

The Green Party of Lake County Bylaws

These by laws were adopted by the Green Party of Lake County May 2013

Article I: Name

The name of this organization is the Green Party of Lake County, otherwise known as the Green Party of Lake County or GPLC.

Article II: Mission & Purpose

Section 1 – Mission

The mission of the Green Party of Lake County shall be to promote the Ten Key Values of the Green Party of California in Lake County. The Ten Key Values are:

- Ecological Wisdom
- Grassroots Democracy
- Social Justice
- Nonviolence
- Decentralization
- Community-Based Economy
- Feminism
- Respect for Diversity
- Future Focus/Sustainability
- Personal & Global Responsibility

Section 2 – Purpose

2-2.1 These bylaws shall govern the organization, operation, and functions of the Green Party of Lake County.

2-3.2 The County Council shall administer the Green Party of Lake County according to these bylaws. In the event of an omission or ambiguity in these bylaws, the GPLC shall look to the bylaws of the Green Party of California for guidance.

Article III: Organizational Structure

Section 1 – GPLC Membership

3-1.1 Membership is open to any person registered to vote in the Green Party of Lake County.

3-1.2 Persons who are not eligible to vote, but are helping to carry out the mission of the Green Party of Lake County, may participate in the functions of the GPLC as long as they are residents of Lake County

3-1.3 Because of the rural nature of our community and the importance of bioregionalism, the GPLC will sometimes allow for exceptions to the above rules for Membership. Individuals who live in neighboring communities and wish to work with the GPLC shall also be allowed to act as Members of the GPLC with all of the rights and responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws.

3-1.4 Members may serve on committees, participate in the decision-making process as described in these Bylaws, participate in any actions agreed upon at meetings, approve and amend the Bylaws of the GPLC, run for County Council or other offices (if they are registered), remove Council members according to procedures in these Bylaws, and serve as delegates to state meetings as defined in these Bylaws.

3-1.5 Members are not empowered to represent the GPLC Green Party (e.g., act as spokesperson) without the consent of the General Assembly.

Section 2 – General Assembly (GA)

3-2.1 General Assembly Mission & Purpose

The GA is the highest authority of the GPLC. The GA is responsible for setting the priorities, goals and strategies of the Green Party of Lake County and providing an open forum where GPLC members can come together and decide how the Party will operate and what it shall do. General Assemblies shall meet monthly, in conjunction with County Council meetings, and these meetings shall be open to the public.

3-2.2 General Assembly Membership

All members of the GPLC are welcome to participate in the meetings of the GA.

3-2.3 General Assembly Duties & Authority

- a. The GA is responsible for setting the overall agenda of the GPLC and for instructing the County Council.
- b. The GA is responsible for certifying newly formed Locals.
- c. The GA is responsible for appointing delegates to represent Lake County at the General Assembly of the Green Party of California (GPCA) meetings.
 - Every effort should be made to assure a gender balance in the choice of these delegates.
 - The elected Delegate(s) shall notify the GPCA Coordinating Committee of their appointment within five (5) days.
 - The GA of the GPLC may mandate its delegate(s) to cast votes for or against action items on the agenda of the GPCA General Assembly.
 - The delegates may not cast votes in opposition to the explicit will of the GA of the GPLC. In the event of mandating opposition to a particular agenda item, the GA of the GPLC shall specify concerns with said item and provide proponents with the opportunity to address its concerns, in which case the Delegate may be released from that particular mandate.
- d. In order to carry out the work of the GPLC, the GA may create or dissolve committees and affirm committees created by the CC. All members of the GPLC are eligible to participate in these committees.
- e. The GA has the authority to require someone to leave if they are disrupting the meeting.

3-2.4 General Assembly Meetings

- a. Agendas
 - Ratification of the proposed agenda will be approved at the beginning of the meeting.
 - Agenda items may be added at the GA meeting with approval of the GA at the beginning of the meeting.
 - The agenda package will include written drafts of all proposals. Any item not on the agenda must be in written form and provided to the GA.
- b. All meetings shall be handicapped accessible.

c. If requested at least seven days before any GA, the CC shall coordinate cooperative childcare for the duration of the meeting.

d. Date and location for the next GA meeting will be scheduled by the members present at the end of each meeting. Effort will be made to follow a regular monthly schedule.

