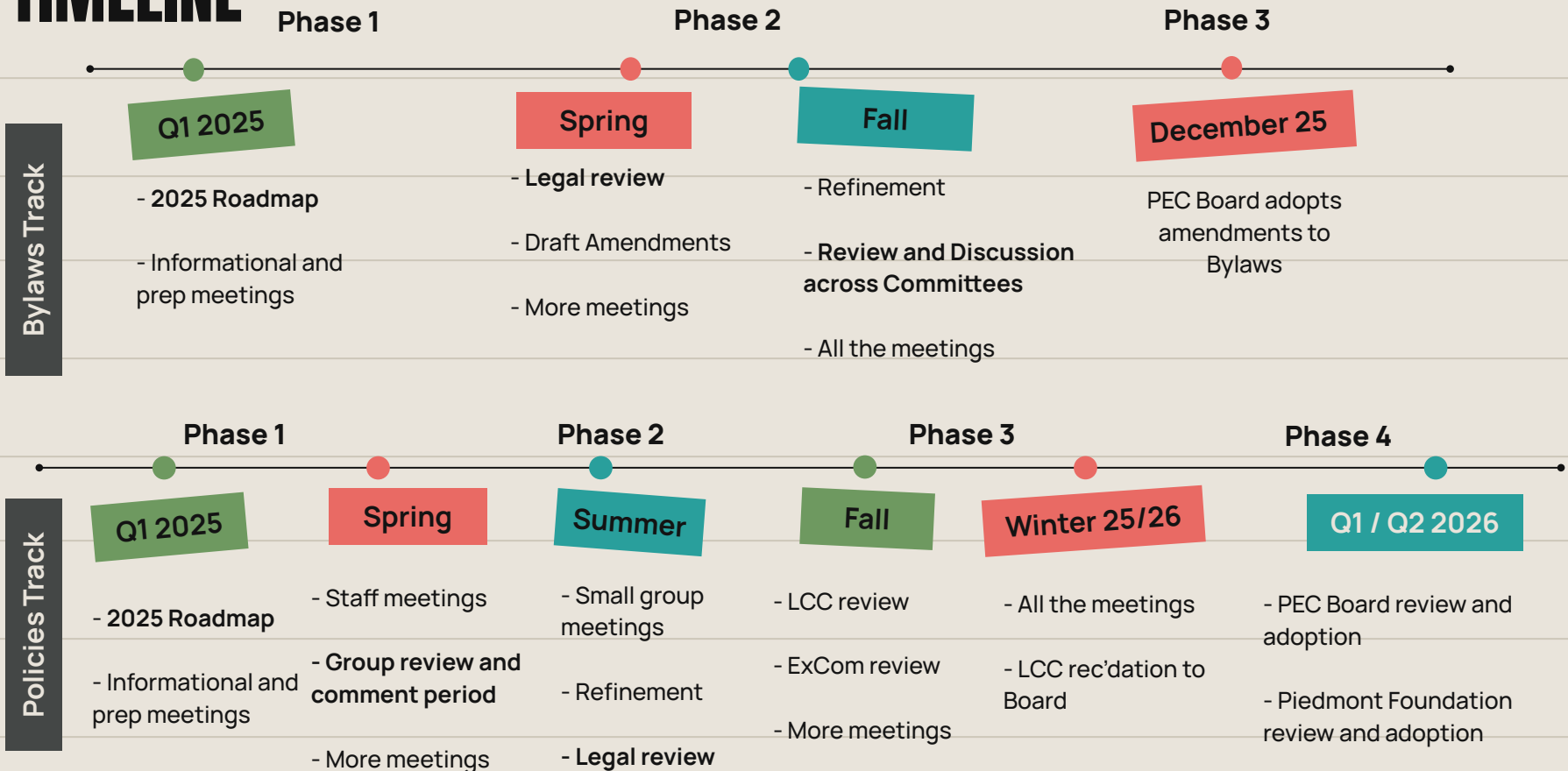
PEC Bylaws

Conflict of Interest,
Ethics, etc.

How many layers of
review is enough?

Change
requirement
related to title
insurance?

TIMELINE



Mountain of Memos

Recordkeeping Policy

This year!

Ethics

EPG

Easement
Process
Guide

Conflict of Interest

Related parties.

Ensuring timely
disclosure.

Monitoring

Guide and
Procedures.

Evolving
technology and
mapping.

Establish a clear process at the outset with identified roles and timeline

Ensure all policy revisions align with current laws and regulations

Communicate early and often

Regularly evaluate effectiveness

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Q & A

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of a white triangle pointing towards the top right, with a black triangle pointing towards the top left, creating a corner effect.

THANK YOU!

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