

1 ACTIVITY COMMITTEE NAME

The name shall be Seattle Naturalist Committee.

2 AUTHORITY

This Seattle Naturalist Charter is adopted by the authority of The Seattle Branch Council Charter.

3 PURPOSES AND MISSION

The mission of the Seattle Naturalist Committee shall be focused on teaching many aspects of the natural world of the Pacific Northwest to Mountaineers members, to promote identifying and understanding a variety of topics, such as mosses, plants, birds, animals, geology, and ecology. We do this through year-round naturalist trips, an annual lecture series, a course introducing Mountaineers to the natural world, and clinics and seminars. We recruit and support volunteer instructors and leaders for Naturalist trips and courses.

Seattle Naturalist Committee Responsibilities

- Work to achieve the mission and goals of the Seattle Branch and The Mountaineers organization
- Develop a diverse, open and inclusive population of Mountaineers members, students, instructors and leaders
- Develop and conduct Naturalist courses, clinics, seminars and trips. This includes establishing eligibility requirements for the courses as well as their equivalency.
- Set fees for the seminars, courses, and course equivalencies. The Naturalist Committee will recommend fees based upon organizational guidance and the purpose, mission, and values of the Committee.
- Establish leader qualifications and maintain a current Naturalist Leader and Instructor list.
- Ensure Naturalist trips are led according to Naturalist Activity Standards, including regular review of feedback
- Ensure that all Committee-sponsored events, including online, are consistent with Naturalist Minimum standards and program quality, and align with the mission of the Seattle Naturalist Committee.

- Coordinate with the club wide Safety Committee investigating any incidents originating from activities sponsored by the Seattle Naturalist Committee and make recommendations or adjustments as appropriate.
- Administer Naturalist volunteer incentives and recognition.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Seattle Naturalist Committee is open to all current Mountaineers members in good standing, regardless of branch affiliation. Current Naturalist leader or instructor status and having graduated from the Introduction to the Natural World course is highly desirable but not required.

5 GOVERNANCE

The Seattle Naturalist Committee is composed of an Executive Committee and a minimum of three (3) At-Large members. The Committee shall be responsible for the governance of the Activity, including but not limited to making rules and determining policy for the Activity programs and property, managing the budget, and furthering Activity interests. Naturalist Committee Members may vote on Committee business.

5.1 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of five or six (5 or 6) officers who are members of The Mountaineers and are in good standing -

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Leadership Coordinator
- Safety Officer

The Executive Committee may create, restructure, or dissolve sub-committees to carry out purposes of the Activity, appoint sub-committee officers and members, and delegate certain powers and duties to sub-committees

The Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected. The Vice Chairperson, Leadership Coordinator, and Safety Officer shall be appointed by the Chairperson. The intent is that all positions be filled when possible. Following an election, the incoming Vice Chairperson shall function as the presumptive Chairperson-elect, tasked with learning the role and responsibilities of the Chairperson, and serving in place of the Chair in their absence. If the outgoing Chairperson is willing to continue to serve on the Committee in any capacity, they shall function as the Immediate Past Chairperson, tasked with assisting the current Chairperson and Vice Chairperson in matters of governance, procedure and best practices, as needed.

5.2 Term Conditions and Stipulations

Each member of the Executive Committee (elected or appointed) shall serve for a period of two (2) years, with terms coincident with The Mountaineers fiscal year.

Elected officers may serve multiple terms, but not more than two (2) consecutive terms.

In the event that a replacement cannot be found for any elected positions, except for Chairperson, for any reason, the Chairperson may 1) temporarily extend the term of the incumbent or 2) appoint an interim officer for a period of up to one (1) year, or until such time that a replacement can be found.

In the event that there is no Vice Chairperson and a replacement cannot be found for the Chairperson, the Executive Committee may extend the incumbent's term for up to two (2) additional years.

In the event that the incumbent does not agree to an extension, then the Executive Committee may appoint any qualified individual until a replacement can be found.