3-2.5 General Assembly Quorum

a. A quorum will exist for the purpose of both opening a meeting and making decisions when at least 4 GPLC members are present.

b. If there are ever fewer than 4 GPLC members present, including at least 50 percent of the CC, quorum shall no longer be recognized and decisions cannot be made.

3-2.6 General Assembly Decision Making

a. All members, and observers when time permits, may participate in the decision making process. In the event that a vote is necessary to make a decision, only members may participate.

b. If a member cannot attend a meeting, s/he can send a written statement to be read by another member if the subject is on that meeting's agenda.

c. Consensus is a process of decision-making in which all legitimate concerns of group members are addressed to the satisfaction of the group. A proposal is a positive statement of a possible action for a group to take. A concern is a statement of how the proposal as stated might conflict with the group's stated purpose or shared values. Concerns are resolved as the proposal is explained or changed to address them. Decisions of the GA shall be made using the consensus-seeking process as follows:

1. Consensus is sought after adequate discussion, including the repeated asking for and discussion of any unresolved concerns, within the time and content limits of the agenda.

2. Any stand-asides will be recorded.

3. In calling for a consensus, any unresolved concerns will be recorded, and those unresolved concerns will signal a move to a vote.

4. Voting will be on the basis of a two-thirds majority for business and procedural questions and an 80% majority to amend, repeal, or replace bylaws and to make policy decisions. If there is a question as to which voting count to use, the higher percentage will be used.

See Addendum for more a detailed summary of the Consensus-Seeking Process.

3-2.7 General Assembly Endorsements

a. The GA may endorse candidates for public office or take positions for or against initiatives, referendums, and recalls on the behalf of the GPLC.

b. Preference should be given to candidates who are registered with the Green Party and no candidate for partisan office from another Party shall be endorsed if a Green candidate is in the race.

Section 3 – County Council (CC)

3-3.1 County Council Mission & Purpose

a. The CC is the elected representative body of the GPLC and is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the GA.

b. The CC shall fill the roll served by the “County Central Committee” pursuant to Division 7 of the Elections Code.

3-3.2 County Council Membership

a. The number of CC seats elected by the voters is determined by the Secretary of State and the Lake County Registrar of Voters before each primary election.

b. The California Elections Code gives the “Central Committee” the authority to elect additional members to the CC. The GPLC grants this authority to the GA.

c. The minimum number of CC members shall be seven (7). In the case of a vacancy, the GA shall fill that seat until the next primary election.

d. The maximum number of CC members shall be twelve (12) plus one delegate from each recognized Local.

e. A CC member automatically resigns in the event that:

- The member moves out of the County.
- The member registers with another political Party (whether qualified or not).
- The member misses three consecutive meetings, without appointing a proxy.

3-3.3 County Council Duties & Authority

a. The CC is responsible for carrying out the duties and obligations of the “Central Committee” as defined by the California Elections Code.

b. The CC is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the GA, including coordinating meetings, internal communications, publicizing meetings and events and other administrative tasks.

c. The CC may create or dissolve committees to carry out the work of the GPLC. These committees must be affirmed by the next GA meeting following formation. All members of the GPLC are eligible to participate in these committees.

d. The CC shall solicit ideas for items and proposals from the general membership and Locals. The CC is responsible for creating the agenda and choosing facilitator(s) for each GA.

e. The Chair or a designee will distribute a draft agenda to the Locals at least two weeks before the General Assembly to allow time for feedback. The CC will strive to post a draft agenda for all meetings at least seven days in advance of the meeting on the GPLC website.

f. The CC is responsible for publicizing the GA through newspapers and public calendars.

