

A Guide to Starting and Running a SCB Chapter

Fiona Nagle, Editor**

With thanks to Paul Beier, Lisa Delissio, Cristian Olivo (Chapters Committee 2005); Adena Rissman (Berkeley Chapter), Alejandra Domic (Bolivia Chapter), Ingrid Hogle (Davis Chapter), Brenda Saunders (Kingston Chapter), Kelly Paulson (Minnesota Chapter), Tracy Rittenhouse (Missouri Chapter), Susan Hall and Carissa Wong (Toronto Chapter); Alan Thornhill, Kathryn Powers (SCB Executive Office); and all those who took the time to answer the Chapter survey of Spring 2004. Updates provided by Fiona Nagle in May 2007 and July 2011.

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SECTION I: WHAT IS A CHAPTER?

Chapters are affiliates of SCB that serve an area such as a university, town, region, state, ecoregion, country, or several small countries. The purpose of Chapters is to provide a way for SCB members (and others) in local areas to organize and network around the mission of the Society. Chapters are a way of “acting locally” while the parent society is a way of “thinking globally.”

Chapters provide a number of great benefits to members and conservation, such as: a professional resource for finding jobs, funding, and projects; facilitation of continuing education lectures or classes; support for community and regional conservation projects and education; avenues for public and political advocacy for conservation; opportunities for members to share local information and resources; and moral and social support for professionals and students.

Since SCB started chartering Chapters in 1993, many Chapters have formed. Most have been in North America but numbers have been growing across the globe since 2005. A current list of Chapters can be found in the directory on the SCB website (<http://www.conbio.org/Chapters>). Initially, Chapters focused primarily on students (grads and undergrads) and their needs. More recently, many Chapters have broadened their scope to include professional members and to undertake a wider variety of activities tailored to their individual members needs and interests. As of 2011, roughly 1/3 of Chapters were comprised of mostly students, 1/3 of mostly professional members, and 1/3 with a mix of students and professionals. They collectively served 500 SCB members and 1000 more community members.

With the development of the SCB Executive Office (EO) in October 2001 and the formation of the Chapters Committee in July 2003, Chapters gained access to new resources and are now more integrated into the society as a whole. The committee’s mission is to support, facilitate, and advocate Chapter growth, inter-Chapter communication, and increased support for Chapters from SCB’s executive office, the parent Society, and regional Sections. The Committee helps Chapters establish and grow, exchange ideas and information, become more visible within SCB, and facilitate a worldwide network of Chapters.

SECTION II: HOW TO FORM A CHAPTER

The process of forming a Chapter can take up to a year of concentrated effort, and is best tackled by a core group of about five people (although as few as two have been known to successfully initiate a Chapter).

1) Form a Game Plan This is your strategy for forming your Chapter. This can include a timeline, list of potential resources, a preliminary focus and structure of the Chapter, and an outline for the first meeting.

- a) Review structure, activities, and mission statement of active Chapters by visiting their websites. Download the templates for the Chapter agreement, bylaws, and charter on the SCB Chapters website. Review the SCB Groups Handbook, also available of the Chapters website.
- b) Contact the New Chapters Coordinator of the Chapters Committee (Section VI) for assistance and advice.

- c) Check to see if a Chapter existed previously in your area. It may simplify your start-up process to reactivate an old Chapter rather than beginning a new one (check with the Chapters committee if you need help with this one).

2) Gauge Local Interest Survey local and regional interest in forming a Chapter to confirm that there is likely to be a large enough group (at least 20) to make the Chapter viable. Recruit from the existing pool of SCB members in your area as well as a broader pool of conservation biologists and practitioners, including those from agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academia (students and faculty). In addition to asking those surveyed about their interest in a potential Chapter, it is also good to get an idea of their priorities for such an organization; for example, would they rather see the Chapter sponsor face-to-face networking events or communicate primarily through a newsletter?

