

# **FOREST GUILD - MEMBERSHIP AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

(September 10, 2008)

## **I. Organization**

- A. The Forest Guild (the “Guild”)

## **II. Statement of Mission & Principles**

- A. The Forest Guild promotes ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry—“excellent forestry”—as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild provides training, policy analysis, and research to foster excellence in stewardship, to support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and to engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management.
- B. The Guild’s professional members base their practice on the following principles:
  - 1. Human society benefits from responsible forest management that places the highest priority on the maintenance and enhancement of the entire forest ecosystem.
  - 2. The natural forest provides a model for sustainable resource management; therefore, responsible forest management emulates nature’s dynamic processes and minimizes impacts when harvesting trees and other products.
  - 3. The forest has value in its own right, independent of human intentions and needs.
  - 4. Human knowledge of forest ecosystems is limited. Responsible management that sustains the forest requires a humble approach and continuous learning.
  - 5. The practice of forestry must be grounded in field observation and experience as well as in the biological sciences. This practical knowledge should be developed and shared with both traditional and non-traditional educational institutions and programs.
  - 6. A forester’s or natural resource professional’s first duty is to the forest and its future. When the management directives of clients or supervisors conflict with the Mission and Principles of the Guild, and cannot be modified through dialogue and education, a forester or natural resource professional should disassociate.

## **III. General Membership**

- A. Application
  - 1. Applications will be accepted at any time during the year and reviewed regularly by the Membership Committee.
  - 2. Prospective members must complete application form and submit it to national office for processing (with exceptions as noted in III.B.4.d) below).
- B. Types of Membership
  - 1. Founding Members
    - a. Founding Members consist of those individuals listed in Appendix A, all of whom were in attendance at one or more of the four seminal meetings of the Guild held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Eureka, California, Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, and Asheville, North Carolina in 1995-1997.
  - 2. Professional members

- a. Professional members are foresters and allied resource management professionals, working independently or with organizations, whose activities and accomplishments exemplify the Guild's statement of mission and principles.
- 3. Student members
  - a. Students of forestry and allied resource disciplines who support the Guild's mission and principles and wish to become actively involved in the Guild's activities.
  - b. Students may participate in working groups and the Program Committee, but are not eligible to vote or to serve on the Policy Council or other committees.
- 4. Affiliates
  - a. Affiliates are individuals, organizations, businesses or agency offices who support the Guild's mission, but are not forestry professionals and are not actively involved in Guild affairs.
  - b. Organizational, business or agency affiliates must designate a single individual to serve as the contact person with the Guild.
  - c. Affiliates and their representatives may participate in working groups but are not eligible to vote or to serve on the Policy Council or other committees.
  - d. One-year gift affiliate memberships may be awarded at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Individuals receiving gift affiliate memberships are not required to complete a membership application.

#### C. Membership Requirements

- 1. All members must support the Guild Statement of Mission and Principles.
- 2. Professional Membership in the Forest Guild is open to all forest professionals whose work is directly related to the stewardship and protection of forests, whether that work occurs through on-the-ground management, policy, advocacy or research.
- 3. Professional Members must either possess a college-level degree in forestry or a working knowledge of forestry practice based on several years' field experience.

The qualifications of an applicant seeking Professional Membership based on field experience will be subject to the discretion of the Membership Committee. These applicants must provide a detailed 1-2 paragraph description of relevant field experience. Generally, five years' field experience is desired. However, applicants with less time may be considered. The Membership Committee may request that applicants with less than five years' field experience provide additional demonstration of their qualifications such as resumes, references and sample management plans.

- 4. The Forest Guild is committed to a culturally diverse membership. Guild membership is non-discriminatory with regard to race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran.
- 5. Membership applications are subject to approval by the Membership Committee by a simple majority vote.
- 6. Payment of Annual Dues. Full and timely payment of dues is required after membership application is approved (prorated based on the number of months left in the year); thereafter dues must be paid by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. For new members, a "first dues" payment received within the last three months of a calendar year will cover dues requirements for the full year that follows.

#### D. General Privileges

- 1. All members have the following privileges:
  - a. Access to the shared knowledge and experience of other members and peer organizations.
  - b. Access to research resources.
  - c. The ability to sign onto and help with Guild sponsored policy initiatives.
  - d. Invitation to Guild Annual Meeting and other Guild meetings.