3-3.4 County Council Meetings

a. The County Council shall meet monthly in conjunction with the General Assembly. The County Council may meet more frequently if necessary to carry out the business of the General Assembly. When the CC meets in conjunction with the GA, the rules for the GA shall apply.

b. Quorum

- A quorum will exist for the purpose of both opening a meeting and making decisions when a majority of seated CC members are present, either in person or through a real-time communication device.
- If there are ever fewer than a majority of seated CC members present, a quorum shall no longer be recognized and decisions cannot be made.

c. Decision Making

- Only seated CC members may hold “unresolved concerns” and participate in any vote, should one become necessary.
- CC members shall receive priority in discussions. At the discretion of the facilitator(s), and time permitting, non-CC members may participate in these discussions.
- A CC member may appoint a proxy in his/her absence. The proxy shall have the right to hold an “unresolved concern” or cast a vote should one become necessary with the written authorization of the CC member he/she is representing.
- Decisions of the CC of the GPLC shall be made using the consensus-seeking process as follows:

1. Consensus is sought after adequate discussion, including the repeated asking for and discussion of any unresolved concerns, within the time and content limits of the agenda.

2. Any stand-asides will be recorded.

3. In calling for a consensus, any unresolved concerns will be recorded, and those unresolved concerns will signal a move to a vote.

4. Voting will be on the basis of a two-thirds majority for business and procedural questions and an 80% majority to amend, repeal, or replace bylaws and to make policy decisions. If there is a question as to which voting count to use, the higher percentage will be used.

See Addendum for more a detailed summary of the Consensus-Seeking Process.

3-3.5 County Council Officers

The CC shall be responsible for electing the following officers from among its members:

1. Chair. The duties and authorities of the chair are as follows:

- The Chair will have no independent decision-making authority.
- Create the agenda for CC meetings with input from the rest of the Council and bringing copies for everyone at the meeting.
- Serve as facilitator at CC meetings or appoint another person to serve as facilitator.
- Act as the sole liaison between the Green Party of Lake County and the County Clerk and the California Coordinating Committee.
- Serve as the spokesperson for the Green Party of Lake County.
- The Chair or the Treasurer will sign all checks for the Green Party of Lake account.
- The out-going Chair shall notify the County Clerk of the name, post office address, and daytime telephone number of the newly elected Chair within five days of her/his election as Chair.
- At the request of the Chair, the CC can decide to appoint Co-Chairs (2) to share these responsibilities.

1. Treasurer. The duties and authorities of the Treasurer are as follows:

- Provide the CC with written financial reports for the month proceeding each meeting.
- File all required reports with the Treasurer of the Green Party of California.
- Be responsible for fulfilling all the requirements of the Political Reform Act and the Fair Political Practices Commission.

1. Secretary. The duties and authorities of the Secretary are as follows:

- Take written minutes of CC and GA meetings.
- Minutes will be posted on the website within seven (7) days of the meetings and copies shall be brought to each meeting for participants.

The terms of these officers shall be two years. In the event of the incapacity, resignation or recall of one of these officers, the CC shall elect a new person to fill the position.

3-3.6 Recall of County Council Members.

Any County Council member may be removed by the membership. A proposal to this effect, signed by 20 GPLC members and outlining how the CC member violated these Bylaws, must be

brought before the GA and the Consensus–Seeking Process [described in the Addendum] will be used.

Section 4 – Locals

3–4.1 Mission & Purpose of Locals

Locals represent the registered Green Party voters in a designated neighborhood or geographic area partially or completely within Humboldt County. They are charged with fostering community empowerment and Green Party growth within their self–defined geographic areas. Locals must be certified by the GA.

3–4.2 Membership of Locals

All members of the GPLC who live in the geographic area of a designated Local are welcome to participate in the meetings of Locals.