- a) To contact all current SCB members in your geographic region, the Executive Office can broadcast a message on your behalf. Your query can let them know you're starting a Chapter, ask about their level of interest or needs in a Chapter, list Board positions and committees, and ask respondents to indicate their willingness to serve in various capacities. SCB has promised members not to share its mailing list, so the email will have to be generated from the EO but the responses will come directly to you. Contact the Heather DeCaluwe at hdecaluwe@conbio.org for assistance with this.
- b) Do not limit your canvassing to current SCB members. Contact graduate and undergraduate departments, conservation-related agencies, NGOs, and other nonprofits. Non-members can be solicited and when the Chapter is forming may join the parent Society for a nominal fee (www.conbio.org/join). Non-members in developing nations can apply for subsidized memberships with the Society; however, these memberships are not guaranteed and are granted on a first-come first-serve basis.
- c) Graduate students are the life-blood of many Chapters, and provide energetic and capable leadership. However, we strongly encourage University-based Chapters to have several persons likely to remain active participants beyond the duration of a typical student career, such as a faculty member or conservation professional. Overlapping officer terms of 2 or 3 years can also provide better continuity than Boards that have 100% turnover each year. We do not have a special category for "student Chapters" – a Chapter is a Chapter, regardless of the occupations of its members.
- d) Chapters vary in geographic scope from an individual city or campus to large ecoregions. If your Chapter wishes to stake out a large geographic area, your officers should be from various parts of the region. It's best to make conscious efforts to avoid being identified with the "capital city" as this can marginalize "non-city" members from Chapter activities.

3) First Meeting The first meeting of the nascent Chapter is an opportunity to meet interested individuals, define the Chapter's goals, and perhaps conduct the first elections. This meeting should be well-planned and well advertised! Offering refreshments usually increases turnout. The purpose of this meeting is to take substantive steps towards ensuring the Chapter's legitimacy and viability. If you're ready for elections, they can take place at this meeting with a written ballot, and when

the announcement of the meeting is made a protocol for absentee voting ought to be included (i.e. attach a PDF file to an invitation and provide an address to which the written ballot can be returned). Elections can be carried out with a “slate” of approved candidates or by running individuals for each position. Committees, for example the membership, conservation, and finance committees, can be formed at this meeting and given assignments. Temporary committees can be formed to carry out a specific task and then dissolved: for example, a committee to work on the Agreement, Bylaws, and Charter is a good idea.

- a) Typically, the core activists (those who generated the initial momentum for starting the Chapter) and enthusiastic supporters put together the list of candidates for the first election. These founding members should not feel embarrassed about the appearance of a “power grab”—most members will be grateful for the initiative, and the Chapter will benefit from the quick start. As soon as possible, hold an election to establish the officers. New members can be encouraged to become involved in the fledgling Chapter by being active on the various committees listed in the Chapter’s by-laws.

4) Agreement/Bylaws/Charter (ABCs) Download the templates of a Chapter Agreement, Bylaws, and Charter (ABCs) at www.conbio.org/Chapters. Discuss the documents with the group, be sure to fill in the various “blanks”, and sign all three documents. Then return all three to the Chair of the Chapters Committee. The documents will be reviewed by the Chapters Chair and ratified by the SCB president. If necessary, The Chair will contact you with any requested adjustments or concerns.

- a) Amendments can only be made to certain Articles in the Bylaws (listed in Article XIII). The Agreement and Charter cannot be altered. If you need to make a Bylaw amendment, please do so and briefly describe the changes in a cover letter to the Committee Chair. Most by-law changes are approved after review by the SCB President. In rare cases the Board of Governors may need to review the requested changes.
- b) The signed and ratified copies of the new Chapter's ABCs constitute your authorization to have a Chapter.

Please email your three documents to the Chair of the Chapters Committee (address can be obtained at <http://www.conbio.org/Chapters/info/contact.cfm>). Alternately, they can be faxed to 1-703-995-4633, Attention: Heather DeCaluwe.

5) Registration/Chapters Listserve Once your Chapter is ratified by SCB’s President, you need to register your group. This can be done on the SCB website at www.conbio.org/Chapters/info/annualregister.cfm. Registration is required annually of all Chapters (and upon ratification) and is necessary to maintain your Active Status. Registration lets the Chapters Committee and EO update your contact information and helps guide activities and support for your group and for all Chapters.

Also, subscribe all your Chapter officers to the Chapters Listserve. The Chapters Listserv is a moderated forum only for Chapter leaders. It is used by the Chapters Committee, EO, and Chapters to post queries or announcements of interest to all Chapters. You can self-subscribe at <http://list.conbio.org/mailman/listinfo/Chapters>.

