

NATURALIST COUNCIL CHARTER

1. ACTIVITY COUNCIL NAME

The name shall be the Naturalist Council.

2. AUTHORITY

This Naturalist Council charter is adopted by authority of the Branch Leadership Committee. As approved by the Branch Leadership Committee, the Naturalist Council has the following authority:

- Develop, set, maintain, and revise Clubwide Naturalist Standards for approval by Branch Leadership Committee.
- Develop and maintain organization-wide expectations and standards for Mountaineers Naturalist programs, including but not limited to:
 - Leadership development
 - Activity-specific risk management
 - Use of shared teaching locations
- Collaborate across branches on developing course curriculum and assessment.

3. PURPOSE

The Naturalist Council is a decision-making body. The purpose of the Naturalist Council is to promote safe and enjoyable Naturalist programs that also strive to conserve the natural world. The Naturalist Council does this by developing, setting, and maintaining clubwide Naturalist Standards and by promoting shared ideas and resources across branches.

Naturalist Council Responsibilities:

- Develop and set initial Clubwide Naturalist Standards, including Clubwide Naturalist Leader Standards.
- Review/audit and revise Clubwide Naturalist Standards, at least annually.
- Share ideas and resources across branches with goals of:
 - Consistency where practical
 - Learning from one another to improve the volunteer, participant, and student experience
 - Understanding industry best practices and relevant research, where available
- Make other cross-branch decisions as determined by the Council.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Naturalist Council consists of:

- Naturalist Committee Chairs (or proxies)¹
- One additional representative from each Naturalist Committee

¹ This includes any committee whose scope includes Clubwide Naturalists Standards, as included in their committee charter and approved by their branch.

Approved: May 18, 2022

5. GOVERNANCE

The Naturalist Council is led by group governance. There are no elected or appointed officers or specific positions of leadership. Collectively, the group is responsible for convening regular meetings, ensuring Clubwide Naturalist Standards are reviewed annually and submitted to Branch Leadership Committee for approval when updated.

6. DECISION-MAKING

A motion to bring business before the Naturalist Council for vote may be made by any one Council members and seconded by another. Any business related to Clubwide Naturalist Standards that comes before the Council for decision making must pass by 100% consensus of the voting members, including delegated proxies and any members not present, in order to be adopted. Members not present must submit an electronic vote on Clubwide Standards business. Members not present must respond within 2 weeks of the request. Failure to respond is taken as consent. Other business must pass by simple majority of members present. Abstaining from any vote is taken as consent.

Quorum

Two-thirds of voting members, including delegated proxies, must be present to make a decision, the exception being decisions on Clubwide Standards in which case all branches must vote.

Eligibility

Each Naturalist Council member shall be eligible to cast votes for all motions and other Council business. Each Council member may cast a single vote.

Proxy

In the event that a Council member is unable to attend a meeting, they may delegate their proxy to another individual in attendance. A verifiable proxy may be in, but not necessarily limited to, the following formats: written, email, text message, or voicemail.

Veto

In the event that at least 60% of the voting members of two or more branches oppose, a motion that would otherwise have passed with a simple majority does not pass.

Table

In support of transparency and allowing time for Council members to confer with their committee, any Council member may make a motion to table the vote until a specific future date. The Council is obligated to honor a motion to table a topic for up to four weeks. If the motion is to table the vote for an extended period of time, or if the topic has already been tabled, the Council will vote on whether and for how long to table the decision.

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Voting Electronically

The Naturalist Council may vote between meetings to speed up the decision making process using email, Basecamp, or other electronic means. The process is as follows:

1. After sufficient discussion, a member poses the question: "Is there anyone who would like to have a special meeting before putting this to vote?"
 - a. If a member wishes to have a special meeting, the member schedules and publishes a meeting with at least 4-weeks' notice (this can be online, but must be open to the entire Council). Those present at the meeting will conduct a vote on whether to put the issue to vote during the special meeting or to conduct the vote on the issue at a later date.
 - b. If, after 7 days, no member requests a special meeting, the council can put the issue to vote.
2. An electronic vote must allow members 7 calendar days to cast their vote.
3. Veto rules apply.

7. MEETINGS

The Naturalist Council will convene a Naturalist Summit annually. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Naturalist Council. A quorum of decision-making members must be present to make a decision on any matter. Attendees can include Naturalist Council Members and key activity volunteers (at the discretion of the Naturalist Committee Chairs).

8. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

No Naturalist Council member shall be removed from the Council except for good cause. The process of removal may be initiated upon a two-thirds vote of the Naturalist Council, with the affected Council member counting only toward the quorum. Removal may only be voted for good cause shown at a meeting called for that purpose, with notice of that purpose sent to all Council members and to the Vice President of Branches.

In the event of a dispute about whether a particular role in a branch should serve on the Naturalist Council, the Vice President of Branches will consult as necessary and make the final decision.

9. AMENDING THE COUNCIL CHARTER

Amendments to this Naturalist Council charter may be proposed by any Council member. Approval by the Naturalist Council should follow the chartered decision-making process. All amendments must also be approved by the Branch Leadership Committee.

Amendment History:

The Naturalist Council Charter was first approved following review of the Branch Leadership Committee on May 18, 2022.