

Friends of the Forest Standard Operating Procedures Manual

As Revised February 2010

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Managing Membership

Purpose: To standardize welcoming, tracking and counting our membership.

Membership Tracking

- Standard membership is January through December.
- Dues are payable on or before January 1 of each year.
- Members whose dues are in arrears more than 90 days are not eligible to vote or to serve on the Board.
- Membership records are the responsibility of the Database Manager, in consultation with the Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

Membership Categories

- Annual Member: Paid an annual membership fee; counted as one member.
- Annual Family: Paid an annual family membership fee; counted as two members.
- Lifetime Member: Paid a one-time lifetime membership fee; counted as one member.
- Lifetime Family: Paid a one-time lifetime fee; counted as two members.
- Honorary Member: Awarded by the Board for outstanding service or other reasons at the discretion of the Board. This member pays no dues and their membership is in place as long as the member is interested. We count as a member.
- Guest: Organizations with a similar mission, selected Forest Service personnel, key elected officials in the Red Rock District area, and others whom we want to keep informed about FOF activities. A guest member pays no dues and is mailed the newsletter. We do not count guests as members.
- Donor: Person or organization that donated funds with no expectation of membership. We mail them newsletters for one year, but do not count as a member.

Family Memberships

- Annual Family and Lifetime Family memberships are open to all immediate family members, including minor children.
 - Minors 16 and 17 years old are considered members and may participate in activities under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian who is a member.
 - Minors under age 16 are considered members but may participate in activities only with permission of the committee chair and under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian who is a member.

New Members

- Upon receipt of dues payment from a new member, the Treasurer sends an e-mail to the Database Manager, President, and Membership Secretary, with the new member's contact information and committee interests.
 - A person is considered to be a member when the Treasurer has notified the Membership Secretary.
- The Membership Secretary conducts welcoming activities.
 - E-mail information to the Chairs of the committees the new member has said they might join, so the Chairs can contact the new member.

- E-mail the new member's e-mail address to the Webmaster, to be added to the e-mail distribution list.
- Mail the new member a welcome letter.
 - Inform the new member they will receive a name badge when they sign up for a committee or upon request.
- The Database Manager keeps the hard copy membership forms that were filled in by new members until after the annual audit.

Dues Renewals

- In November the Membership Secretary mails dues renewal letters to Annual members.
- As dues payments come in, the Treasurer forwards the names of those who renew to the Membership Secretary, and to the Database Manager, who enters this information into the database.
- In February, the Membership Secretary mails a second dues reminder to members who have not renewed their annual membership. This notice will remind members they must renew their membership in order to serve on a committee or participate in any FOF activities.

Counting Members

- Any member who does not renew by July 1 is dropped from the membership roster.
- Anyone joining after July 1 is a member for the rest of the year and the following year.
- Anyone joining after September 30 is counted as a new member as of the following year.
- The Database Manager, in consultation with the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, counts annual membership as of September 30, for a report at the annual meeting.

Membership List

- After July 1, the Database Manager e-mails the Board and all Committee Chairs the list of members who did not renew.
 - All Committee Chairs check their committee roster to ensure everyone is current. The Committee Chairs contact any members of their committee who have not renewed to let them know they must renew their membership to continue committee participation.
- After July 1, the Database Manager e-mails the membership list to the President.
- The membership list is available to any Officer or Committee Chair.

Membership Privileges

- A person must be a member to participate on a committee.
- Membership is important in order to be covered by FOF liability insurance and Forest Service liability insurance, and because members represent our organization.
- Each adult member may cast one vote at the annual meeting of the general membership.

Approved by the Board 04/15/09

Membership Recruitment and Publicity

Purpose: To outline effective membership recruiting strategies that are consistent with the welcoming culture of the Friends of the Forest.

Organizational Philosophy Regarding Recruitment: The organization does not aggressively seek out new members. Instead, ongoing activities in support of the Red Rock District of the Coconino National Forest and publicity about the Friends attract individuals or families who take the initiative to become members and participate in Friends-sponsored activities.