6) **Handbook** Download the most current version of SCB's Groups Handbook at www.conbio.org/Chapters/info/NewChapters.cfm. This will help you understand your roles and responsibilities as a Chapter. Review the Handbook with your officers and committee leaders, and contact the Chapters Committee if you have questions.

7) **Create a Website** It is vital that current and prospective members be able to reach you and learn about your Chapter's activities and events. Every Chapter must therefore maintain a website and keep it current. This can be hosted by SCB or your own local server. The Web Coordinator of the Chapters Committee can also help with creating and hosting the website (email address at www.conbio.org/Chapters). Several Chapters also maintain a Facebook page as a quick way to dialogue with members.

8) **Strategic Plan** We highly recommend drafting a strategic plan for your Chapter. A full Chapter Strategic Plan helps set the vision and direction of the Chapter for your current and future members. It may include a Mission Statement, a Strategic Plan for several years (3-5 is common), and a yearly Organizational Plan that can be updated annually. These documents must be in line with SCB's general Strategic Plan, found on the SCB website. Two resources to help your thinking about a strategic plan can be found under the 2006 Chapters Workshop at <http://www.conbio.org/Chapters/workshops/>.

- a) The Mission Statement articulates the values, purpose, and goals of the Chapter. It should express the Chapter's *raison d'être* in a way that inspires interest and commitment by members and potential funders. The statement should be short, strong, easy to understand, free of jargon, worded with active verbs, and answer three key questions:
 - I: What are the opportunities or needs the Chapter exists to address?
 - II: How does the Chapter address these needs?
 - III: What principles or beliefs guide the Chapter's work?
- b) The Strategic Plan delineates specific goals and targets for the Chapter over an extended period of time. It is your roadmap to fulfilling your mission statement. It can include timelines, benchmarks, and measures for success. This should be reviewed and renewed at the end of the life of the Plan.
- c) The Annual Organizational Plan is your list of activities for the year. It can also include timelines and benchmarks, but should also assign responsibility for various activities or tasks to individuals or committees.

SECTION III: MEMBERSHIP

Acquiring members is one the first tasks of a new Chapter. Maintaining members, especially active members, is equally important once your new Chapter is established. The Chapters Committee can help by referring inquiries from prospective members to you and by linking your website to SCB's site. The Executive Office can also support your Chapter with the initial email to SCB members in your area.

Acquiring members requires lots of positive energy and often occurs through word of mouth. In addition, articulating how membership benefits the new member, the Chapter, and conservation is helpful in recruiting because potential members are given specific reasons to join. Other ways to recruit members include sending emails to

relevant listserves, posting signs, and advertising events on the main Chapters website, other listserves, in local newspapers, or in the quarterly SCB Newsletter.

Chapters are encouraged to charge dues. Many current Chapters charge between \$5 and \$15 per year, some vary the amount for students and non-students, and some only suggest a yearly donation. To ensure high participation, however, most Chapters encourage everyone (both paid and non-paid) to attend events and activities. A benefit often given only to paid members (and to SCB members) is the ability to vote for Chapter officers. Chapters need to keep records of financial transactions, most easily done by maintaining a bank account. Some Chapters allow members and organizations to make donations via the web using Paypal. SCB can also accept donations from funders for your Chapter for tax purposes, and then transfer the funds to you. There are strict reporting requirements associated with this transference to maintain financial accountability (see more on this under “Section V: Logistics”).

Membership demographics vary among Chapters. Many are affiliated with universities and thus contain primarily students and faculty. Others are comprised of professionals from agencies and nonprofits. Being affiliated with a university provides many benefits, such as energetic faces as new students arrive; however, non-academics often provide valuable input into local conservation issues the Chapter can address. Most Chapters recommend membership consisting of a variety of people. The public can be a great source of members too: local schoolteachers, local government employees, or your next door neighbor may be interested in conservation as well.

Maintaining members is a vital step in establishing a successful Chapter. Ensuring members are able to reach officers (e.g. via phone or email posted on your website) establishes communication between officers and members. However, our best advice is to establish one or two main projects/activities per year for your Chapter to sponsor. Members will remain members if your Chapter provides them the opportunity to participate in conservation efforts.

