

Analysis of Changes in Sierra Club Bylaws

From 1892 to 1905

- * Name, place and purpose (I, II, and III from Articles of Incorporation) added to head By-laws.
- * Election to membership changed to be by invitation of Secretary on proposal by an existing member, and 7/9 votes of Board; Admissions Committee discontinued.
- * Formation of Southern California Section authorized; may act independently and provide its own funds, but not take part in management of Club, nor use Club funds unless authorized by Directors.
- * Voting on a question by full membership on written request of 50 members instituted. Board can also order a vote of the membership on any issue.
- * Special meetings of Board now callable not only by President, but also by any 3 Board members.
- * Officers reduced 6 to 4 (Corresponding Secretary and Second VP eliminated).
- * Position of Librarian created.
- * Numbers required for formal actions increased: requests for Board to call special meeting of Club, from 15 to 30; numbers constituting a quorum from 20 to 50; to add name to slate of nominees for Director from 5 to 10; Judges of Election from 3 to 5.
- * Positions of honorary officers and members created (Honorary President, distinguished in mountaineering, exploration or research, and four Honorary VPs by unanimous vote, and honorary (no dues) memberships (limited to 25) via 2/3 vote of Board).
- * President having casting vote no longer mentioned.
- * President no longer required to sign all checks and other financial obligations.
- * Permanent Fund (of which income only is to be spent) is instituted.
- * Board forbidden to subject Club to any liability beyond amount of corporate funds.
- * Position of Secretary described more specifically, including some jobs previously done by Treasurer (dealing with dues, depositing moneys); but no mention of signing checks and other financial obligations.
- * Time-frames lengthened: Nominating Committee to be appointed 5 weeks rather than 2 weeks before elections; slate of nominees for Director to be posted/mailed 2 weeks rather than 48 hours before elections.
- * Number of nominees for Director specified (at 18); as is listing of their names on ballot in alphabetical order.

- * Annual dues dropped from \$5 to \$3.

From 1905 to 1923

- * Number of Directors increased from 9 to 15.
- * Board can amend any By-law except dues by 12/15 votes.
- * Executive Committee of 5 (the 4 officers and another Board member), and a Committee on Legislation added to Standing Committees; Auditing and Local Walks committees dropped; Publications Committee re-named Editorial Board.
- * Membership automatic on application sponsored by a Club member, or accompanied by "written references to Secretary," rejected if written objection from 2 Directors within 60 days.
- * Formation of chapters on application by 50 members and approval of Executive Committee authorized. A proportion of the membership fees generated by new chapters to be retained for use of that chapter, and each chapter to have privilege to nominate candidates for Directors of Club.
- * Further increase in time-frames and numbers: Nominating Committee to be appointed 2 months rather than 5 weeks, slate mailed out 4 weeks rather than 2 weeks before elections; it now takes 5 rather than 3 Board members or the President to call a special meeting of the Board, and Judges of Election are increased from 5 to 9.
- * Annual dues increased from \$3 to \$4.

From 1923 to 1934

- * Executive Committee, separated from standing committees, serves as Committee on Finance, Legislation and Public Relations in addition to acting for Board in emergencies.
- * Membership applications shared with members of Executive Committee of Club as well as secretaries of executive committees of chapters, rejected if written objection from any member within 30 days unless a majority of the Executive Committee of both Club and chapter votes in favor.
- * Under 21 (half rate dues) and patron (donating over \$1,000) memberships created.
- * Chapter organization specified in more detail.
- * Position of Librarian discontinued.
- * Emphasis on reporting reduced: no mention of President's report, Circular Letters to members by Secretary, or publication of Treasurer's report in Bulletin.
- * Directors who miss 2 (from earlier 3) consecutive meetings ineligible for re-election.

- * Discretionary inclusion with ballots of information about nominees instituted.
- * Order of names on ballot changed from alphabetical to decided by lot.
- * Board appointment of alternates to Nominating Committee members and Judges of Election instituted.

From 1934 to 1939

- * Membership applications must be sponsored by 2 Club members of at least a year's standing.
- * Admissions fee of \$1 raised to \$4.
- * Life membership cost raised from \$50 to \$75.
- * Unpaid dues deadline, both for notice of same and cancellation of membership for non-payment, moved back 3 months.

From 1939 to 1941

- * Spouse admitted to full membership by payment of admission fee and yearly dues at half rate, with no receipt of publications or mailings.