Categories and Descriptions of Recruitment Techniques Used by the Friends

- Comprehensive information about the Friends' mission and activities is readily accessible on the organization's website *friendsoftheforestsedona.org*.
 - Prospective members may communicate their interest or questions via email to inquiry@friendsoftheforestsedona.org.
 - A printable membership application is available on the website.
- The Coconino National Forest webpage on volunteering www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/volunteering/index.shtml provides a link to the Friends website for forest-related volunteer opportunities in the Sedona area.
- Press releases submitted by the Friends Publicity Committee include an invitation for the reader to join the Friends. Each press release also calls attention to the website *friendsoftheforestsedona.org*.
- Interviews for news articles, radio programs or videos highlight the welcoming and inclusive culture of the Friends. The Friends website is mentioned during the interview.
- An informational kiosk that depicts the Friends' mission and activities is exhibited at the Coconino National Forest Red Rock District's Visitor Contact Office.
- Membership brochures are available at Forest Service Visitor Centers in Red Rock Country. The Vice President of the Friends is responsible for maintaining a stock of brochures at the Visitor Contact Office (VCO).
 - A laminated copy of the brochure is available at the informational kiosk in the VCO for prospective members to preview. Brochures are handed out upon request.
 - The Cultural Resources Committee Chair is responsible for displaying brochures at V-Bar-V and Palatki Heritage Site Visitor Centers.
- Outreach during Friends-sponsored events and activities such as V-Bar-V Days and Trail Patrol is informative and welcoming but not aggressive.

- Friends wear their name badges and volunteer caps or vests (when appropriate for the activity) to demonstrate that they are Forest Service volunteers.
- When questioned about volunteering, the member describes the Friends' mission and activities and suggests ways of obtaining more information, such as the Friends' website or the Red Rock District's Visitor Contact Office, if interest is expressed.
- Individual members may choose to keep a few brochures with them to hand out during Friends-sponsored activities such as Trail Patrol and Weed Patrol.

Inappropriate Recruitment Techniques

- Examples of aggressive membership recruitment techniques that do not fit the organizational philosophy of the Friends include:
 - paid advertising
 - canvassing neighborhoods door to door
 - confronting people on trails
 - advertising flyers on vehicles
 - advertising flyers at businesses
 - unsolicited phone calls
 - mass mailings (email or USPS)

Approved by the Board 6/17/09

Forming & Disbanding Committees

Purpose: To establish and maintain only those committees that are requested by the District Ranger and adequately supported by the membership.

Procedure for Forming New Committees

- All new committees should come about in response to a request from the District Ranger for the Friends to begin a new, significant activity which is anticipated to be ongoing beyond a year's time.
- After a specific request from the Forest Service, all new committee details will be discussed and agreed upon by the Executive Committee prior to the next board meeting if possible. The Executive Committee will make a summarized recommendation to the board for their consideration, including:
 - approximate number of Friends required to staff the new committee
 - estimated moneys needed to fund the new committee
 - duties and time commitment of new committee members
 - estimated length or duration of the new committee
- As soon as possible after the Executive Committee meeting and prior to the next Board meeting, the president will send an email to the general membership asking how many members are interested in staffing the new committee, with details in the email as to their duties, time commitments, etc. Response back from the general membership will be requested from them by email within a week's time.
- At the next Board meeting, a summary of the Executive Committee recommendations and the response from the general membership will be presented to the board for their consideration and vote. The new committee will be formed if voted in by the Board and supported by the general membership. It is anticipated that a new committee will not be formed if there is insufficient interest or support from the general membership to staff it.

Annual Review

- All committees will be briefly reviewed annually by the Executive Committee with input from the District Ranger. Recommendations from the review will be presented to the board.
- Reasons for disbanding a committee might include
 - the function is no longer needed
 - the committee has fulfilled its purpose
 - it has too little support from the general membership to continue
 - District Ranger requests that it be disbanded.
- Any proposal to disband a committee will be voted on by the board.

Approved by the Board 04/15/09

Nomination and Election of Directors

Purpose: To establish a process for identifying, nominating and electing members who are interested in serving as the Directors of the Friends of the Forest.