SECTION IV: ACTIVITIES

Every Chapter has similar goals, generally expressed as “promoting the development of skills needed to conserve biodiversity, providing a forum for awareness of regional issues, articulating positions on matters of public policy, and fostering high standards of professional integrity.” Each Chapter needs to translate these general goals into *One or Two Things Our Chapter Wants To Do Well*. Please avoid the temptation to take on too much! Instead, identify one or two vacant niches that your Chapter can fill or key services that you can provide. Do one or two things well and consistently provide that service year after year. For more information on the activities listed below, please contact the Chapters Committee.

Some of the main activities of successful Chapters are:

An Annual Conservation Biology Symposium

This can be a stand-alone event, such as offered jointly by the Berkeley and Davis Chapters in California's San Francisco Bay Area, or a session of papers on Conservation Biology offered as part of an existing annual regional meeting, as is done by Missouri and Colorado Plateau Chapters. In both cases, conservation biologists in a region get a regular opportunity to learn about ongoing projects in the region, meet each other, and form a network. With high-quality programs, these soon become annual “must attend” meetings

not only for students but also for conservation practitioners. A Chapter-run symposium also generates revenue, especially if you find donors willing to contribute food and drinks for session breaks, the evening mixer, and the poster session. A lunch break of 90-120 minutes during the annual symposium is an ideal time for your annual meeting. The Bay Area Symposium costs about \$5,000 to produce, but generates a profit with registration fees of \$20 for students (about 200 attend) and \$35 for non-students (about 100 attend) for the all-day event (held on a Saturday). The honorarium and travel costs for a big-name plenary speaker are a major expense, but are worthwhile investments. Take advantage of locally prominent persons by having them serve as session chairs. Advertise the event several months in advance, listing those big names prominently. If you do not get a few complaints about too much publicity, you probably are not advertising aggressively enough.

Seminar Series

A monthly or quarterly seminar series on Conservation Biology is another excellent service that your Chapter can provide. A reception for the speaker before or after the talk should include food (make sure it is consistently good food!). Do not charge admission, but the introducer should always encourage the audience to join the local Chapter and support the series. Try to arrange a big name speaker for the first event of the season, and be aggressive with publicity.

Educational Outreach

Educational programs for schoolchildren and for interested adult groups are a good way to teach community members about the principles and practice of conservation. Several Chapters have developed successful hands-on programs that have been taken to local schools as well as traded with schools in other regions. Other activities have included conservation projects for kids (such as tree plantings) and guided nature walks. See "Section VI: Resources" below for more information. The "Kids Do Ecology" website (<http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/nceas-web/kids/> -- in English and Spanish) is also a good resource.

Websites and Electronic or Paper Newsletters (2 to 4 issues per year)

These are helpful for alerting members to special talks of interest, important hearings on projects affecting biodiversity, and the like. The newsletter of at least one Chapter (Missouri) includes short research reports from ongoing projects and fun columns on local flora and fauna. The website is worthless if it is not updated at least every 12 weeks - seek an energetic webmaster! A most helpful feature is an electronic Bulletin Board that allows members to post and read announcements.

Field Events and Restoration Activities

Many Chapters organize field events such as trips to local nature preserves, bio-blitzes (eg bird or flora counts), and whale-watching tours. Several Chapters have also adopted local habitats for restoration or work with community groups to protect certain species. These activities can be a source of funding for the Chapter, and are great ways to engage your members, the public, your communities, and local organizations!

Public Policy

A number of Chapters are committed to influencing public policy on conservation. These activities range from writing letters to a newspaper editor, to providing public comments on government documents, to taking a position on a piece of legislation that affects biodiversity. SCB must meet strict government guidelines for nonprofits, so please check with the Chapters Committee and SCB Policy Director before undertaking an action. An internal policy approvals process exists to ensure all policy activities have the backing of SCB and are scientifically valid. Guidelines for policy work can be found on the Chapters website and Policy webpage on the main SCB website. Typically, a policy position statement is driven by the interest of one crusading member, but facilitating good public policy can be one of your most important functions!