- e. Free subscription to print and e-mail Guild newsletters.
  - f. Free copy of member directory and other Guild publications.
  - g. Other privileges as established by the Board of Directors.
- E. General Duties and Responsibilities of Membership
1. Members shall uphold and promote the Guild mission and principles.
  2. Members should actively participate in membership development through recruitment, referrals and other assistance.
  3. Members should volunteer assistance in Guild obligations and activities.
  4. Members should vote, if eligible.
  5. Members should endeavor to attend Guild meetings.
  6. A Forest Guild member's individual actions affect the reputation of the organization as a whole and members shall strive to uphold the positive reputation of the Guild at all times. Guild members shall conduct themselves in their professional affairs in a civil and dignified manner and shall refrain from the use of personal attacks and inflammatory language in any public communications.
- F. Specific Privileges of Professional Members
1. Professional members may nominate and vote for election of the Policy Council.
  2. Professional members are eligible for membership on the Policy Council and other organizational and special committees.
  3. Professional members are eligible to receive a discount on Annual Meeting registration fee and assistance with travel and lodging expenses, when available.
  4. Professional members may propose amendments to the Mission and Principles to the Guild Board of Directors at any time. The Board of Directors must review such proposals and make a decision as to the appropriate response within six months of receipt.
  5. Professional members participate in the formulation and approval of policy and position statements.
- G. Voting Rights and Processes
1. For all voting purposes, Professional Members are entitled to one vote each.
  2. Students and affiliates are not eligible to vote.
  3. Votes may be submitted by mail, fax or email.
  4. Voting deadlines will be established by the Board of Directors on a ballot-by-ballot basis.
  5. A minimum of one month must be provided for voting members to review and consider issues requiring a vote.
  6. Amendments to the Guild's Membership and Policy Guidelines must be approved by two-thirds (2/3's) of professional members who take part in the vote. No minimum level of participation is required for a vote to be valid.
- H. Termination of Professional Membership
1. Professional Membership may be terminated for any of the following reasons:
    - A. A member's dues have not been paid in full.
    - B. A member's actions are clearly not in accord with the Guild's Mission and Principles.
    - C. A member's actions are clearly and consistently contrary to the General Duties and Responsibilities of Membership (III.E).
  2. Membership is automatically terminated for non-payment of dues when at least 90 days have elapsed since the expiration of membership and the member's dues have not been received AND the member has received a written notice stating that termi-

nation is pending for non-payment of dues at least 60 days previously. Any Guild professional member may request the Membership and Policy Council to make a waiver of membership dues for up to two years on behalf of another professional member otherwise in good standing for whom dues are a financial hardship.

3. Termination of professional membership for reasons other than non-payment of dues can only be affected by the Membership and Policy Council (MPC) in response to valid petitions for termination as described in sections III.H.4 below.
4. A petition for termination of a Professional Member can only be proposed by one or more Professional Members in good standing. Petitions for termination must be submitted to the Chair of the Membership and Policy Council in writing and include sufficient detail of the reasons for termination and references to information sources or persons familiar with the circumstances to allow the MPC to reasonably assess the situation. Members facing a petition for termination shall have the right to respond directly to the petition in writing or in a closed session with the MPC prior to the MPC's taking action.
5. Within 60 days of having received a petition for termination the MPC shall conduct an investigation and make a decision in response to the petition. At a minimum the investigation shall include interviews with the petitioning member(s) and the member facing termination. The MPC may elect to interview any other directly affected or knowledgeable persons and the details of any such interview conducted in response to a petition may be considered confidential if the interviewee so elects. The MPC may elect to delegate all or part of the required investigation to the Forest Guild Membership Committee and/or ask the Membership Committee for a recommendation for action in response to the petition. Following the investigation the MPC will either approve the petition to terminate membership, deny the petition with no further action, or deny the petition while sending a formal letter of reprimand to the member subject to the petition.
6. Professional Members having received a formal letter of reprimand within the last 36 months may have their membership subsequently terminated by the MPC for continued actions not in accord with the Mission and Principles or the General Duties and Responsibilities of Membership. The MPC will exhibit reasonable diligence in evaluating such circumstances, however it may take action subject to the approval process described in III.H.7 without the need for another petition for termination or formal investigation.
7. MPC action in response to petitions for termination requires a 2/3 majority of votes during a properly noticed meeting with a quorum of members present. Failure to achieve a 2/3 majority for any action in response to a petition for termination will result in denial of the petition. The chair or another representative of the MPC will notify both the petitioner and the member facing termination of the MPC's action on the petition within 3 days.

