

YELLOW DUCK LABS

THE PRESERVATION CONSTITUTION

A founding covenant for protecting the conditions
that allow life, community, and childhood to flourish.



WHY THE YELLOW DUCK

The Yellow Duck serves as a symbol of our obligation: to safeguard the unburdened joy of youth and ensure a future where children inherit a world stable enough to flourish without the shadow of preventable harm.

FOUNDING DRAFT v0.3

AUGUST 2026

STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

Founding status

This is the first consolidated founding constitution of **Yellow Duck Labs**. It records the principles agreed during the company's formation and is intended to guide hiring, product choices, partnerships, governance design, and future legal drafting. It is not itself a substitute for articles of incorporation, shareholder agreements, public-benefit-company filings, or legal advice.

The **Yellow Duck** serves as a symbol of our obligation: to safeguard the unburdened joy of youth and ensure a future where children inherit a world stable enough to flourish without the shadow of preventable harm.

Preservation is the governing ethos of Yellow Duck Labs: a durable commitment to protect the continuity of communities, cultures, ecosystems, and ways of life from preventable harm.

The Constitution is deliberately more durable than a product roadmap. Domain-specific operating rules - for wildfire, spill response, maritime security, border protection, or future fields - belong in living charters and playbooks beneath it.

The idea in one sentence

We protect the world so the next generation can still grow up with yellow ducks.

Constitutional architecture

Constitution	The slow-changing purpose, scope, principles, guardrails, accountability order, and stewardship obligations of Yellow Duck Labs.
Living Charter	The current institutional interpretation of the Constitution: strategic priorities, governance mechanisms, maturity triggers, and financial doctrine.
Domain Playbooks	Evidence-driven operating doctrine for specific fields such as wildfire, oil-spill response, environmental protection, maritime security, and border protection.

PREAMBLE

The promise of Yellow Duck Labs

We believe that the greatest measure of progress is not only what humanity creates, but what it ensures endures.

Yellow Duck Labs exists as a silent sentry: to safeguard the continuity of communities, cultures, ecosystems, and the ways of life entrusted to our care.

We seek to understand threats before they become loss; to detect danger early enough that meaningful action remains possible; and, when effective means do not otherwise exist, to accept responsibility for developing the intervention required to stop preventable harm from continuing.

We do not preserve abstractions at the expense of people. Preservation means continuity: the ability of communities to remain communities, cultures to remain living traditions, ecosystems to remain viable, and people to continue their lives without avoidable destruction remaking them.

Every person who joins this work becomes a steward. Founders, executives, engineers, operators, investors, and future generations of colleagues are temporary custodians of a mission larger than any one of us. We inherit it, strengthen it, and hand it forward.

Yellow Duck Labs is a commercial institution because endurance requires economic strength. Profit is fuel for the mission, not the destination of the mission. We pursue prosperity so that preservation can compound across generations.

This Constitution exists so that capability, capital, ambition, and time do not cause the institution to forget why it was created.

ARTICLE I

Purpose, scope, and measure

We protect the conditions that allow communities to choose their future. We do not choose that future for them.

1.1 Purpose

Yellow Duck Labs exists to preserve the continuity of communities, cultures, ecosystems, and the systems upon which everyday life depends.

1.2 The boundary of our mandate

Our mandate is not unlimited. Yellow Duck Labs concerns itself with **external disruptive threats**: identifiable forces that physically, materially, or systemically threaten the continued functioning of communities, ecosystems, infrastructure, or ways of life entrusted to our care.

These threats may arise from nature, accident, negligence, criminal activity, hostile actors, or other identifiable external causes. They may include wildfire, flood, environmental contamination, industrial accidents, trafficking, poaching, sabotage, hostile incursions, attacks on critical infrastructure, and other threats that can be meaningfully understood, detected, deterred, contained, or stopped.

1.3 What is ordinarily outside our mandate

Preservation does not grant Yellow Duck Labs a mandate to decide how societies ought to live, govern themselves, organize their cultures, or resolve ordinary political disagreement. We are not founded to campaign against lawful public policy merely because we disagree with it, nor to police normal cultural change.

A government policy may affect what people value, but disagreement with policy alone does not make it a Preservation threat. Our role is to protect the conditions that allow communities and societies to make their own choices in safety.

1.4 Measure

- We measure outcomes, not novelty.
- We prefer prevented loss to celebrated response.
- We seek evidence that continuity was preserved or materially strengthened.
- We do not count deployment, data volume, model accuracy, or revenue as mission success unless they connect to real-world preservation.