Sister Chapters

A sister Chapter is a formal relationship between two Chapters that allows for the exchange of information and resources, as well as the coordination of projects and activities. A sister relationship can exist between two active Chapters, or between an established Chapter and one that is developing. In the latter case, we strongly recommend the established Chapter be active for at least one year before becoming a sister – you need to become established and sustainable before you can act as a mentor or resource to another Chapter. In general, being sister Chapters is a great way to strengthen both Chapters' activities and resources, generate enthusiasm among members, and expand the reach of your conservation efforts.

As an example, the well-established Bolivia and Davis Chapters have been sisters for several years. Bolivia's experience, written in 2005, is shared below.

Alejandra Domic, Bolivia Chapter President (2005), writes: *“Bolivia’s SCB Chapter was founded in 1998. Since then, we have been carrying out several activities. The way we got in touch with the Davis Chapter was in 2003 when Cristian Olivo [Chapters Committee–fn] met Ingrid Hogle, then-President of Davis, during the SCB meeting in Duluth, Minnesota. They talked about issues concerning our Chapter (like memberships and journal subscriptions). They came up with the idea to become sister Chapters, thinking that this would be one of the best ways Davis could help Bolivia grow larger. Ingrid then got in contact with me about formalizing this idea. We were happy that Davis was so interested in supporting our growing organization because we had been wanting to meet more SCB members and get more involved with SCB activities for a long time. By becoming sister Chapters with Davis, we believed this could be the way to accomplish this goal.*

“After several contacts with Ingrid we started to share our experiences and realized we had a lot of things in common, such as our mutual interest in environmental education (both Chapters work with children). We have also talked about developing some possible projects. For example, we are planning their visit to Bolivia during summer 2005 after the SCB meeting in Brazil. Another project we are developing together is the design for a conservation biology study in one of Bolivia’s many protected areas. Finally, we’ve discussed the possibility of coordinating environmental education workshops as well as sharing our mutual experiences as SCB members.”(January 12 2005)

SECTION V. LOGISTICS

Registration

Annual Chapter registration is used to advise the Chapters Committee and EO on Chapter status and activities, which is important for maintaining Chapter funding and

other resources from the EO and other sources. Each Chapter, therefore, is required to register **by January 31 of each year**. The on-line registration form is available at <http://www.conbio.org/Chapters/AnnualReports/>. A Chapter is considered inactive if it has not been registered two years in a row, and dormant if unregistered for four consecutive years.

An up-to-date Chapter website must be linked to the main SCB website. It should include contact info on current officers, major recent activities, and a summary of membership.

All-Chapter Business Meetings

Quarterly business meetings are held via conference calls for all Chapters. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss various topics and issues of interest or concern for Chapters. These are a great way to connect with other Chapters and to help build capacity among your leadership. At least one officer or designated person should be on the call from each Chapter. This person should be able to speak for the Chapter as well as report back to the Chapter. Chapters outside North America can join the calls via phone or skype. Agendas are set by the Chapters and by the Chapters Chair, and announcements with the call-in information are posted on the Chapters Listserve.

Chapter business meetings, workshops, and other activities of interest to Chapter leaders and members are also offered at every SCB global conference. Be sure to schedule these into your activities when you attend these conferences!

Strategic Planning

We highly recommend drafting a strategic plan for your Chapter. A full Chapter Strategic Plan helps set the vision and direction of the Chapter for your current and future members. It may include a Mission Statement, a Strategic Plan for several years (3-5 is common), and a yearly Organizational Plan that can be updated annually. These documents must be in line with SCB's general Strategic Plan, found on the SCB website. Two resources to help your thinking about a strategic plan can be found under the 2006 Chapters Workshop at <http://www.conbio.org/Chapters/workshops/>.

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- e) The Strategic Plan delineates specific goals and targets for the Chapter over an extended period of time. It is your roadmap to fulfilling your mission statement. It can include timelines, benchmarks, and measures for success. This should be reviewed and renewed at the end of the life of the Plan.
- f) The Annual Organizational Plan is your list of activities for the year. It can also include timelines and benchmarks, but should also assign responsibility for various activities or tasks to individuals or committees.

Financial Management

Each Chapter maintains its own accounts, and both the treasurer and president are typical signers on the accounts. Annual budgets and amount of money in savings vary considerably among Chapters. Chapter savings accounts may contain between \$100 and \$3000, depending on the focus, longevity, expenses, and fundraising efforts of the Chapter.