Continuity of Organizational Directorship

- The Bylaws of the organization specify that one-third of the members of the Board of Directors be elected for a three year-term at the Annual Meeting.
- According to the Bylaws, the three-year terms of one third of the members of the Board of Directors expire at the Annual Meeting. Consideration for nomination for election/reelection as a Director is guided by the following:
 - The Directorship of any sitting officer whose three-year term expires and who is under consideration for reelection is re-nominated for another three year term.
 - The Directorship of any person under consideration as a potential officer nominee to be newly elected at the December Board meeting is re-nominated for another three-year term.
 - Every effort should be made to recruit newer members who have demonstrated a high degree of interest and participation in the Friends as nominees to the Board of Directors.
 - The Director's current willingness and ability to serve as a chairperson, co-chairperson and/or officer of the organization is taken into consideration.
 - The number of individuals nominated is normally limited to the number of positions open for election. The underlying philosophy is that any person who is willing and considered able to serve as a Director of the volunteer organization not be subject to rejection.

Directors Nominating Committee

- Not less than 60 days in advance of the Annual Meeting, the President, acting on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, shall appoint three members to serve along with the President and Vice President as a Directors Nominating Committee.
- The Vice President shall serve as chairperson. Although the three appointed committee members may or may not include Directors, generally Directors have the most knowledge concerning the interest and abilities of members of the organization.
- Excluding the President and Vice President, only Directors whose terms are not expiring shall serve on the Directors Nominating Committee.
- The Directors Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying a slate of at least one candidate for each of the expiring Directorship positions of the organization.

Nomination Process

- The Directors Nominating Committee shall identify Directors whose terms are expiring who may be slated for election/reelection as an officer of the organization.

- The Directors Nominating Committee shall identify Directors whose terms are expiring who may be no longer interested or capable of fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of being a Director and should be retired.
- It is the responsibility of the President to contact those retiring Directors to notify them that there is an organizational need to recruit newer members into the Board of Directors and to thank them for their years of service as a Director of the organization.
- In the interest of preserving continuity in the Directorship of the organization, the members of the Directors Nominating Committee shall canvass the Directors with expiring terms to determine their interest and ability to serve another 3-year term as a Director.
- The members of the Directors Nominating Committee shall canvass the Committee Chairpersons seeking the names of members who have demonstrated both an exceptional interest and participation in serving the organization as an active volunteer.
- The Vice President shall prepare a ballot of the committee's list of Director Candidates, plus space to cast a vote for a write-in candidate if the member so chooses.
- The ballot shall be published in the organization's newsletter that is mailed to members prior to the Annual Meeting.
- The ballot shall include instructions that all absentee ballots and write-in votes must be received by the Secretary before 5 pm of the day preceding the Annual Meeting, as required by the Bylaws.

Election Process

- Members who attend the Annual Meeting, and do not wish to vote for a write-in candidate, need not return a written ballot. The Secretary shall return ballots, other than those containing write-in candidates, that are received from any members who attend the Annual Meeting.
- Because the Bylaws require that write-in votes be received by the Secretary by the day preceding the Annual Meeting, no nominations shall be made from the floor.
- The Secretary shall tabulate the absentee ballots and provide the results, including the number of votes for write-in candidates, to the President prior to the election.
- If there are less than twenty (20) write-in votes for any individual write-in candidate, the President shall call for a vote accepting the nominated slate of Directors.
- The new Directors' term in office begins as soon as the election results are announced.

Approved by the Board 6/17/09

Nomination and Election of Officers

Purpose: To establish a process for identifying, nominating and electing capable members who are interested in serving as the officers of the Friends of the Forest.

Continuity of Organizational Leadership

- The Bylaws of the organization specify that the officers for President, Vice President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Secretary, be elected annually by the Board of Directors to serve one-year terms of office.
- In practice, the complexity of the organization's service activities and finances make it desirable that wherever possible:
 - the persons elected as President and Vice President each serve two successive terms in office
 - the Vice President succeed the President in office, thereby requiring the person newly nominated as Vice President to commit to serve the organization for four years
 - the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer each serve successive terms in office
 - the Assistant Treasurer succeed the Treasurer in office, requiring the person newly nominated as Assistant Treasurer to commit to serve the organization as Treasurer for at least one additional year.

