

CHARTER OF THE INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND AWARENESS WORKING GROUP OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, INC.

Organized: September 18, 2009

Amended and Approved: October 21, 2020

ARTICLE 1. NAME, SCOPE, AND AFFILIATION

Section 1. NAME – The name of this organization shall be the **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness Working Group of The Wildlife Society**, hereinafter referred to as the Working Group.

Section 2. SCOPE – This Working Group shall have as its scope of organization the study and transfer of information relative to the challenges and opportunities of ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion for programs and services of The Wildlife Society. Study will include areas such as recruitment, retention, and career-long mentoring of students, wildlife scientists, and managers from underrepresented groups in natural science professions, such as those based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Working Group will operate in close coordination on these efforts with other Working Groups such as the Student Development, Early Career Professional, Native Peoples' Wildlife Management, and the College and University Education Working Groups. Through its activities, the Working Group will strive to increase awareness of the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion among members of the Society and the profession at large.

Section 3. AFFILIATION – The Working Group shall conform to Bylaws, Code of Ethics, goals, objectives, policies and positions adopted by The Wildlife Society, Inc. (Hereinafter, The Wildlife Society, Inc.¹, may be referred to as The Wildlife Society or the Society)

ARTICLE II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. GOALS – Consistent with the goals of The Wildlife Society, the Working Group's goals are to:

1. Diversify the Society membership through identifying and removing barriers to recruitment, improving mentoring, and increasing member retention.
2. Ensure policies, programs and practices of the Society provide for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

¹ Incorporated in 1948 under the laws of the District of Columbia.

3. Provide information and educate Society members with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.
4. Provide support to chapters, sections, and working groups related to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.
5. Provide programs, events, and activities at the Society's Annual Conference to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Section 2. OBJECTIVES – To aid in the achievement of these goals, this Working Group proposes to:

1. Provide regular communication among members of The Society to improve the recruitment, training, and mentoring of wildlife professionals from underrepresented groups through meetings, symposia, workshops, newsletters, specialty publications, and other means.
2. Promote membership in The Wildlife Society among current and prospective wildlife professionals who are interested in broadening the human diversity of the wildlife profession through recruitment, mentoring, retention, and promotion of wildlife professionals from traditionally underrepresented groups.
3. Make recommendations to The Wildlife Society Council for specific actions by the Society related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., development of mentoring guides, development of recruitment materials, conference activities such as workshops and symposia).
4. Develop or review technical reviews, position statements, and other materials in the area of recruitment and mentoring of professionals from underrepresented groups for consideration by the Society Council.
5. Provide information and technical assistance to Wildlife Society members in the area of recruitment and mentoring of professionals from underrepresented groups.
6. Provide information and technical assistance to TWS organizational units, journalists, government officials, other organizations, and the general public in the area of the need for and methods being employed to achieve diversification of the wildlife profession.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. MEMBER – Membership in the Working Group shall be available to any member of The Wildlife Society with an interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Working Group membership shall be available only to members of The Wildlife Society.

Section 2. CHARTER MEMBER – Members in good standing on the membership rolls as of March 31, 2009 shall be considered charter members.

Section 3. DUES – Annual dues shall be payable by each Working Group member to The Wildlife Society headquarters upon renewal of their membership. Annual dues shall be determined by majority vote of the Working Group members. Members who have not paid their Society dues shall lose their membership in the Working Group. The Society shall retain a minimum of \$1.00 of the dues of each Working Group member to partially defray expenses associated with collecting dues, maintaining membership lists, and other administrative assistance. The remaining portion of each Working Group member’s dues shall be distributed to the Working Group.

ARTICLE IV. ELECTIONS, OFFICERS, AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. NOMINATIONS – The Immediate Past Chair shall convene a three-member Nominating and Elections Committee to nominate a slate of candidates for each of the elective positions, namely: Chair-elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and three additional Board Members from the Working Group membership. When a Chair-elect is appointed (Article IV, Section 7), candidates for Chair also shall be nominated. No member of the Nominating and Elections Committee may themselves be a candidate for elective office.

CLAUSE A. Qualifications – Nominees must consent to becoming a candidate, cannot be a nominee for more than one elective position at a time, and may serve in only one position at a time.

CLAUSE B. Membership Notice and Candidate Submission – The slate of nominees shall be submitted to the membership at least 14 days prior to the start of the voting period. During this period, additional nominees may be added to the slate upon the signed support of six or more Working Group members, subject to Clause A.

CLAUSE C. Uncontested Election – Upon approval of the Executive Board, a slate of one (1) candidate may be submitted to the membership for Chair-Elect or Secretary-Treasurer, or a slate of three (3) candidates for Board Member, if:

1. The Nominating and Elections Committee has contacted at least 10 bona-fide Society Members for additional nominations for elected positions, and all have declined, and
2. No additional nominees are submitted per Clause B.