ARTICLE II

What we preserve - and what we preserve it from

2.1 What is entrusted to our care

- **Communities** - the relationships, places, livelihoods, and shared systems that allow everyday life to continue.
- **Cultures** - living traditions, knowledge, heritage, and practices whose continuity may be shattered by catastrophic loss.
- **Ecosystems** - the natural systems whose continuity supports human and non-human life.
- **Critical systems** - infrastructure and essential services whose failure can fracture communities or make them unsafe.
- **Future possibility** - the capacity of future generations to inherit functioning communities, viable ecosystems, and meaningful freedom to shape their own lives.

2.2 Threat classes

- **Natural catastrophe** - wildfire, flood, severe weather, geological events, and other destructive natural phenomena.
- **Environmental and industrial harm** - oil spills, chemical releases, contamination, infrastructure failure, maritime accidents, and comparable hazards.
- **Malicious or criminal actors** - trafficking, poaching, smuggling, sabotage, organized environmental destruction, and other deliberate harmful activity.
- **Hostile external actors** - foreign incursion, hostile vessels, attacks on critical infrastructure, and comparable threats to territorial or community safety.
- **Other identifiable disruptive threats** - future threat classes may be added when they fit the constitutional scope and can be addressed without turning Preservation into a claim over ordinary civic life.

2.3 The two-part test

Every Yellow Duck Labs project must be able to answer:

What are we preserving?

What are we preserving it from?

If either answer is vague, ideological, or unbounded, the project requires additional scrutiny before it can claim the Preservation mandate.

ARTICLE III

The Preservation Cycle

Understand. Detect. Decide. Intervene. Restore. Learn.

Understand

Begin with context. Learn the system, the people who live with the problem, the incentives, the failure modes, and the history. No technology is permitted to substitute for understanding.

Detect

Acquire and process signals early enough to create a meaningful response window. Detection includes verification, classification, communication, and delivery of an actionable signal to the person or system capable of responding.

Decide

Determine whether action is justified, what is being preserved, what uncertainty remains, and what form of response is proportionate to the threat.

Intervene

Intervention means Yellow Duck Labs itself attempts to stop, contain, deter, or materially reduce the harmful process. Alerting alone is not intervention. We develop direct intervention when existing means cannot reliably close the gap.

Restore

Where damage has occurred, seek to restore continuity when doing so is within our competence and mandate.

Learn

Measure what happened in the field. When outcomes diverge from models, the field wins. Update the system rather than defend the theory.

ARTICLE IV

Foundational principles

Continuity over spectacle

We choose work that protects enduring life, not work that merely makes the institution look technologically impressive.

Wisdom before technology

No discipline owns the truth. We practice intellectual humility, listen to communities and practitioners, and use technology as a servant to context, never its master.

Field over theory

Models, simulations, and laboratory results are provisional. Real-world outcomes have authority. When reality disagrees with our model, we change the model.

Unfinished responsibility

We seek to accomplish the mission through effective and trustworthy partners where possible. When no effective means exist, we accept responsibility to develop the missing capability ourselves.

Build only to close a demonstrated gap

We do not build capability for its own sake. Every major tool must close a credible gap between what must be preserved and what existing systems can protect.

Minimum necessary intervention

We intervene to the level required to preserve continuity, no further. Greater capability does not create greater permission.

Do not create greater harm

No act of preservation is justified merely because its intention is protective. We evaluate foreseeable second-order harms and reject responses that predictably create a greater danger than the threat they address.

Freedom is part of what we preserve

People should feel safer because Yellow Duck Labs exists, not watched by it. We will not build indiscriminate surveillance systems or use protection as a pretext for unnecessary observation, control, or oppression.

Protect choice, not ideology

We protect the conditions that allow communities to make their own choices. We do not use the language of preservation to impose political, cultural, or social preferences on those communities.

Economic durability

A mission that cannot sustain itself cannot endure. We build sound businesses, price our work responsibly, and pursue profit so that preservation can continue and expand.

Profit is fuel, not destination

We seek models in which human flourishing and commercial strength reinforce one another. When greater mission impact can be achieved through lower profit without threatening institutional continuity, reduced profit is a legitimate choice.

ARTICLE V

Stewardship

The mission belongs to the institution; every generation holds it in trust.

5.1 Who is a steward

Every person who joins Yellow Duck Labs accepts stewardship of its purpose. Stewardship is not a management title. It is a relationship to the mission.

5.2 Duties of stewards

- Tell the truth about what the technology can and cannot do.
- Raise constitutional concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Seek evidence before defending institutional pride.
- Refuse to disguise extraction, surveillance, aggression, or political preference as preservation.
- Leave the institution stronger, wiser, and more capable of fulfilling its purpose.