Officers Nominating Committee

- Following the October Annual Meeting and before the second week of November of each year, the President shall impanel an Officers Nominating Committee consisting of the Vice President and at least one but not more than three additional members of the Board of Directors.
- The Officers Nominating Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President.
- The Officers Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying a slate of at least one candidate for each of the officer positions of the organization.
- Members of the Officers Nominating Committee may be considered for the slate of nominated officers.

Nomination Process

- In the interest of preserving continuity in the leadership of the organization, the members of the Officers Nominating Committee shall canvass the officers of the organization to determine their interest and ability to serve the successive terms of their offices.

- The members of the Officers Nominating Committee shall canvass the members of the Board of Directors; seeking individuals who are both interested and capable of the responsibilities of vacated officer positions.
- The Vice President, as chairperson of the Officers Nominating Committee, shall present the slate of officers to the President one week before the December Board of Directors meeting.
- The President shall notify the members of the Board of Directors of the slate of officers in the agenda sent out prior to the December Board meeting.
- Any Director wishing to nominate an alternate candidate for an office must do so in writing to the Secretary prior to 5 pm on the day preceding the December Board meeting.
 - The rationale for this requirement is to reduce confusion and last-minute disruption during the meeting, to allow the individual named to be contacted to determine his or her interest and ability to serve, and to allow for the preparation of ballots.
 - As specified by the Bylaws, all nominees must be members of the Board of Directors.

Election Process

- Following the President's Report in the agenda, the President shall preside over the election of officers by:
 - announcing the Officers Nominating Committee's slate of officers
 - announcing additional nominations, if any
 - conducting the election.
- The new officers' term in office begins as soon as the election process is completed, and in those years when a new President is elected, the gavel will be turned over at that time.

Approved by the Board 6/17/09

Board Voting by Electronic Mail (Email)

Purpose: To authorize the Board of Directors to vote by electronic mail (email) between regular meetings when such a vote is necessary.

When Email Votes Will be Used

- Email voting between Board meetings will be reserved for those issues needing a decision before the next in-person Board meeting will be held.
- Interim email voting might be used for such important activities as authorizing expenditure of funds or taking an action that moves a project forward.

Voting Process

- All email requests for a vote shall be presented to the Board through the President or, in the absence of the President, the Vice President. The President will personally contact any Board member who does not have email, to ensure all Board members can participate in the vote.
- The email vote will be in the form of a clearly stated motion. The President will take great care to ensure that all information presented to the Board is accurate and reasonably complete, and will try to include both pros and cons.
- The President will indicate the timeframe in which votes will be cast and counted. If possible, Board members will be given time to engage in email dialogue prior to casting their votes. The time period for voting will occur after the time period for on-line dialogue is over. It is possible Board members will raise considerations that result in the President determining it would be in the best interests of the organization to revise the motion or to wait till the next in-person meeting to consider the issue.
- Board members will cast their votes by using "Reply All," so votes are visible to all.
- As always, a majority of the Board members constitutes a quorum, so for an official vote to occur, more than half the Board members would need to respond to the request for a vote.
- The President will count the votes and inform the Board, via email, of the results.
- A record of the email vote and any actions taken must be added to the Minutes of the next in-person meeting of the Board of Directors.

Approved by the Board 6/17/09

Recognition Awards

Purpose: To provide a means for recognizing Friends of the Forest, Inc. members with service awards at the Annual Meeting of the Membership and the December Board meeting when the outgoing President leaves office.