Chapters may support an audit committee to audit the Chapter's financial records independent of the treasurer.

Fundraising

There are several ways for your Chapter to acquire funds:

- **Membership fees:** Don't expect someone else to give your Chapter money if your own members don't think the Chapter is worthy of their support. Some Chapters survive solely on membership fees.
- **Annual meeting and symposium:** For most Chapters, this is the only member service for which it is practical to charge money beyond the membership fee. Registration fees not only pay for the meeting, but are the main source of revenue for some SCB Chapters. The key is having a consistently high-quality program, including events designed to build community, so that people come back year after year.
- **Fundraising events:** Raffles, rummage sales, t-shirt sales, and banquets can also serve as social events for the members. Most Chapters engage in these activities only in conjunction with their annual meeting.
- **Competitive Grants:** If you are applying for a grant greater than \$5000, contact the EO for assistance and to ensure you're not in competition with another group within SCB. When seeking competitive grants, some paramount rules include: (a) Apply only to those foundations whose statements indicate they are a good match – you will NOT fool a funder by putting a spin on who you are! (b) Before you apply, telephone a program officer at the foundation, honestly explain your needs, and ask if it is worthwhile to apply. Program officers are friendly people who will give you frank advice to save your time and theirs. (c) Follow their application instructions to the last detail!
- **Informal Local Grants:** Approach local membership-based environmental groups, sporting good stores, manufacturers of outdoor equipment, or local eco-tourism industries, and ask them for support. In addition to money, many are happy to provide food or raffle prizes for your annual symposium or other events.
- **Monies from the Chapters Committee:** Occasionally the Chapters Committee is able to provide small grants for Chapter projects or for travel to global conferences. Announcements are sent when these monies are available. The grant application form can be found on SCB's Chapters website.

Websites, Newsletters, and Member Communication

Chapters need to have active webpages. Some are updated only a few times per year, while others are updated regularly by designated webmasters. Some Chapter websites provide news, job listings, and links to important conservation sites and to online journals. Others are maintained by the secretary and is updated with minutes from each meeting. Several Chapters maintain websites on the SCB server with the assistance of

the Web coordinator on the Chapters Committee, while others use affiliated university servers to host their webpages. Chapters are encouraged to be linked to the SCB main website (if not directly hosted by the site) so that they can be easily found by potential members and other interested parties.

The SCB quarterly newsletter, which goes to the general SCB membership, contains articles and reports about Chapters written by the Chapters Committee or by one or more Chapters. Announcements and other contributions are also encouraged. Material can be sent to the editor, found at www.conbio.org/Publications/Newsletter.

Many Chapters also publish their own newsletters. For example, twice a year Missouri produces a publication called "The Glade." It typically has 2-3 research articles that cover work going on in the state, announcements, a "critter corner", and a "nature corner". For the latter, they recruit a local naturalist/nature lover to write about a favorite geographic spot in Missouri. The editor and contributors are all volunteers.

Communication with members relies primarily on email listserves and posting information on Chapter webpages. Some Chapters maintain two listserves: one for SCB members who can vote on Chapter business including position papers and spending Chapter money, and a separate general one with a large subscription of interested parties. In addition, SCB maintains a general listserve of officers from *all* Chapters as well as other interested persons.

Chapter Meetings

Frequency of Chapter meetings also varies considerably. For example, one statewide Chapter holds an annual business meeting for all members in conjunction with a larger regional conference, plus 2-3 officer meetings each year. In contrast, other Chapters meet once or twice per month, offer pizza and drinks, and have a typical attendance of 15-20 people. Still other Chapters choose to conduct most business at Chapter events rather than holding regular Chapter meetings. However, one business meeting each year is required of all Chapters and is needed to set your work plan for the upcoming year and/or hold elections.

Non-Profit Management Issues

Non-profit status helps confer tax advantages and can make it easier to manage financial donations. The simplest way for a Chapter to take advantage of nonprofit status is to use the umbrella of SCB's 501(c)3 status. SCB is a US non-profit organization, registered with the US federal government as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt entity. If a donor to a Chapter requests acknowledgement for tax purposes, the donation can be made to the EO in the name of the Chapter, and the funds will then be routed back to the Chapter. All accounting and tracking is the responsibility of the Chapter, and all monetary donations sent to the EO on behalf of the Chapter must be submitted in United States dollars. Additional information and forms are available from the EO.