5.3 Rights of stewards

- The right to question whether a major action is aligned with the Constitution.
- The right to surface field evidence that contradicts accepted models or strategy.
- The right to request constitutional review when a major decision may violate a guardrail.
- The right, at mature stages, to participate in choosing representatives to the Stewardship Council.

5.4 No one above the Constitution

Founders, chief executives, directors, investors, and future leaders remain subject to the same constitutional limits. Founder status does not convert purpose into personal discretion.

ARTICLE VI

Accountability order

When obligations genuinely conflict and cannot all be satisfied, Yellow Duck Labs uses the following order as a moral compass rather than a mechanical formula:

Order	Accountability	Meaning
1	Future generations	Preserve the conditions that allow those who come after us to inherit viable communities, ecosystems, and freedom of action.
2	Communities entrusted to us today	Honor the people and places that depend on our work and bear the consequences of our decisions.
3	Ecosystems that sustain continuity	Protect the natural systems without which communities cannot endure.
4	Stewards of the institution	Maintain a healthy, capable institution whose people can do the work with integrity.
5	Capital providers	Treat investors as essential partners in durability, entitled to disciplined stewardship of capital but not ownership of the constitutional purpose.

This ordering does not authorize reckless spending or symbolic sacrifice. Economic durability is itself part of stewardship because an institution that dies cannot preserve anything.

ARTICLE VII

The constitutional decision test

Before a major initiative, ask what must remain intact - and what could go wrong because of us.

- 01 What, specifically, are we trying to preserve?
- 02 What, specifically, are we preserving it from?
- 03 Does the threat fall within the constitutional class of external disruptive threats?
- 04 What is the evidence that the threat is real, material, and addressable?
- 05 Who experiences the threat, and have we listened to the people closest to it?
- 06 Why are current systems, institutions, or partners insufficient?
- 07 Which stage of the Preservation Cycle are we actually responsible for?
- 08 If direct intervention is proposed, why is intervention necessary and what is the minimum effective form?
- 09 What new harms, dependencies, surveillance powers, incentives, or failure modes could our solution create?
- 10 How will we know that continuity was actually preserved?
- 11 What evidence would cause us to change course?
- 12 What would make us stop, retire, transfer, or refuse the work entirely?

The test is mandatory for major product categories, consequential partnerships, material shifts in intervention capability, and other decisions designated by the Living Charter. It should remain lightweight enough to be used rather than admired.

ARTICLE VIII

Enterprise as an engine of Preservation

We sell continuity, not catastrophe.

8.1 A for-profit institution

Yellow Duck Labs is a for-profit enterprise. We may charge market prices, build valuable intellectual property, raise capital, earn significant profits, and create wealth. We reject the premise that purpose requires economic fragility.

Durable preservation requires durable economics. A system dependent indefinitely upon charity, grants, or goodwill remains vulnerable to the very instability it seeks to prevent.

8.2 The business model should advance the mission

Wherever practical, Yellow Duck Labs seeks business models in which **the act of generating revenue also advances the act of preservation.**

**The customer pays because something valuable is being protected.
Yellow Duck Labs prospers because it protects that thing effectively.
Increased scale produces increased preservation.**

8.3 Alignment over after-the-fact charity

We prefer enterprises in which social value is produced by the core commercial activity itself, rather than a model in which harm is monetized first and a portion of the proceeds is later donated toward repair. Philanthropy may complement the mission, but it is not a substitute for alignment.

8.4 The Preservation Business Test

- 1 Who benefits from preservation?
- 2 Who has a durable economic incentive to pay for it?
- 3 Does greater revenue naturally result in greater preservation?
- 4 Could the revenue model ever reward us for perpetuating the threat instead of eliminating it?
- 5 Can the model remain economically sound if we succeed at reducing the very harm we were created to address?

8.5 Prefer continuity contracts to catastrophe economics

Whenever possible, Yellow Duck Labs should prefer recurring readiness, protection, risk-reduction, coverage, prevention, and resilience models over business models that become more profitable when disasters multiply.

A wildfire product should ideally become more valuable when communities experience fewer destructive fires, not when suppression events increase. A spill-response system should ideally be rewarded for detection speed, containment readiness, and avoided damage, not for the volume of contamination. A security system should be rewarded for safe continuity and credible deterrence, not for escalation.

8.6 Illustrative business-model families

- **Protection-as-a-service:** annual contracts with municipalities, communities, industrial operators, ports, utilities, land managers, insurers, or other beneficiaries for defined protection coverage.