Categories and Descriptions of Awards

- New Volunteer of the Year is a principal award given to a member who is new to the Friends, suggesting perhaps a membership of one to one and one half years. This person has jumped in with both feet and hit the ground running and has given many hours volunteering on several committees.
- Volunteer of the Year is a principal award given to a member who has, over the past year, given generously of their time through a variety of activities and exemplifies the volunteer spirit.
- Vice President's Award is a principal award presented to a member who exhibits "Heart" to the Friends of the Forest. The award recipient is passionate about the Friends and freely gives their time to make a difference.
- President's Award is a principal award of special recognition to a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the Friends' volunteer work.
- Distinguished Volunteer Award is a principal award presented to a member who has over many years consistently given of their time to the Friends of the Forest in a variety of activities.
- Committee service award certificates are presented to committee members who excel in criteria identified by committee chairs such as number of volunteer hours, special effort, or breadth of contribution.
- Recognition of the outgoing President with a gift.

Nomination Process

- Selection of award recipients and procurement of award keepsakes are the responsibility of the Awards Nominating Committee (ANC).
 - The President impanels the ANC, consisting of the President and/or Vice President and two other Board members, by August 15.
 - The ANC disbands after distribution of awards at the Annual Meeting.
- The ANC invites all committee chairs and Board members to submit names and rationale for nominations by September 15 for consideration by the ANC. Descriptions of award categories and lists of prior award recipients are communicated so that principal award recipients are not eligible for the same award for a period of five years.
 - Each nomination for a principal award should contain sufficient supporting information to substantiate the nomination. A principal award may be presented to an individual, couple, or team.
 - A nomination for a committee service award certificate should include a one to two sentence justification that will be read as the member receives the certificate at the Annual Meeting of the Membership.

- Generally, small committees recognize one or two members. Large committees may recognize up to five members.
 - Committee members are eligible for service award certificates every year.
- The ANC selects the award recipients from the nominees, prepares written narratives for the Awards Program and procures any keepsakes at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting of the Membership.
- The Vice President prepares the narrative to recognize the outgoing President and procures the gift.
- All service award costs (principal awards, certificates, and recognition of the President) are paid by Friends of the Forest.
 - The ANC may spend an amount not to exceed \$25 for each principal award.
 - The value of the gift for the President should not exceed \$150.
- Awards are presented only to members in good standing, i.e., members whose dues are not delinquent.

Awards Programs

- Annual Meeting of the Membership
 - For each principal award, the President provides both a description of the award and the rationale for selection of the recipient as the award is being presented. The presentation of each principal award is photographed for inclusion in the Friends of the Forest newsletter, *Branching Out*.
 - The committee chairs present committee service award certificates to nominees. A brief one or two sentence account of each member's contribution is shared as the member's name is called. Certificate recipients are photographed as a group. Names of recipients are reported in *Branching Out*.
- December Board meeting of outgoing President
 - The newly-elected President recognizes the service of the outgoing President. Presentation of the award and gift is photographed for inclusion in *Branching Out*.

Approved by the Board 04/15/09

Forest Service Resource Requests

Purpose: To establish a procedure to insure that proposals for Friends of the Forest (FOF) finite resources involving volunteer hours and/or funding are consistent with the Forest Service (FS) priorities established by the Red Rock Ranger District Ranger, and are a good fit for the Friends of the Forest.

FS Requesting Process

- This process should be followed when the FS would like FOF to take on a major new project (e.g., NVUM survey or Road Count) or when the FS requests funding in an amount above \$200.
- A FS staff member initiates the request at a FS monthly staff meeting, which is attended by the FOF President or Vice-President.
 - The proposal is discussed by the FS staff.
 - The District Ranger and FOF President determine if the activity is worthwhile for the FS and appropriate for the FOF volunteers.
 - The Forest Service minutes should identify the project and the decision made.
- To the extent practical, the FS request should include the following:
 - A description of the activity and expected results.
 - Estimated funding required for the activity.
 - Estimated supplies, equipment, manpower and skills needed to complete the activity.
 - Time-frame for beginning and ending the activity.
 - Identification of the FS contact person for the activity.

FOF Implementation

- The FOF President will follow the SOP for “Forming & Disbanding Committees,” which includes procedures for responding to requests from the FS.
- If the Board approves a new activity that is temporary then the President will appoint a special project coordinator who will ask for volunteers to complete the project.
- If the Board does not approve the activity because funding or volunteer hours are not available, then the FOF President will discuss the proposal with the District Ranger to see if FOF resources ought to be redirected from some other active project.