If a Chapter outside the United States requires nonprofit status, then it is recommended they check with their local rules and customs for guidance on how to proceed. Also alert the EO that this is your intention so the EO can make sure there are no legal restrictions from the United States.

- a) Executive Office Monetary Donations Procedure:** All donations must be given in the name of the Society for Conservation Biology, not the Chapter or section or event. The reason is that funds must come into the parent SCB

account in order to come under our tax accounting; otherwise SCB will not be able to certify them to IRS.

Checks: Please have your donors draft their checks to the Society for Conservation Biology. All checks should have the Chapter name on them and, if room, the reason for donation. The Donations Worksheet form can be obtained by contacting the EO. Once all information and payments have been processed, a check will be issued to the Chapter. Checks can be sent by donors or by the Chapter to:

Heather DeCaluwe, Assistant Director
Society for Conservation Biology
1017 O Street NW
Washington, DC 20001-4229
United States

Cash: If cash donations are accepted, make note of the donation in compliance with the Donations Worksheet and deposit this into your Chapter Account. Then send payment via check from the Chapter to SCB with documentation of who the original donor was. SCB will then deposit the check and issue payment back to the Chapter as well as process any necessary receipts.

b) Non-monetary Donations: Chapters can accept non-monetary donations for the Chapter for its activities. Whatever this may be is entirely up to the Chapter. Should non-monetary donors require acknowledgement of their donation to SCB as a non-profit, please contact the EO for proper procedure. A letter of recognition will be sent to the donor (or Chapter if requested) and they can fill out the value of the donated item upon its arrival.

c) Follow-up Documentation: Because SCB is liable to the IRS for donations received, ***all Chapters receiving monies through this mechanism must provide a detailed accounting (with receipts to back it up) of how the money was spent.*** Paying for a disc jockey for a "Conservation Biology social event" is fine so long as we have a paper trail! These reports will be ***due no later than 15 February of the year following the monies donated.*** These reports must be signed by all elected officers of the Chapter.

SECTION VI: RESOURCES

Chapters Supporting Each Other

Chapters are often willing to offer assistance and advice to new (or established) Chapters. The following Chapters have offered support to other Chapters on the following topics in which they have expertise or materials:

- New Orleans, Missouri, UC Davis, and Bolivia offer advice and curricula for Education Outreach Programs.
- Missouri offers advice on running Poster Competitions and Publishing a Newsletter.
- Bolivia would like to share information about On-line Forums, Bulletin Boards, and Courses developed by Chapters.

- UC Davis and Bolivia offer their expertise on Conference and Seminar Planning and Management; Berkeley offers excellent documentation on how to set up a conference.
- Minnesota and Missouri offer advice on website development.
- Bolivia offers books and magazines about biodiversity in Bolivia.

Support from the Executive Office

These fall into 2 main categories: Material and Networking. Please let the Chapters Committee know if there's anything else that would be useful to add to this list.

Material Contact Anna Braum at info@conbio.org for a full list of available materials and to make your requests.

- Various promotional materials regarding SCB for use at Chapter meetings, fundraisers, events, etc (Examples are brochures, newsletters, a sample issue of *Conservation Biology*, sample issues of *Conservation in Practice*, T-shirts. Please note the journals can only be sent once per year; the other materials can be sent as needed on a first-come first-served as-available basis. Posters can be borrowed, but must be returned in a timely manner, and a data file with the official SCB logo can be requested for promotions.
- Donated prizes for competitions or fundraisers (eg, a subscription to a journal)

Networking Contact the Chapters Committee for more information on specific resources below.

- Webhosting for your Chapter site on the main SCB website
- A private monitored listserve for officers of all Chapters for the exchange of information and requests (Chapters@list.conbio.org)
- Individual Chapter listserves are offered for a nominal fee. Other services such as Google Groups are free.
- A designated Chapters Day at the SCB Booth during global conferences for your brochures and announcements.

