

How to Start a CNPS Chapter

The following information is based on Article F of the Bylaws. Refer to Sections 1-4. Persons wishing to organize a new chapter of CNPS should follow the guidelines set forth below.:

Organization. A minimum of fifteen members is required to start a chapter of CNPS. Experience has shown, however, that a base of at least 25 members is advisable. The approval and endorsement of nearby chapters should be sought. Any CNPS members in the geographical area to be covered by the new chapter should be contacted and asked whether they would choose to affiliate with the new chapter. The mailing can be arranged through the CNPS office to cover the relevant zip codes. The CNPS mailing label should be sent back with the response.

At a formal organizational meeting, members should elect officers and choose a name for the chapter. A president, vice president and secretary/treasurer are the minimum officers required. Most chapters use more officers to handle specific functions. The CNPS Directory chapter listings can help in determining what may be needed for your group.

Chapters are not required to have formal bylaws. As chapters become large and more active, however, most find them useful. Chapter bylaws must be consistent with the Society Bylaws. Some chapters prefer to prepare standing rules in place of more formal bylaws.

Petition for Acceptance. Chapter organizers must submit a written request for admission as a chapter to the CNPS State Board of Directors. A copy should also be submitted to the CNPS office. The request must be accompanied by the following:

The name of the chapter and area it proposes to represent.

Names, addresses and telephone numbers of all chapter officers, including the name of the person to whom membership information is to be sent.

A list of all members choosing to be affiliated with the proposed chapter. This list must include names, addresses and zip codes. Applications and payments for members new to CNPS may be submitted at this time.

The petition for chapter status must be voted on by the Board. Chapters are expected to abide by the rules outlined below.

When a new chapter has been formally accepted, it may submit an application for \$100 "start-up" advance on dues subventions.

Formal Requirements of Chapters

The CNPS Bylaws, Article F, state each chapter must:

a) Establish a democratic election process under which each member allotted to such chapter shall have the opportunity, not less frequently than every two years, to cast a

vote for the selection of each chapter officer subject to election; and

b) Maintain and submit to the state Treasurer statements covering all transactions necessary to establish CNPS responsibility for California sales taxes and all other reports required by the Finance Committee.

A chapter is required to hold six (6) meetings a year. Field trips count as meetings but chapters usually find they need several other meetings a year to conduct business, attract attention to the work of the chapter, and keep members interested in maintaining an active chapter.

Inactive status.

If at any time a chapter finds that it is not able to remain active, it should notify the Chair of the Chapter Council. The Chapter Council Chair will assist members who may wish to be reassigned to other chapters. Section F-2 of the Bylaws clarifies and makes explicit the procedures for handling a chapter's obligations and assets during and after the transition to inactive status.

Chapter monies, financial records, important files, supplies, or other property should be sent to the state office. Consult with Chapter Council Chair as necessary. Reactivation of a chapter is similar to the procedures for starting a new chapter.

Sub-chapters

People living in an outlying area of an existing chapter's boundaries may want to consider organizing a sub-chapter that temporarily affiliates with an existing chapter. By maintaining a chapter affiliation, the newly organized group can apply all its energy and interest to outreach activities such as local field trips, meetings, programs, horticultural projects or conservation issues. The parent chapter supports the new group by providing space in its newsletter, and an already functioning structure to relay information and supplies between members and the state office. Full chapter status may follow when a sub-chapter gains sufficient support of enough active members to carry out a full array of chapter responsibilities and programs.

Chapter Organization and Function

Each chapter is represented at quarterly meetings of the Chapter Council by its president or assigned delegate. These meetings provide an opportunity for attendees to discuss matters of particular interest to chapters and to share ideas and information. Chapter presidents are encouraged to bring local concerns to the attention of the statewide organization during Chapter Council meetings.

Chapter officers may carry a variety of responsibilities, some of which may be specific to the needs of a particular chapter. Typical chapter positions include:

President

Plant Sale

Vice President
Recording Secretary
 Membership
Conservation
 Invasive Exotics
 Rare Plants
Past President
Field Trips
Legislation
Member at Large

Hospitality
Treasurer
 Poster and Book Sales
Newsletter
 Programs