- **Risk-reduction partnerships:** pricing tied to measurable reduction in expected loss, response time, exposure, or other verified preservation outcomes where legally and operationally feasible.
- **Readiness and infrastructure subscriptions:** persistent sensor, drone, communications, or intervention capacity maintained before a crisis occurs.
- **Enterprise and public-sector systems:** sale or licensing of preservation technology where the buyer's own incentives are aligned with protecting communities, infrastructure, ecosystems, or lawful security interests.
- **Shared-savings or avoided-loss models:** where appropriate, compensation may be linked to demonstrable savings created by preventing or reducing harm, provided measurement can be done honestly and without gaming.

8.7 Mission-profit conflict

Where profit and mission genuinely collide, the mission governs subject to the requirement that the institution remain economically viable. Where mission can be advanced by accepting lower profit without threatening continuity, lower profit may be chosen.

8.8 Institutional pluralism

Yellow Duck Labs may use multiple legal entities - including operating companies, laboratories, foundations, trusts, or other stewardship structures - when doing so strengthens the mission. The eventual legal architecture should be designed so that commercial success cannot silently purchase the right to rewrite the purpose.

8.9 Public-benefit structure

The founding intent is to pursue an appropriate public-benefit or mission-locked corporate structure where available and practical. Legal implementation shall translate, not dilute, this Constitution.

ARTICLE IX

Guardrails and refusals

Yellow Duck Labs must remain capable of saying no. Some opportunities should be refused even when legal, prestigious, strategically attractive, or highly profitable.

- We will not build systems whose primary purpose is indiscriminate surveillance of civilian life.
- We will not knowingly build technology primarily intended for oppression, collective punishment, or arbitrary coercion.
- We will not use Preservation as a mandate to fight ordinary political disagreements, lawful cultural change, or public policy merely because we oppose it.
- We will not continue a product solely because it is profitable when evidence shows that it no longer advances - or actively undermines - the mission.
- We will not manufacture dependence where durable local capability or empowerment is reasonably possible.
- We will not treat access to data as permission to exploit it beyond the preservation purpose for which it was entrusted.
- We will not allow technological excitement, institutional ego, or market fashion to substitute for demonstrated need.
- We will not claim that detection is intervention. If our promise requires stopping harm and the response gap remains unclosed, we will say so plainly.
- We will not design business models that materially benefit from the persistence or escalation of the threat we claim to solve.

These refusals do not make Yellow Duck Labs anti-security, anti-defense, or anti-intervention. They require that consequential capabilities remain tied to preservation, proportionality, lawful authority, and the freedoms that make a way of life worth preserving.

ARTICLE X

Institutional maturity

Governance should grow because the institution has something real to govern - not because bureaucracy arrived before impact.

Stage 0 - Formation

Before a public-facing product has demonstrated measurable preservation impact. The Constitution guides founder behavior, hiring, product design, and partner selection. No standing stewardship bureaucracy is required.

Stage 1 - First operating cycle

Triggered when a public-facing product is operating in the field and preservation outcomes can be measured. Lightweight reflection begins: what did we preserve, where did reality differ from assumptions, and what must change?

Stage 2 - Institutional scale

Triggered when Yellow Duck Labs operates multiple products, domains, or materially consequential intervention capabilities. A formal Stewardship Council, constitutional review procedure, and periodic mission review activate.

Stage 3 - Enduring institution

Triggered when multiple entities, external capital, succession, or major public responsibilities make founder judgment insufficient as the principal safeguard. Mission-locking legal structures, independent stewardship, and succession mechanisms become fully operative.

The Living Charter will define objective triggers more precisely as the institution develops. The constitutional principle is fixed: process must be proportional to consequence and maturity.

ARTICLE XI

Stewardship Council and constitutional review

11.1 Purpose

The Stewardship Council safeguards alignment with the Constitution. It does not manage ordinary operations and should not become a shadow executive team.

11.2 Composition at maturity

The intended mature model combines perspectives rather than concentrating authority: a founder-appointed representative, an employee-elected representative, an independent scientific or technical representative, and a community or public-interest representative. A stewardship foundation or comparable mission guardian may appoint or replace seats as the legal structure matures.

11.3 When review is required

- A credible allegation that a major initiative violates a constitutional guardrail.
- A major mission-profit collision that cannot be resolved through normal management.
- A proposal to enter a materially new class of intervention capability.
- A proposal to expand the constitutional definition of external disruptive threat.
- A proposed amendment to the Constitution.
- A credible claim that a founder, executive, or governing body has persistently acted outside the Constitution.

11.4 Restoration before removal

Constitutional review should seek realignment before punishment. Where a leader has strayed, the first objective is acknowledgment, correction, and restoration of alignment. Persistent refusal or serious breach may lead to removal through procedures defined in the Living Charter and legal governance documents.