5.3 Officers' Duties

Each Officer of the Executive Committee shall serve as the liaison to counterparts in other Branches, and attend meetings pertinent to the position, as well as executing any additional tasks assigned by the Chairperson. Additionally, each officer on the Executive Committee shall perform the duties as assigned.

5.3.1 Chairperson

The Chairperson shall -

- Preside at all regular Committee, Executive Committee, and special meetings.
- Confirm all sub-committee chairs
- Be an ex-officio member of all committees, sub-committees and task forces except the Nominating Committee.
- Be the spokesperson for the Committee.
- Oversee the operations, activities, programs and budget of the Committee
- Recruit and appoint new At-Large Members
- Attend Seattle Branch Council Meetings and Naturalist Council Meetings

5.3.2 Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson shall -

- Act in place of the Chairperson in the latter's absence.
- Assist the Chairperson with duties of the office.
- Coordinate the operations of the Nominating Committee.
- Assist the Chairperson with recruiting and developing new At-Large Members

5.3.3 Secretary/Treasurer

The Secretary shall –

- Be the recording officer for the Committee.
- Take, transcribe, and archive the minutes of the regular Committee, Executive Committee and any special meetings.
- Solicit nominations and maintain the official list of nominees for each office up for election

The Treasurer shall –

- Oversee the financial affairs of the Activity.
- Periodically report to the Committee on the state of the finances of the Activity.
- Assist in the preparation of the annual budget.
- Interface with The Seattle Branch Treasurer and Program Center Staff, as necessary.

5.3.4 Leadership Coordinator

The Leadership Coordinator shall -

- Review and plan the pathway to becoming a Naturalist Leader.

- Assure that leader and leader applicant status and contact information is updated
- Assist in identifying appropriate Mentors
- Assist in recruiting potential leaders and instructors
- Assist with instructional courses and workshops and other duties as assigned by the Chairperson

5.3.5 Safety Officer

The Safety Officer shall -

- Take the lead on all safety-related issues pertaining to the Activity.
- Interface with the Seattle Branch Safety Committee, the Seattle Branch Safety Officer, and the Safety Officers of other Activities, as necessary.
- Provide periodic reports to the Committee.

5.4 Order of Succession

In the event that the Seattle Naturalist Committee Chairperson is unable to attend a regular, Executive Committee, or special meeting, then any of the other attending Executive Committee Members may chair the meeting, given the following order of succession –

- Vice Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Leadership Coordinator
- Safety Officer

Whenever a Seattle Naturalist Executive Committee member other than the Chairperson chairs a meeting, they assume the duties and authorities of the Chairperson, for the duration of the meeting.

5.5. At-Large Members At-Large Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson and may serve renewable two-year terms as long as they are active participants and contributors to the Committee's business. They may be tasked with subcommittee roles or assist Executive Committee officers.

- **Role and Responsibilities of At-Large Members:**

- Represent the broader interests of Naturalist Activity Members and the Mountaineers community
- Participate in Naturalist Committee meetings and vote on relevant business
- Support Naturalist Committee courses, initiatives, subcommittees, or projects as assigned by the Chairperson or Executive Committee

5.6. Naturalist Activity Members The term Naturalist Activity Members includes all persons (other than Committee Members) on the Naturalist's roster of trip leaders, course instructors, and other volunteers who have been active in Naturalist Committee roles within the last three (3) years, as maintained on The Mountaineers website. Naturalist Activity Members are active volunteers who contribute to Naturalist programs but are not part of the formal Committee unless separately appointed or elected and do not have voting privileges

6 ELECTIONS

For the election of Naturalist Committee Executive officers, a Nominating Committee shall convene. The committee shall consist of Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, Leadership Coordinator and two volunteer At-Large Members. The Vice Chairperson shall chair the Nominating Committee. The Secretary shall maintain the official list of nominees for each office up for election. By July 31, the Nominating Committee shall nominate up to two qualified Committee Members (including incumbents) and/or Activity members for each position up for election. At the end of the nomination period, the Nominating Committee shall dissolve.

In the event that no nominees are found, the Chairperson may nominate officers, subject to Executive Committee ratification, for the coming term(s).