Candidates for a replacement Chair (Article IV, Section 7) may also be nominated uncontested if the due diligence search described above is followed.

CLAUSE D. Term Limits – For elective positions other than the successional positions of Chair-elect, Chair, and Immediate Past-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer, a Board member may be elected for up to two consecutive terms in the same elective position. There is no term limit for Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 2. BALLOTING – Balloting for elections and special votes shall occur by electronic ballot. Electronic ballots shall generally be accepted for at least 21 days but not less than 14 days and shall be received from the members and counted by the Nominating and Elections Committee.

CLAUSE A. Special Elections – A special election may be called for filling vacant elected positions or to put a vote for other business before Working Group members if due notice is provided as described in Article IV, Section 1, Clause B for filling vacant positions or for at least 14 days for other business. Voting should be open for at least 21 days, but must be open for at least 14 days.

CLAUSE B. Delinquent Membership – Members in arrears shall forfeit their rights to vote during the period of their delinquency.

CLAUSE C. Majority Vote – The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected. Other business and Special votes shall be determined by the majority of votes received unless a different voting requirement is specified at the time voting is initiated. In the event of a tie vote for a candidate or on other business, the Executive Board will cast a ballot vote with a majority determining the outcome.

Section 3. EXECUTIVE BOARD – The Executive Board shall act as the governing body for the Working Group and shall be made up of the Officers and Board Members.

Section 4. OFFICERS – Officers of the Working Group shall consist of a Chair, Chair-elect, immediate Past Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer. Their duties are:

CLAUSE A. Chair – The Chair shall have general supervisory responsibility for the Executive Board; shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Board and membership; shall appoint, with the advice of the Executive Board, chairs of all [standing and special] committees; and shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees, except the Nominating and Elections Committee. The Chair may represent the Working Group or appoint alternate representatives to other Working Group, Chapter, Section, or Society boards, committees, or meetings, including The Wildlife Society Council. The Chair shall be responsible for submitting an annual report of the Working Group's activity to the Society. Upon completion of a full term as Chair, the Chair succeeds to the position of immediate Past Chair.

CLAUSE B. Chair-Elect – The Chair-elect shall assume the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair or upon the inability of the Chair to preside over meetings or conduct normal business, and shall perform any duties assigned by the Chair. Upon completion of a full term as Chair- elect, the Chair-elect succeeds to the position of Chair.

CLAUSE C. Immediate Past Chair – The immediate Past Chair shall perform any duties assigned by the Chair and shall assume the duties of the Chair to preside over meetings or conduct normal business if the Chair-elect cannot fulfill those duties.

CLAUSE D. Secretary-Treasurer – The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the files, records (Article VI, Section 4), and funds of the Working Group. Duties shall include recording the minutes of all membership and Executive Board meetings and issuing copies of the minutes to the Executive Board, members, and Society. Additionally, duties shall include the receipt and disbursement of funds; preparing and submitting an annual fiscal-year (Article VI, Section 2, Clause D) financial report to the Executive Board, members, and Society; and preparing an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board.

Section 5. BOARD MEMBERS – The Board Members shall perform duties assigned by the Chair. In the event that the Immediate Past Chair cannot serve in the Chair's absence, the Executive Board shall appoint a Board Member as Chair, *pro tempore* to preside over meetings or conduct normal business.

Section 6. TERM OF OFFICE – The officers and Board Members serve for approximately 2 years; are inducted at the Annual Meeting; and, unless reelected, terminate their duties at the conclusion of the second Annual Meeting following their induction, or at such time as their successors are elected and installed.

Section 7. VACANCIES – If the office of the Chair is vacated for any reason, the Chair-elect shall assume the duties of Chair for the balance of the unexpired term of the Chair and then may serve their normal term as Chair. The Executive Board shall fill all other vacancies in any unexpired term of an elective office through appointment, although an appointed Chair-elect shall serve only until the next scheduled Working Group election when the membership shall elect the next Chair (Article IV, Section 1). All appointees shall conform to the criteria for nominees found in Article IV, Section 1, Clause A and D. In the event of three (3) or more concurrent appointments, a special election shall be held to fill vacant elected positions unless it is 6 months or less until the next scheduled election.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – Membership meetings shall be held at such times and places as determined and published by the Executive Board.

CLAUSE A. Annual Member's Meeting – The membership meeting held at or around the time of the Society's Annual Conference shall be known as the Annual Meeting of the Working Group and shall be for the purposes of electing and/or inducting Officers, receiving reports of Officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.

CLAUSE B. Due Notice – Members must be notified at least 30 days prior to meetings.

CLAUSE C. Quorum– Quorum for meetings shall be 25 percent of the membership or 15 members in good standing, whichever is less.

