

# **The Constitution of the Western Society of Naturalists**

## **Purpose**

Article 1 The Western Society of Naturalists has as its objectives the stimulation of general interest in the fields of biological science, and the provision of opportunities for presentation and discussion of problems of common interest to biologists. It proposes to emphasize broad advances in knowledge of concern to all workers in the field of biology rather than the development of technical procedures. In this respect, the Society shall attempt to exercise an integrative function which cannot be performed by more specialized organizations. The society aims to reflect and promote the diversity of its membership, and foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community irrespective of such factors including, but not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, ethnicity, ability, religion, language, nationality, age/career stage, or institution.

[Amended 19 Nov 2017, at the 98<sup>th</sup> WSN Annual Meeting, Pasadena, CA]

## **Membership**

Article 2 Any person interested in the purpose of the Society as defined in Article 1 shall be eligible for membership.

Article 3 Individuals become members upon payment of annual dues. Members shall be dropped from the roll when their dues are in arrears. Such members may rejoin on payment of dues.

Article 4 Members retiring for age can become Emeritus members by notifying the WSN Secretariat. Emeritus members are exempt from dues and retain all rights of regular membership including voting privilege.

## **Officers**

Article 5 The officers of the Society shall be President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-at-large. Offices may be shared by more than one person. Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting on the basis of nominations submitted by a Nominating Committee appointed by the President, with the exception of the Member-at-large who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and who shall be local chairperson for the next annual meeting.

Article 6 The terms of the offices of the President, President-Elect, and Member-at-large shall be one year. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall serve for three years. The President and President-Elect shall not serve successive terms in the same office.

Article 7 The Secretary and the Treasurer shall serve as the board of directors in a given calendar year, in relation to the corporate status of the society.

### **Committees and Special Positions**

Article 8 The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the President-Elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Member-at-large, and the chairperson of the Student Committee. The Executive Committee shall set the places and dates for meetings, and transact such other business as may be referred to it by the society or as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the society. The Executive Committee shall report its actions to the society at each annual meeting, or whenever special circumstances make it advisable.

Article 9 The Program Committee shall consist of the Secretary (who shall act as Chairperson), the President, a representative of the Student Committee, and the current Member-at-large. This committee shall plan programs for the meetings of the society, issue proper advance notice of meetings, solicit papers, and accept or decline papers. The Secretary, as committee chairperson, is responsible for ensuring that these tasks are accomplished in a timely manner.

Article 10 The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members, appointed by the President and with the concurrence of the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be known by the membership by the publication of their names in the Spring Newsletter. This committee shall provide nominees for officer positions who have indicated their willingness to serve if elected, and shall provide the names of a nominee for each position for publication in the program for the annual meeting.

Article 11 The Student Committee shall be maintained for the purpose of facilitating communication between WSN student members, WSN non-student members, and the Executive Committee. This committee shall be in charge of organizing student activities at WSN annual meetings including, but not limited to, field trips, seminars, workshops, fundraisers, student-led symposia, and graduate student mixers, and coordinating these activities with the Program Committee. The committee shall consist of a minimum of three WSN student members. Each representative may serve on the committee for one to three years, as long as their WSN student membership is maintained. New representatives shall be nominated by the Student Committee and ratified by the WSN general membership at the Business Meeting. A committee chairperson shall be appointed by the committee on a rotating basis, with the responsibility of representing the Student Committee at the WSN Executive Committee and Business Meetings.

Article 12 To facilitate WSN's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Society will form and maintain a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. The

DEI Committee will coordinate activities with the WSN Executive Committee and serve an advisory role by aiding in the development and maintenance of a Meeting Code of Conduct and suggesting activities for the Annual Meeting to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are incorporated throughout the Annual Meeting including programming, leadership, and speakers. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of five WSN members including three WSN non-student members and two WSN student members. Each representative may serve on the committee for one to three years. Nominations for new representatives shall be solicited from the membership by the DEI Committee; the DEI Committee will then present their recommendations to be ratified by the WSN general membership at the annual Business Meeting. A Committee chairperson shall be appointed by the Committee on a rotating basis for a one year term, with the responsibility of representing the DEI Committee at the annual Business Meeting and in communications with other committees. The DEI Committee may also re-elect the Chairperson for additional terms throughout their service on the Committee.

[Article added 19 Nov 2017, at the 98<sup>th</sup> WSN Annual Meeting, Pasadena, CA]

- Article 13 The Historian shall be elected for the purpose of maintaining the history of the society. The Historian shall be nominated by the President and elected at the annual meeting. There is no term limit for this position.