#### **IV. Meetings of the General Membership**

##### **A. Schedule**

1. Meetings of the General Membership will be held at the Annual Meeting.

##### **B. Agenda**

The agenda for meetings of the General Membership will provide for the following:

1. Review of annual activity.
2. Reports from national coordinator and regional coordinators.
3. Meetings of working groups and committees.
4. Concerns from the floor. Installation of new Policy Council members.

#### **V. Board of Directors**

##### **A. General Powers**

1. The property, affairs and activities of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors.
2. This board shall consist of not less than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15) members (see the Bylaws of the Forest Guild).

#### **VI. Policy Council**

##### **A. Composition**

1. The Policy Council is to be comprised of nine members.
2. Only Professional Members in good standing are eligible for the Policy Council.
3. Policy Council composition should reflect the geographic diversity of Guild membership.
4. At least 2/3 of Policy Council members serving at any one time must be actively engaged in forest management (e.g. management plan development, silviculture).

##### **B. Election**

1. The Nominating Committee will solicit nominations from the Professional Membership at least 4 months prior to the Annual Meeting.
2. Professional members may submit Policy Council member nominations to the Nominating Committee at any time.
3. Nominations must be received no later than three months prior to the Annual meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee will review nominations, recruit candidates, prepare a slate of candidates and distribute ballots to the Professional Membership 2 months prior to the Annual Meeting.
5. Completed ballots must be received (by email, fax, or mail) no later than 1 month prior to the Annual Meeting.
6. Election based upon the most votes received for each candidate as submitted by Professional Members.
7. Elected candidates will be notified prior to the Annual Meeting.

##### **C. Term of Office**

1. Term begins at the Annual Meeting of the General Membership immediately following election.
2. Policy Council members will be elected for terms of 3 years, with no more than 1/3 of Policy Council membership up for reelection in any one year.
3. Policy Council members may be elected to a maximum of 2 consecutive terms.

4. Policy Council members who have served the maximum number of consecutive terms may seek reelection after a period of 2 years.
5. “Year” (as used in V.D.1 & 3 above) refers to the interval between meetings of the General Membership.
6. Vacancies:
  - a. Any vacancy occurring between annual meetings may be temporarily filled by the Policy Council at any meeting (in person or by conference call) held after the vacancy occurs. A Policy Council member so appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve until the next Guild Annual Meeting.
  - b. Vacancies will be officially filled by election annually at the meeting of the General Membership, based on votes conducted according to section V.B. above.

#### D. General Duties, Powers and Responsibilities of the Policy Council

1. The Council will:
  - a. Fulfill the purposes and objectives set forth in the mission statement.
  - b. Issue Guild policy and position statements in accordance with Section X below.
  - c. Schedule and supervise votes of the Professional Membership on:
    - Policy Council membership
    - Guild policy statements
    - Modification of the Mission and Principles
  - d. Address issues related to member services.
  - e. Select the members of the membership and nominating committee in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

#### E. Terminations

1. The status of any member who is absent from 3 consecutive in-person meetings will be automatically reviewed by the Policy Council.
2. If the Policy Council finds insufficient cause for absence, the Policy Council may, by simple majority vote, deem the member to have vacated their seat and any office, elected or appointed, that they may have held. Seats thus vacated may be filled according to V.C.6 above.

#### F. Compensation

1. Council members will not be compensated by the Guild for fulfilling membership obligations, including services on committees.
2. Reimbursement may be provided for reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out the Council obligations. Reasonable expenses include lodging, transportation, and work related meals.

### VII. Meetings of the Policy Council

#### A. Regular Meetings

1. Regular in-person meetings of the Policy Council will be held in conjunction with the Guild Annual Meeting.
2. Other meetings may be called as deemed necessary, and held via conference call or in person. Bimonthly calls are suggested.
3. Responsibility for coordination and notification lies with the Chairperson of the Policy Council and Guild staff.

#### B. Agendas

1. Agendas will be set by the Policy Council with assistance from Guild staff.
2. Agendas will be distributed to meeting participants sufficiently beforehand to enable Policy Council members to cast proxy votes if necessary.

### C. Participation and Voting

1. Votes will be conducted on a one person, one vote basis.
2. Proxy voting
  - a. Proxy votes may be cast in response to specific issues identified in the meeting agenda.
  - b. Only one proxy vote is allowed per Policy Council member in attendance at a Policy Council meeting.
3. Guild staff is expected to be represented at all meetings of the Policy Council.
4. Guild staff is responsible for compilation and distribution of minutes.