Approved by the Board 12/09/09

Routine Expenditures

Purpose: To specify the “routine expenditures” that the Treasurer is authorized to pay per Article 8 of the Bylaws, provided annual approval is given by the Board.

Included in “Routine Expenditures”

Accounting fees

Display merchandise at the discretion of the merchandise chair, provided the unsold inventory does not exceed \$700 at any time

Filing fees

Forest Service volunteer patches

Insurance premiums – D&O, liability

Member name tags

Membership brochures

Newsletter printing

Officers’ office supplies

Orders for any pre-sold merchandise

Palatki and V-V guides

Plaques for annual awards and gifts

Postage

Vests and caps

Water

*Approved by the Board 02/18/2009
Revised by the Board 2/17/10*

Fundraising

Purpose: To define and delineate the fundraising policy of the Friends of the Forest, both in terms of mechanics as well as organizational philosophy.

Organizational Philosophy for Fundraising

- As a general policy, the Friends of the Forest is largely a service organization, not a fundraising organization.
- We do not engage in aggressive fundraising techniques, such as soliciting membership for extra donations, soliciting businesses, or through email or other large-scale mailing campaigns.
- We do not engage in political fundraising, lobbying, or other politically oriented fundraising activities.

Procedures for Fundraising

- The Friends of the Forest raises funds through:
 - membership dues
 - unsolicited donations from members, individuals, foundations, or other organizations
 - donation boxes at Palatki, V-V and the Visitor Contact Office.
 - the sale of various merchandise such as water, soft drinks and booklets
 - the partial donation of the proceeds from the sale of books or other creative works authored or contributed by members of the Friends
 - grant applications to various granting agencies, including but not limited to: National Forest Foundation, Sedona Community Foundation, Arizona Community Foundation and Arizona Game & Fish Department.
- Any other fundraising proposals must be approved by the Board of Directors before being implemented.
- All funds raised by the Friends of the Forest are used either to cover operating expenses or for use in Forest Service projects.

Approved by the Board 6/17/09

National Forest Foundation Grants

Purpose: To define the process for acquiring funds via the National Forest Foundation (NFF) Matching Awards Program, used to perform on-the-ground conservation work on the Red Rock Ranger District (RRRD), Coconino National Forest (NF). Under the NFF/National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) Partnership Agreement, matching funds are available, up to \$1000, for small projects that are not funded by the annual Forest Service operating budget.

Application Process

- The Forest Service initiates project requests by preparing the Special Project Request Form and presenting it to the FOF/NFF liaison no later than two weeks before the FOF Board meeting at which action is requested.
- The FOF/NFF liaison assures that the project involves specific on-the-ground actions that will be of direct benefit to the NF resources and will have strong community support, and coordinates the project with Local Representatives of NAFSR.
- The FOF/NFF liaison presents the proposed project and recommendations to the next FOF Board of Directors meeting for approval.
- After planning details are worked out between the RRRD and the FOF/NFF liaison, the liaison prepares a 2-3 page application for matching funds from NFF addressed to both NFF and NAFSR for project and funding approval.

Financial Aspects

- Upon receipt of the "Award Recipient Agreement" committing matching funds from NFF, FOF sends a check for 50% of the estimated cost of the project to NFF. NFF then matches the FOF funds, up to \$1000, and sends the aggregate to the treasurer of NAFSR. These funds, minus \$50 administrative processing funds, are then made available to FOF to complete the project.
- FOF and NAFSR representatives are fiscally accountable for the project funds, and therefore assure that funds are spent for the intended purpose such as supplies, materials and contracts. No NFF funds may be directed back to the Forest Service for any purpose, and the project must be completed in one year.

Accomplishment Report

- Upon completion, the FOF submits an accomplishment report, signed by a local NAFSR representative, to both NFF and NAFSR along with any publicity of the project.
- The report should show how the money was spent, include the completed NFF Financial Report Form, an outline of the benefits in measurable results to the NF and local community, and photographs if appropriate.

Approved by the Board 9/16/09