CLAUSE D. Meeting Rules – Order of business and parliamentary procedures at meetings shall follow *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures*, latest edition or procedures adopted in the Working Group Operations Manual.

CLAUSE E. Charter – The Working Group charter shall be available for inspection during every meeting.

CLAUSE F. Attendance – Member’s Meetings are open to all Working Group members, any attendees of the Society’s Annual Conference, or invited guests. All attendees may participate in discussion upon recognition by the Working Group Chair or Executive Board, but only Working Group members may participate in voting.

Section 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS – Executive Board meetings shall be held at such times and places as determined and published by the Executive Board.

CLAUSE A. Frequency – The Executive Board shall meet at least once a year, generally in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Working Group. The Executive Board may also meet as many additional times as necessary to conduct the business of the Working Group and may conduct business in person or by telephone or electronically provided all Board Members may participate fully in all discussions.

CLAUSE B. Due Notice – Members of the Executive Board must be notified at least 5 days prior to board meetings.

CLAUSE C. Quorum – Quorum for meetings of the Executive Board shall be 4 members of the Executive Board.

CLAUSE D. Meeting Rules – Order of business and parliamentary procedures at meetings shall follow *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures*, latest edition or procedures adopted in the Working Group Operations Manual.

CLAUSE E. Charter – The Working Group charter shall be available for inspection during all Executive Board meetings.

CLAUSE F. Attendance –Working Group members and guests may be invited to attend Executive Board meetings outside of executive session and may participate in discussions upon recognition by the meeting Chair, but they may not vote at such meetings.

ARTICLE VI. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

Section 1. EXECUTIVE BOARD – The Executive Board (Article IV, Section 5) shall govern the Working Group. The Executive Board shall conduct its affairs in conformance with the provisions of this charter, and the Bylaws of the Society. The Board is authorized to act for the Working Group between membership meetings and shall report its interim actions to the members at each succeeding membership meeting or through other communications. Any action of the Executive Board may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the members attending a membership meeting.

Section 2. FINANCES – Funds of the Working Group shall be under the supervision of the Executive Board and shall be handled by the Treasurer. The financial records of the Working Group shall be periodically examined by the Audit Committee (Article VII, Section 2, Clause E).

CLAUSE A. Liability – The Treasurer need not be bonded.

CLAUSE B. Source of Funds – Funds shall be derived from dues, meeting fees, special activities, contributions, and other sources.

CLAUSE C. Handling of Funds – Funds shall be placed in a federally-insured bank or savings and loan association, or other money management instrument/institution approved by the Executive Board.

CLAUSE D. Fiscal Year – The Working Group operating and fiscal year shall begin January 1.

Section 3. REPORTS – Within 21 days of an election or other official action of the Working Group, the Secretary shall report such action to the Society's headquarters. The following annual reports also shall be submitted to the Society: activity (Article IV, Section 4, Clause A) and calendar year financial (Article IV, Section 4, Clause D). If the Working Group obtains its Employer ID Number through The Wildlife Society, the Working Group shall also submit required IRS forms to the IRS and the IRS confirmation receipt to The Wildlife Society; the Working Group may contact The Wildlife Society to determine the appropriate form to submit for IRS reporting purposes.

Section 4. FILES – The Working Group shall maintain files containing: Bylaws of The Wildlife Society, Charter of the Working Group, minutes of all meetings of the membership and of the Executive Board, financial statements and records, correspondence pertinent to Working Group affairs, all committee reports, list of charter members, and all other material designated as pertinent by the Executive Board. A Working Group Operations Manual shall be maintained by the Executive Board and copies of the Charter and Operations Manual will be made available to all incoming Officers and Board Members.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. APPOINTMENTS – The Working Group Chair shall appoint chairs for all standing and special committees. Committee chairs shall complete their committees with the assistance of the Working Group Chair.

Section 2. STANDING COMMITTEES – Major duties are outlined below. Additional duties may be provided in the Operations Manual or annual charges to the committee by the Working Group Chair.

CLAUSE A. Nominating and Elections – See Article IV, Section 1.

CLAUSE B. Diversity Award – This committee shall work to solicit nominees for the TWS Diversity Award. The award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding efforts in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the natural resources professions, especially wildlife conservation and education. After considering all nominations received, the committee votes to determine the recipient of the current year's award. The committee chair provides the committee's recommendation to Council for their approval and supplies a summary of the recipient's achievements in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the natural resource professions. Unsuccessful nominations are retained for consideration for one year. The committee will adhere to the TWS Guide to Awards Procedures.

CLAUSE C. Membership and Outreach – This committee shall work to promote membership in the Working Group to all members of the Society and other wildlife professionals interested in the goals and objectives of the Society and the Working Group.