The SCB Chapters Committee

The committee's mission is to support, facilitate, and advocate Chapter growth, inter-Chapter communication, coordination with other parts of SCB, and increased support for Chapters from the parent organization. In other words, they help Chapters establish and grow; enable Chapters to exchange ideas and information; create a more visible presence for Chapters within the larger SCB organization; and facilitate a network of Chapters across the globe. Please contact the Chair or appropriate members of the Chapters Committee, listed on the Chapters website (www.conbio.org/Chapters), for assistance, questions, or concerns.

SECTION VII: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: How do we approach length and continuity in our Board's terms of office?

“How long should officer terms be when Chapters start out? Is two years too long for students to commit to a board position? What should be the minimum or maximum time in office?”

A1: Do what works for your group! Each group does things a bit differently, some with 1-year terms, and some with 2-year terms. For example, the Minnesota Chapter has 2-year overlapping terms, also known as staggered elections so that only half the board turns over at one time. This greatly helps the institutional memory and continuity of the Chapter! When the Chapter first started, they held elections for half of the officers in year 2, while the other half was up for election in year 3. The initial 3-year positions reverted back to 2-year terms following this one-time, initial exception. The Chapter also found that, since most grad students are in for the long-haul, the 2-year terms didn't seem to be a problem. On the other hand, the UC Davis Chapter uses 1-year terms and has found this to be successful. Amendments to make terms and elections work best for your Chapter can be made in Bylaws Article II, Section 3.

With a primarily student Chapter, some involvement by non-students helps maintain continuity. Some very long-running Chapters, such as the Colorado State University Chapter, owe their longevity to a faculty advisor who stays with the Chapter for many years. Board positions or committee leadership can also be good ways to involve faculty or professionals. For example, a long-serving treasurer avoids the need for annual trips to the bank to add and drop authorized signers to your account, and ensures that someone remembers the cost of various activities from year to year. The treasurer position is also rather more limited in scope than other Board positions, generally demanding no more time than balancing your monthly personal bank statement.

If someone must step down from office before the end of his/her term, someone else should be appointed to an interim position until regular or special elections can be held.

Minimum and maximum term limits can also be addressed in Article II, Section 3 of the Bylaws. The minimum time recommended is 1 year – any shorter and the viability of your Chapter is seriously threatened. No maximum time in office has been specified, but we can't imagine anyone would want to serve more than, say, two decades!

Q2: What kind of info about our Chapter must be posted on the main SCB website?

A2: The SCB parent website requires your Chapter name, contact information, and a link to your Chapter website or Facebook page. You can also write up a short description of your Chapter to be linked to the SCB Chapters page.

Q3: What kind of conservation advocacy is our Chapter allowed to do? Are there any limitations imposed by SCB?

A3: Chapters, as with all groups and members of SCB, are required to follow the guidelines and process stipulated by SCB for public policy. These can be on the Chapters main website and on the Policy page of the main SCB website (www.conbio.org/Activities/Policy). Also check your bylaws and the Groups Handbook for further information. The goal is to make sure any policy activities done in the name of SCB are properly vetted so that we speak with a unified voice and are making scientifically sound recommendations. Two Chapters Policy Coordinators sit on the Chapters Committee (one for North America and one for global Chapters), and we encourage you to contact them **early** with any questions, concerns, and issues your Chapter would like to pursue. A number of Chapters have pursued policy actions with great success. For example, local efforts by the Minnesota Chapter and the Montana

Chapter resulted in, respectively, SCB's official positions on the U.S. Farm Bill and the delisting of the Rocky Mountain Grey Wolf.

Q4: Can the SCB Executive Office assist us when donors cannot give us (as a Chapter) a check?

A4: Yes! Have the donor make the check out to SCB, indicate the Chapter name in the comments area on the check, and send a letter of explanation with the check to the SCB office. Keep in mind that turn-around will take some time.

Q5: When seeking funding from non-members (e.g., businesses) are we limited in who we ask?

A5: No!

Q6: How do we find SCB members in our area?

A6: If you wish to contact all current SCB members in your geographic region, the EO is happy to broadcast a message on your behalf. You can check out who your local members are yourself, online, as explained below. Because we have promised members not to share our mailing list, contact with these local members should be generated from the Washington office, with responses directed to you.

To search for potential SCB members in your region, designate a member of SCB to login on www.conbio.org. Once you are logged in, you should be able to go to the "Search Expertise Database" part of the site, which takes you to the form for searching the database.