From 1941 to 1947

- * Membership Committee, to include chairs of chapter membership committees, instituted.
- * Membership restricted to those over 12, interested in advancing the purposes of the Club as stated in Articles of Incorporation, attested by them in writing at application, personally known to their sponsors who must be over 21, and investigated by membership committee of their chapter.
- * All Board and committee, including Executive Committee, meetings opened to all Club members. Although private sessions can be convened, vote or other final action must be in open session.
- * Board authorized to establish additional Standing Committees and lay down their powers and membership.
- * Procedure for Board's suspension or annulment of a chapter detailed.
- * Chapter by-laws must be approved by the Board to become effective.

- * To add a name to the slate of those nominated for Director to take 50 instead of 10 members.

- * Dues and life membership cost increased.

From 1947 to 1951

- * Purposes revised, broadening Club's concerns from the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast to all the scenic resources of the United States, and emphasizing its educational mission.

- * Description of procedure for nomination and election of Directors simplified.

- * Period of half and no dues for new members adjusted.

From 1951 to 1956

- * Sierra Council formed of one representative from each committee and one appointed by each chapter executive committee, no Director being eligible, with power to make recommendations to Board and committees on any matter affecting the Club.

- * Change in Directors' term of service from 1 to 3 years, with staggered terms.

- * Seven candidates must be available for the 5 Directors to be elected annually.

From 1956 to 1959

- * Membership application needs only one sponsor, investigation of applicant dropped. Time for objection reduced.

- * Board empowered to set admission and life membership fees.

- * Secretary and Treasurer need no longer be chosen from members of Board.

- * Honorary President may be chosen from any field, not only mountaineering, exploration or research, for furthering purposes of Club.

- * Members given choice of what chapter they wish to belong to.

From 1959 to 1968

- * Change in number of signatures required to add a name to the ballot from 50 members to 1 % of the ballots cast at the immediately preceding annual election.

From 1968 to 1971

- * Purposes revised, broadening the Club's mandate to include the entire world and all aspects of man's environment; shifting from exploration, enjoyment, and concern with especial scenic beauty to preservation and restoration of environmental quality and ecosystem integrity; and dropping the literary from among its undertakings.
- * Membership applicants' need for sponsors, waiting period, and rejection if objection abandoned.
- * New categories of membership created (student, junior, senior, special).
- * Directors may serve unlimited number of terms with one year off after every 2 consecutive terms.
- * Sierra Club Council established as policy making committee for amendment of Articles of Incorporation, any change requiring vote in favor by Directors and 2/3 of Council membership.
- * Dues and admission fees set by Board and approved by membership vote, no longer requiring change in Bylaws.

From 1971 to 1975

- * Change in definition of student member abolishes upper age limit.

From 1975 to 1977

- * Admission fee eliminated.
- * Statement from nominees required on ballot.
- * Role of Executive Committee simplified to power of acting for the Board on whatever Board delegates to it.

From 1977 to 1979

- * Change in language describing Board's role to conform to California law to read: "The activities and affairs of the Club shall be conducted and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the Club's Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws." Eliminated detailed description of specific Board duties.

From 1979 to 1981

- * Purposes revised, specifying concern with the human as well as the natural environment; restoring as a purpose the exploration and enjoyment of wild places; adding promotion of responsible use to educational mission; and stating that objectives will be pursued by all lawful means.
- * Position of Executive Director, selected by Board, as general manager and chief executive officer of the Club is established under President and Board's supervision.
- * Number of signatures required to force consideration of a resolution raised.
- * Method of calculating signatures required to nominate a candidate for Director by petition changed (from 1% of ballots cast at last election to 1/20th % of the membership but no fewer than 100 or more than 500).
- * Removal of Director from office by majority rather than 3/4 vote of membership, or by Directors' vote for missing 3 consecutive Board meetings instituted.
- * Specification of several membership classes deleted, left to Board designation.
- * Appointment of alternates to committees and Sierra Club Council authorized.
- * In a number of instances, details considered obsolete, unnecessary, or inappropriate have been deleted, and existing provisions clarified.

From 1981 to 1999

- * Dues for Regular Members to be set by Board and no longer require approval by membership vote.

From 1999 to 2005

- * Requirement for space for write-in candidates on the Club ballot for Directors eliminated.
- * A requirement for one year's continuous Club membership required for candidates for Director.