3–4.3 Duties & Authority of Locals

- a. Locals are expected to hold at least six (6) meetings each calendar year with at least seven (7) days advance notice on their website or the website of the GPLC. All meetings of Locals shall be open to the public.
- b. Locals shall elect a Chair, Vice–Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, and they may elect a delegate to represent them on the CC.
- c. Locals shall adopt bylaws in accordance with the bylaws of the Green Party of CA and the bylaws of the GPLC that include a description of the Area represented by the Local. Local bylaws must include democratic rules and procedures concerning how to raise and spend money, how internal “consensus seeking process” will be conducted, and how elections will be conducted for the Offices of Local Delegate to the CC, Chair, Vice–Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, as well as other offices or appointees.
- d. Locals shall make their bylaws publicly available as well as the minutes of its proceedings and all rules, policies and procedures.

e. Local Delegates to the CC shall inform the CC of all decisions reached by the Local and the results of any votes in a report at each CC meeting.

3-4.4 Certification of Locals

a. The GA may certify Locals when presented with a Request for Certification signed by at least six (6) members of a Local. The Request must also include Local bylaws, a list of members, a list of all officers and appointees, and minutes of the founding meeting, as well as all subsequent meetings.

b. The election of a Local Delegate to the CC shall be ratified by the GA prior to taking effect. Local Delegates shall be subject to the provisions applied to all CC members.

c. Newly-forming or existing but uncertified Locals may be granted provisional certification by the CC for the purposes of allowing the use of GPLC resources to hold a founding meeting with the intent of obtaining certification. Provisional certifications do not include the right to seat a Local Delegate on the CC and shall expire at the discretion of the CC or automatically if certification is not granted at the next meeting of the GA.

d. Certification shall lapse if the GA decides that a Local has failed to remain active or meet all the requirements of Local or GPLC bylaws. Lapsed certification will result in the automatic removal of that Local Delegate from the CC and withdrawal of all other authority and resources granted to certified Locals.

e. A Local wishing to appeal decertification must reapply to the GA.

Section 5 – Elections

3-5.7 In the event that the GPLC has the need to elect someone to a position within the GPLC (an officer, CC seat, etc) or to choose the Party endorsement for a seat with multiple candidates, the election process shall be as follows:

1. Nominations shall be requested from the floor. Only members may make or second nominations. Members may nominate or second themselves.

2. In any election where the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled, the Threshold Voting System shall be used, as described in Section 3–5.2.

3. In any election where the number of candidates exceeds the number of seats to be filled, the Preference Voting System shall be used as described in Section 3–5.3.

4. Before any election may proceed, the facilitator must determine the total number of authorized voters present. This is necessary to calculate "abstained" votes. The number of "abstained" votes is equal to the total number of authorized voters minus the sum of the "yes" and "no" votes submitted for a candidate.

3–5.2 Threshold Voting System

Each authorized voter submits a ballot with all the candidates listed and the vote: "yes", "no", or "abstain" to be recorded for each. Election requires majority approval $\frac{1}{2}$ plus one (simple majority) of members present, not including abstentions.

3–5.3 Preference Voting System

Each authorized voter submits a ballot with all the candidates listed and the preference vote to be recorded for each. A preference vote may consist of either an "abstention" or a preference number from "1" to the total number of candidates, where a preference of "1" represents the member's first preference. The election is then conducted as follows:

1. The abstentions are first used to eliminate candidates not meeting the minimum threshold of non-abstention votes: 1 divided by the number of seats.

2. The preference votes are then used to eliminate the low preference candidates. The ballots are sorted by the first-preference votes. The candidate with the least number of first preference votes is eliminated, and those ballots are transferred to the candidate listed as the next preference. This process is repeated until the number of remaining candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled.

3. If while transferring ballots, the candidate listed as the next preference has already been eliminated, then the ballot shall be transferred to the most-preferred choice among those not yet eliminated.

4. If while transferring ballots, all candidates listed on a ballot have been eliminated, the ballot is set aside.

5. In the event of a tie, either for a winning position, or in determining the "last" position for ballot transferal, the candidate with the most first-preference votes shall prevail. If still a tie, then the second-preference votes are used, then the third-preference votes, and so on.

Article IV: Amendments of the Bylaws

Section 1. Authority

The GA shall possess the sole authority to amend these bylaws.

Section 2. Process

Amendments may be proposed by any member of the GPLC or by the CC in a written proposal at a GA meeting.

