



Record Retention and Destruction Policy

KELP ARK (formally AltaSeeds Conservancy)
A California Public Benefit Corporation

2451 Signal Street, San Pedro, CA 90731

Approved by: Board of Directors

Last Revised: January 16, 2025

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Records Retention and Destruction Policy (the “Policy”) is to establish procedures for the retention and destruction of records held by Kelp Ark (the “Organization”). This Policy ensures compliance with legal, regulatory, and operational requirements and promotes efficient management of records throughout their lifecycle.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all records created or received by Kelp Ark in the course of its operations. This includes both paper and electronic records, regardless of the format. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, board members, and any other individuals involved in the creation, receipt, maintenance, or destruction of records on behalf of the Organization.

III. Types of Records

The types of records covered under this Policy include, but are not limited to:

1. Financial Records

- Tax filings, financial statements, budgets, accounting records, donor records
- Grant applications, reports, and related documents

2. Administrative Records

- Organizational charts, board meeting minutes, bylaws, policies
- Personnel records, employee files, contracts, and agreements

3. Operational Records

- Program files, project documentation, volunteer records
- Correspondence, reports, and strategic plans

4. Legal Records

- Licenses, insurance records, legal agreements, litigation files
- Intellectual property and compliance documents

IV. Retention Periods

The retention periods for records will vary depending on legal requirements, industry standards, and organizational needs. Below are general guidelines for record retention. Where applicable, the Organization will also adhere to any applicable federal, state, or local laws.

Record Type	Retention Period
Financial Records (e.g., tax returns, audit records, financial statements)	7 years
Employee Records (e.g., personnel files, performance reviews)	7 years after termination

Record Type	Retention Period
Donor Records (e.g., donation receipts, donor communications)	7 years after donation
Legal Documents (e.g., contracts, leases, legal correspondence)	7 years after expiration or conclusion
Board Meeting Minutes	Permanent
Program and Project Files	7 years after project completion
Correspondence (general)	3 years

Note: These retention periods are subject to modification based on changes in applicable law, regulatory requirements, or organizational needs.

V. Records Destruction

When records reach the end of their retention period, they shall be securely destroyed to protect sensitive information. The destruction process will follow the procedures outlined below:

1. **Paper Records:** Paper records will be shredded or otherwise rendered unreadable.
2. **Electronic Records:** Electronic records will be deleted using industry-standard data destruction methods that ensure the complete destruction of the information.

Destruction will be documented, including the date of destruction, record type, and method of destruction. Destruction logs will be retained for a period of at least one year.

VI. Exceptions

In the event of a pending or anticipated legal proceeding, audit, or investigation, records that are subject to retention may not be destroyed until the matter is resolved. The Organization will be notified by the executive team or legal counsel when the retention period should be extended.

VII. Responsibilities

The following individuals have specific responsibilities under this Policy:

1. **Executive Director/CEO:** The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the overall implementation and compliance with this Policy.
2. **Finance Department (CFOO):** The finance team is responsible for maintaining financial records according to the retention schedule and overseeing the destruction of financial documents.
3. **Human Resources (CFOO):** The HR team is responsible for managing employee and volunteer records.
4. **Department Heads/Program Managers:** Department heads are responsible for ensuring that records within their departments are retained and destroyed in accordance with the Policy.

VIII. Review and Updates

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated as necessary to ensure it remains in compliance with applicable laws and meets the needs of the Organization.