CLAUSE D. Annual Meeting Technical Session – When desired by the Executive Board, this committee shall be appointed to work with the Society's Annual Meeting Program Committee to develop a technical session, workshop, or other activities of diversity-building for the Society's Annual Meeting.

CLAUSE E. Communications – This committee shall facilitate communication among the Working Group's membership and TWS units through a variety of means such as newsletters, meeting announcements, websites, social media platforms, electronic mail, or other means. This committee also may provide information to Sections and Chapters, journalists, government officials, other organizations, and the general public in the area of the recruitment, mentoring, and retention of professionals from underrepresented groups.

CLAUSE F. Audit – This committee shall review the financial records and support documents maintained by the Treasurer at least annually to ensure that the Working Group's funds are being managed in a fiscally responsible manner and to make recommendations for procedural changes to the Executive Board, where appropriate.

Section 3. SPECIAL COMMITTEES – The Working Group Chair shall appoint any special committees necessary to accomplish the Working Group’s goals and objectives.

Section 4. ACCOUNTABILITY – All committees shall be accountable to the Executive Board and under general supervision of the Working Group Chair.

Section 5. TENURE – All committees shall serve until new committees are appointed in their stead or until the duties assigned to the committee have been discharged.

ARTICLE VIII. TECHNICAL REVIEWS, POSITION STATEMENTS, AND RESOLUTIONS

Section 1. GUIDELINES – At the request of the Society Council, the Working Group may develop draft technical reviews and draft position statements on issues within the area of the diversity, equity, and inclusion related to professionals or the Society for approval by the Society Council as the official position of The Wildlife Society. After consultation with the Society, the Working Group also may initiate draft technical reviews and draft position statements on issues within the area of the diversity, equity, and inclusion for approval by the Society Council as the official position of The Wildlife Society. The Working Group may develop resolutions on issues within the area of the diversity, equity, and inclusion for issuance as the official policy of the Working Group when: 1) the content of the resolution falls within established policy of the Society, or 2) in the absence of existing policy by the Society. The Working Group shall consult with The Wildlife Society before issuing resolutions to ensure that they are not in conflict with Society policy. A copy of all Working Group resolutions shall be sent to The Wildlife Society within 21 days of approval by the Working Group. All draft technical reviews, draft position statements, and resolutions shall follow the Society’s “Policy Guidelines” (<http://wildlife.org/network/tws-local/annual-reporting/>). TWS Council must approve all position statements developed by Working Groups prior to their final adoption by the Working Group.

Section 2. PROCEDURES – Proposed technical reviews, position statements, and resolutions may be drafted by a special committee or individual member for consideration by the Executive Board. If approved by the Board, the statement is then submitted to the membership for a vote. Approval by a majority of the membership voting is required before the statement can be forwarded to the Society Council for approval or issued as a Working Group resolution.

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. STANDARDS TO CONTINUE – The Working Group must continue to demonstrate its viability to the Society’s Council by meeting the following requirements: 1) filing the required annual reports (Article VI, Section 3), 2) maintaining at least 50 members, and 3) fulfilling the purposes of this charter.

Section 2. DISSOLUTION – The Society Council may dissolve the Working Group, following a 1 year grace period during which time the Working Group can come back into compliance, if (1) it finds the Working Group is unable to meet the standards established in Section 1 of this Article or (2) if the Working Group fails to file the required IRS reports, as set out in Article VI, Section 3, for 3 consecutive years. Upon dissolution of the Working Group, its Executive Board shall transfer all assets, accrued income, and other properties to The Wildlife Society. Said assets shall be held by the Society for five years from the date of dissolution for possible redistribution to another Working Group that may form to replace it. If another Working Group emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion is not established within the five-year period, the Society may use or distribute all assets, accrued income, and other properties in any manner consistent with Society bylaws.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENT TO CHARTER

Section 1. PROCEDURE – This charter may be altered or amended by a majority of the Working Group members voting by mail, e-mail, or electronic ballot provided due notice of the proposed changes (Article V, Section 1, Clause B) has been provided.

Section 2. CONFORMANCE – No amendment to this charter shall be enacted that results in a conflict with The Wildlife Society Bylaws. Amendments to this charter that are approved by the Working Group’s membership, as defined in Section 1 of this Article, do not become effective until approved by the Society.

Charter History

Approved: 9/182009: Working Group approved by TWS Council

Amended: 10/21/2020: Approved by membership 10/01/2020. Changed the name from Ethnic and Gender Diversity to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness; clarified scope and goals; broadened emphasis to diversity, equity, and inclusion; added provision for uncontested election and special elections; removed term limit for Secretary/Treasurer; shortened due notice due to electronic communications; specified use of Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures; established an Operations Manual; various other edits for clarification.