### D. Quorum

1. A quorum requires 2/3 of the Policy Council in attendance or represented by proxy.

### E. Duties of Officers

1. Chair
  - a. Presides over all Policy Council meetings.
  - b. Serves as coordinator and liaison between the Policy Council and the Board.
2. Vice-Chair
  - a. Carries out duties as delegated by the Chair and the Policy Council.
  - b. Assumes the duties of the Chair in his/her absence.

## VIII. Committees

### A. Committees will be composed of Professional Members and be responsible for handling issues assigned by the Board.

1. Composition
  - a. All Professional Members in good standing are eligible for membership on committees.
  - b. Each committee shall have a 9-person maximum.
  - c. Members of committees will be appointed by the Board.
2. Formation
  - a. Committees are created, renewed or dissolved at the discretion of the Board.
  - b. Members of the General Membership may at any time ask the Board to establish a committee.
3. Obligations
  - a. Each committee will elect a chairperson, who will be responsible for reporting regularly to the Board and Guild staff, and to the General Membership at the Annual Meeting.

### B. Committees

1. Membership Committee
  - a. In addition to responsibilities specified elsewhere in this document, the Membership Committee will review and approve applications of prospective Professional Members.
2. Nominating Committee
  - a. The Nominating Committee, in conjunction with Guild staff and board are responsible for identifying and recruiting candidates for the Policy Council, and developing the final slate of candidates for the ballot, subject to the approval of the Policy Council
3. Ad hoc Committees
  - a. Ad hoc committees may be created by the Board to deal with organizational issues as deemed necessary by the Board.

## IX. Working Groups

### A. Definition

1. Working groups will focus on general areas of interest such as policy, education or silviculture.

#### B. Composition, Formation and General Obligations

1. Composition
  - a. All members in good standing are eligible for membership on working groups.
  - b. Membership in working groups is unlimited.
2. Formation
  - a. Working groups are created, renewed or dissolved at the discretion of the Board.
  - b. Members of the Professional Membership may at any time ask the Board to establish a working group.
3. Obligations
  - a. Each working group will elect a chairperson, who will be responsible for reporting regularly to the Board and Guild staff, and to the General Membership at the Annual Meeting.

### **X. Policy Development**

#### A. Categories

1. Broad Policy Statements
  - a. Guild policy statements generally address broad issues with unrestricted time horizons and/or wide geographic relevance, and require a formal vote of the Professional Membership.
  - b. Policy statements will take the form of a formal document.
  - c. State- or local-level policy statements may be developed by local chapters or coordinators, must conform to existing national level policy or position statements, require a simple majority vote of the Professional Membership in the relevant state or locality, and require approval by Guild national headquarters staff and/or the Guild's Policy Council.
2. Detailed Position Statements
  - a. Guild position statements generally address focused issues with restricted time frames and/or limited geographic relevance, are tiered to policy statements and only require approval by the Policy Council.
  - b. Position statements may take any of a number of forms, including a formal document or a simple letter from the Executive Director or Policy Council Chair.
  - c. State- or local-level position statements may be developed by local chapters or coordinators, must be consistent with existing national level policy or position statements, and require approval by Guild national headquarters staff and/or the Guild's Policy Council.

#### B. Procedure

1. Any Professional Member may recommend the development of a policy or position statement to the Policy Council, either directly or through Guild staff.
2. The Policy Council (or a subcommittee thereof) may develop the first draft of a policy or position statement, or, if it so desires, delegate the first draft to Guild staff, the policy working group, or, in the case of a position statement, to local members on issues relevant or restricted to their locale. In cases where the policy working group or staff develops the first draft, it may be reviewed and revised as necessary by the Policy Council in conjunction with staff. In cases where the Policy Council or staff develops the first draft of a policy statement, it may be sent to the policy working group for review and comment.
3. Policy statements must receive initial approval by majority vote of the Policy Council and final approval through a simple majority vote by the Professional Membership. Such votes may be conducted at any time by mail, with voting permissible by mail, fax, or e-mail.

4. The Policy Council may authorize changes to a policy statement after approval by voting for purposes of clarification and editorial clean-up. Substantive changes to an approved policy statement must be subjected to a new vote of the Professional Membership.
5. Position statements may receive final approval from the Policy Council by simple majority vote.
6. Position statements may be appealed by petition of one-third of the Professional Membership. In such cases the Policy Council and staff must conduct a vote of the Professional Members within one month after receipt of the petition. Affirmation or rejection of the position statement in question is based on a simple majority of submitted votes.