### **Meetings**

- Article 14 The regular Annual Meeting shall normally be held during the week of the Veteran's Day holiday in November. The program shall normally include contributed papers of general interest to biologists as well as symposia in appropriate areas of biological research.
- Article 15 A Business Meeting shall be part of the Annual Meeting, for the purpose of electing officers, modifying this constitution, receiving the reports of officers, and transacting any society business. Ten percent of the active membership (not counting Emeritus Members) shall constitute a quorum, or, in the event that fewer than ten percent of the membership are present, a two-thirds affirmative vote is required of those present.
- Article 16 Meeting expenses for the following officers shall be paid by the Society: the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Member-at-large.

### **Meeting Code of Conduct**

- Article 17 WSN is committed to creating an environment in which all attendees can participate without harassment, discrimination, or violence of any type. Establishing a Meeting Code of Conduct is intended to prevent such incidents and

maintain a high quality of scientific discourse. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, will develop and maintain a Meeting Code of Conduct to support the Society's goals

[Article added 19 Nov 2017, at the 98<sup>th</sup> WSN Annual Meeting, Pasadena, CA]

### **Dues and Expenses**

- Article 18 The dues of the Society shall be payable in advance. Emeritus members are exempt from dues. Dues are for the membership year, which is the year between annual meetings.
- Article 19 The dues of the Society shall be set at the annual Business Meeting. Change in the amount of dues may be proposed without prior notice by the Treasurer or the Executive Committee. Change in the amount of dues proposed by other members must be announced in advance or have a two-thirds majority vote.
- Article 20 The registration fee for meetings is a service charge and shall be set by the Executive Committee.
- Article 21 A summary of the assets and yearly income and expenses of the Society shall be formally reported to the Executive Committee and the membership at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer's books shall be examined each year at the Annual Meeting by the President-Elect or his/her designee, and one additional member of the Society, who shall be appointed by the President-Elect. This audit of the books must occur before the annual Business Meeting, and the results of the audit shall be reported to those members present at the Business Meeting.

### **Awards**

- Article 22 The Best Student Paper Awards shall be awarded each year. Awards shall be given for best poster and best oral presentation in several different broad topical categories, as determined by the Executive Committee. Winners in those categories shall be chosen by a committee of Best Student Paper Award judges that shall be appointed by the President and the Secretary. Winners of the Best Student Paper Awards shall be provided with a monetary award.
- Article 23 The Mia Tegner Award may be awarded in conjunction with other Best Student Paper Awards given by the Society for an oral presentation broadly defined as fitting within Conservation Biology. The winner shall be selected by a committee comprised of the Best Student Paper Award judges, and shall be the same monetary award as other Best Student Paper Award winners.
- Article 24 The Naturalist of the Year award shall be given each year to a person whose love of nature, teaching, and mentoring are influential in inspiring young people to

become great naturalists and teachers. Nominations for the Naturalist of the Year shall be solicited from the entire membership, and the winner shall be selected by a committee comprised of the winners of that award in the previous three years. The winner of the award shall give a talk during the annual meeting at which the award is presented.

Article 25 The Lifetime Achievement Award may be given to a scientist who has made major, sustained contributions to the field of biological sciences over their career. Nominations for the Lifetime Achievement Award shall be solicited from the entire membership. The Lifetime Achievement Award winner shall be selected by a committee comprised of the prior year's President (the "past-President"), the current President, and the President-Elect.

### **Dissolution of the Society**

Article 26 If at any time the membership of the Society decides that the Society should be dissolved, such a decision should be based upon a two-thirds majority of all active membership then existing, by secret ballot. Any assets remaining after the paying off of any just claims against the society are to be turned over to some other non-profit organization having objectives comparable to those of the Western Society of Naturalists, and organized solely for education and scientific purposes as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.

### **Amendment of the Constitution**

Article 27 This Constitution shall be amended at any annual Business Meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Society present or by two-thirds of the ballots received from members if balloting is done by mail or electronically. Proposed amendments endorsed by five members in good standing, or by the Executive Committee, must be circulated to the membership of the Society at least thirty days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered.

History of Amendments to WSN Constitution since 1999:

Amended 13 November 2010, at 91<sup>st</sup> WSN Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA

Amended 19 November 2017, at the 98<sup>th</sup> WSN Annual Meeting, Pasadena, CA