6.1 Eligibility

Any qualified Naturalist Committee Member or Naturalist Activity member in good standing, willing and able to serve, may be nominated for any position by petition submitted to the Nominating Committee or the Secretary before July 30.

6.2 Scheduled Election

Elections of Executive Committee Officers shall be held during a regular September meeting, or as designated by the Chair. The Vice Chairperson shall

preside over the election. The At-Large Members shall elect the Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary from those nominated by the Nominating Committee, by simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Seattle Branch Council Chairperson will cast the deciding vote.

The At-Large Members shall accept or reject the appointment of a Vice Chairperson, Leadership Training Officer, and Safety Officer from those appointed by the Committee Chairperson, by simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Committee Chairperson will cast the deciding vote.

6.3. Commencement of Term

Each Officer's two-year term shall commence on the first day of The Mountaineers' fiscal year, currently October 1.

7 VOTING

A motion to bring business before the full Naturalist Committee for vote may be made by any two Committee Members, not including the Chairperson. Any business that comes before the Committee for a vote must receive a simple majority of the eligible voting members present, including voted proxies, to be adopted.

The Executive Committee may meet and vote independently on routine operational matters, administrative decisions or time-sensitive issues that do not fall under the 'Decisions of Consequence' clause or require full Committee discussion and approval. A quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be as defined in Section 10.1.

7.1 Eligibility

Each Committee Member other than the Chairperson shall be eligible to cast votes for all motions and other Committee business. Each Executive Committee member and each At-Large Member may cast a single vote for their position.

The Chairperson shall only cast their vote in the event of a tie. The Chairperson is free to vote any and all proxies that have been delegated to them.

7.2 Proxy

In the event that a Committee Member (excluding the Chairperson) 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.

7.3 Voting by Email

Voting on a motion or other business before the Committee normally occurs at a meeting. This allows for a full debate of the issue at hand. In extraordinary cases voting may occur via email.

8 BUDGET SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

The Treasurer shall have the authority to commit/disburse budgeted funds. All reimbursement requests must be approved by the committee Treasurer or Chairperson. Once the budget limit has been reached, then any and all additional requests must be brought before the Branch Treasurer. All disbursements must be submitted for approval by the Branch Treasurer or Branch Chair.

9 SEATTLE BRANCH COUNCIL LIAISON

The Chairperson may appoint a delegate to act for the Chair as a member of the Seattle Branch Council.

10 MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Committee shall be held twice a year, or more frequently.

The Chairperson or any two other Officers may call for a special meeting in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting with 5 days' notice to the Committee members.

Regular meetings and a proposed agenda shall be announced in advance.

Decisions of Consequence

Although day-to-day operational decisions may be made by the Chairperson or delegated to Committee members, , the following decisions must be brought before the Committee for a vote:

- New course, seminar, or clinic proposals
- Major changes to an existing structure (e.g., splitting course curriculum into two courses, restructuring leader vetting process)
- Operational changes that will negatively impact revenue relative to the budget

10.1 Quorum

A quorum of appropriate members must be present for a vote on any matter.

Three (3) Officer members, plus two (2) At-Large members, of the full Committee shall constitute a quorum for a regular meeting.

Any four (4) members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for an Executive Committee or special meeting.

11 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

No Officer shall be removed before expiration of the term of office except for good cause.

The process of removal may be initiated upon a two-thirds vote of the Committee, with the affected Officer 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 Committee members and to the Branch Chair.

An Activity Member may be removed from the Activity roster in accordance with the policies and procedures then in place for the removal of volunteers by The Mountaineers and/or the Seattle Branch Council.

12 AMENDING THE ACTIVITY CHARTER

Amendments to this Seattle Naturalist Charter may be proposed by petition by any Executive Committee Member. A two-thirds vote of the Naturalist Committee is required to enact an amendment.

Amendment History

Governing Document of the Seattle Naturalist Committee enacted via Ballot September 2019.

Amendments proposed and approved by the Seattle Naturalist Committee July 2025. These are based on the current Charter Template of the Seattle Mountaineers. Further amendments approved as suggested by the Seattle Branch Council August 2025.