Article V: Anti-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with the 10-Key Values the GPLC shall not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, physical ability, or income. It is the responsibility of the CC to insure that this policy is carried out.

ADDENDUM: Consensus-Seeking Process

A proposal may be presented to the CC for inclusion on the agenda of a GA, or it may grow naturally out of a meeting discussion. Either way, the proposal presenter provides a brief statement on the proposal, giving a written copy, if available, to the note taker. The facilitator determines if a quorum exists. If one does, the consensus-seeking process begins:

1. The presenter answers "clarifying questions" from members.
2. The facilitator checks for affirmations and concerns.
3. Concerns are listed by a scribe where all can see them.
4. The facilitator gets a feel for the group's assessment of the proposal.

5. The group seeks to resolve those concerns deemed legitimate by incorporating them into the proposal. The presenter must agree to modifications before they can be made. The note taker reads back any modifications to be sure they are properly recorded.

6. The facilitator asks if there remain any unresolved concerns:

a. If there are no remaining concerns, the proposal is adopted with a plan for implementation.

b. If concerns remain, go to the next level for resolution.

7. The facilitator asks those holding concerns if they are willing to allow the group to adopt the proposal without their approval with their unresolved concerns being listed with the plan for implementation:

a. If those holding such concerns are agreeable, these "stand aside" concerns are recorded by the note taker and included in the minutes with the adopted proposal.

b. If someone holding a concern is unwilling to stand aside, go to the next level for resolution.

8. The facilitator addresses the remaining concerns one at a time as follows:

a. The concern is restated.

b. Questions clarify the concern.

c. Discussion focuses on the single concern.

9. The facilitator asks if all concerns are resolved:

a. If yes, the proposal is adopted.

b. If no, the facilitator asks for stand asides.

c. If a concern remains and the person is unwilling to stand aside, go to the closing options.

If time is being kept, the timekeeper will notify the facilitator when three minutes remain in the time allotted for the proposal. At this point, the presenter will decide on a closing option.

10. Closing options are the prerogative of the proposal presenter:

- a. Send or return the proposal to a committee for further refinement and an attempt to resolve the concerns raised.
- b. Request additional agenda time in the meeting to reach a resolution of any remaining concerns.
- c. Request that the membership use the voting option.
- d. Withdraw the proposal.

Requests for additional agenda time for an item will include a specific number of minutes and whether the time will be added to the length of the meeting or if it will come from some other item. An 80% vote of the membership is necessary to approve the request for more time.

11. When the closing option of voting is selected by the presenter of the proposal, the facilitator will proceed with the following steps:

- a. The note taker will be asked to read the proposal as it stands.
- b. The total "yes," "no" and "abstaining" votes of the active members shall be recorded and included in the meeting minutes.
- c. Two-thirds is necessary to approve a business item; 80% is necessary to approve a policy item; if uncertain, 80% is required. Abstentions are not counted in calculating the percentage vote; however, if 20% or more of those voting abstain, the proposal fails.

12. **Points of Order:** At any point in the discussion any member may signal the facilitator by raising two hands if s/he:

- a. believes a violation of this procedure has taken place (POINT OF PROCESS)
- b. does not understand the procedure (POINT OF CLARIFICATION)
- c. has knowledge of an item of information that is important to the discussion (POINT OF INFORMATION).

Functionaries To Assist Group Process During Meetings:

Facilitator(s): Provides non-directive leadership; assists process clarity; honors agenda contract; promotes good will. A facilitator does not give personal opinions unless s/he clearly relinquishes role and speaks as an individual. Gender balance between co-facilitators is desired.

Time Keeper: Keeps group aware of time status when it is important.

Note Taker: Records minutes of meeting, highlighting decisions made and tasks taken on by the members. The note taker shall receive copies of all proposals brought before the membership. These will be included in the record as received and as amended during the session with notation as to disposition of the proposal.

Scribe: Records on board or piece of paper concerns or items of discussion that come out at meeting.

Vibes Watcher: Keeps emotional level of meeting on even keel; role may be filled by an individual or the whole group.