11.5 Written reasoning

Material constitutional rulings should record the reasoning, evidence, and tradeoffs involved. This creates institutional memory so future stewards can learn from precedent without treating precedent as infallible.

ARTICLE XII

Review, amendment, and succession

12.1 Mission review

At institutional maturity, Yellow Duck Labs will conduct a periodic mission review - expected to be no less frequent than every five years - asking what has drifted, what should stop, what new preservation gaps have emerged, and whether governance still protects the purpose.

12.2 Amendment

The Constitution must be amendable because future stewards will know things the founders do not. It must also be difficult to amend because convenience is the beginning of drift. Mature amendment should require a supermajority across more than one constituency, a written rationale, and a reflection period before final adoption. Exact thresholds belong in the Living Charter and legal structure once the relevant bodies exist.

12.3 Entrenched core

No amendment should convert Yellow Duck Labs from an institution that uses enterprise in service of preservation into an institution that uses preservation language merely in service of enterprise. Any proposed change to the core purpose, the external-threat boundary, the freedom/surveillance guardrail, or the principle that no individual stands above the Constitution requires the highest available level of review.

12.4 Succession

Leadership succession is a stewardship act. Future leaders are selected not only for competence but for demonstrated ability to hold mission, evidence, economic discipline, and humility together.

APPENDIX A

The Steward's Oath

This oath is intended as a cultural covenant, not a loyalty test.

I accept stewardship of **Yellow Duck Labs**.

I will protect the purpose before my position, seek truth before validation, and measure our work by what endures because we acted.

I will listen before I prescribe, learn from the field, and never confuse technological capability with permission.

I will protect the conditions that allow communities to choose their own future without using Preservation as a reason to choose that future for them.

I will pursue economic strength because the mission must endure, while remembering that profit is fuel and preservation is the destination.

I will speak when I believe we are drifting, accept correction when I am wrong, and leave this institution stronger for those who follow.

What is entrusted to our care is larger than any one of us.

APPENDIX B

One-page decision card

Question	Working answer
What, specifically, are we trying to preserve?	
What, specifically, are we preserving it from?	
Does the threat fall within the constitutional class of external disruptive threats?	
What is the evidence that the threat is real, material, and addressable?	
Who experiences the threat, and have we listened to the people closest to it?	

Question	Working answer
Why are current systems, institutions, or partners insufficient?	
Which stage of the Preservation Cycle are we actually responsible for?	
If direct intervention is proposed, why is intervention necessary and what is the minimum effective form?	
What new harms, dependencies, surveillance powers, incentives, or failure modes could our solution create?	
How will we know that continuity was actually preserved?	
What evidence would cause us to change course?	
What would make us stop, retire, transfer, or refuse the work entirely?	

APPENDIX C

Business-model precedent: core activity as impact

Yellow Duck Labs is influenced by a class of enterprises in which the social outcome is embedded in the commercial engine rather than appended as charity. A useful precedent is Sama, founded by Leila Janah around the principle of 'giving work, not aid': building a commercial AI-data business while expanding access to dignified digital employment.

The lesson for Yellow Duck Labs is not to copy Sama's industry. It is to copy the alignment: **the thing that makes the business stronger should also make the mission stronger.**

For Yellow Duck Labs, that means designing protection businesses where revenue grows because continuity is preserved - not because catastrophe persists.

Reference inspiration: Sama, 'Leila Janah's Story' and 'Our Impact' (sama.com), accessed August 2026.

APPENDIX D

Open questions for v0.4

The founding team intentionally leaves these mechanics unresolved until real operating experience makes them worth specifying. They are questions, not omissions to be silently filled by future convenience.

- What exact metric or milestone activates Stage 1 stewardship practices?
- What objective triggers activate the formal Stewardship Council at Stage 2?
- What legal form best mission-locks Yellow Duck Labs in its first jurisdiction of incorporation?
- How should a foundation, trust, laboratory, or other stewardship entity relate to the for-profit operating company?
- What supermajority and cross-constituency thresholds should govern constitutional amendments?
- What powers should the Stewardship Council have to pause a product, partnership, or deployment pending review?
- What due-process standard should govern removal of a founder, executive, or steward for constitutional breach?
- Which categories of sensitive data require special consent, retention limits, or independent oversight?
- What domain-specific rules are required before Yellow Duck Labs undertakes security or coercive intervention capabilities?
- How should affected communities participate in governance when Yellow Duck Labs becomes operationally important to them?
- What business-model metrics should become standard across products: avoided loss, readiness coverage, response time, continuity preserved, or another measurable unit?