



SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapters Handbook

Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability
Ecological Society of America

Updated Fall 2025



SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapters Handbook

Ecology clubs can play a vital role in ecology education and provide opportunities and experiences that textbooks, lectures, and even labs cannot match. This handbook is intended to serve as a resource for students who aspire to promote ecological awareness, education, outreach, and action through ESA-SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapters. Institutions that hope to start an ecology club can benefit from this handbook and use it as a resource for registration information, club establishment, guidelines, fundraising, and activity ideas. Already existing ecology clubs can use it to brainstorm and generate new concepts to improve their club.



SEEDS Chapter Leaders at the 2023 SEEDS Leadership Meeting

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ESA-SEEDS: INTRODUCTION

About the Ecological Society of America (ESA)

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) advances the science and practice of ecology while supporting ecologists throughout their careers. Founded in 1915, ESA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to:

- Promoting ecological science by improving communication among ecologists
- Raising public awareness about the importance of ecological science
- Increasing resources for ecological research
- Ensuring the appropriate use of ecological knowledge in environmental decision making through better communication between scientists and policymakers

Ecology is the scientific study of relationships between organisms and their past, present, and future environments. These relationships include:

- Physiological responses of individuals
- Population structure and dynamics
- Interactions among species
- Organization of biological communities
- Processing of energy and matter within ecosystems

ESA's over 9,000 members conduct research, teach, and use ecological science to address environmental issues that include:

- Biotechnology
- natural resource management
- ecological restoration
- ozone depletion and global climate change
- ecosystem management
- species extinction and loss of biological diversity
- habitat alteration and destruction
- sustainable ecological systems

ESA also publishes a range of materials peer-reviewed journals, newsletters, fact sheets, and teaching resources to advance ecological understanding and outreach.



About SEEDS

The Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity, and Sustainability (SEEDS) program is the flagship, award-winning education initiative of the Ecological Society of America (ESA). Its mission is to diversify and advance the ecology profession by providing opportunities that inspire, support, and empower underrepresented students to participate in and lead the field of ecology.



History

Founded in 1996, SEEDS was created to address the underrepresentation of minority groups in ecology. The program's first phase (1996 - 2002) focused on building institutional support at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Today, SEEDS continues to grow through its core program components, which provides hands-on, engaging experiences that highlight the relevance and real-world applications of ecological science. Each experience also offers opportunities to connect with a diverse community of ecologists and peers broadening students' understanding of ecology and potential career paths.

Although SEEDS primarily serves undergraduate students, its reach extends to communities, high schools, graduate students, and international collaborations. Through these efforts, SEEDS is cultivating a more inclusive ecology community, one capable of fostering environmental understanding and building a sustainable future for all. To learn more about the history of SEEDS, read ["The First Six Years."](#)



SEEDS Chapter Leaders at the 2025 SEEDS Leadership Meeting

SEEDS Chapters

SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapters are independent undergraduate student organizations that serve as key focal points for local and regional environmental leadership advancement, community engagement, and career development. Since 1996, SEEDS has built a strong network of campus chapters nationwide. Today, more than 100 college and university groups are proudly affiliated with the program.

SEEDS Chapters help advance the mission of SEEDS by promoting ecology through education, outreach, recruitment, and professional development. Each chapter tailors its activities to the interests of its members and the needs of its campus and community.

Read our [2022-2024 SEEDS Chapter Report](#) that highlights the amazing work and impact of our SEEDS Chapter Network program.

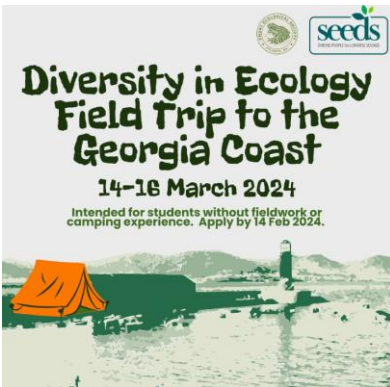


SEEDS Chapter Leaders at the 2025 SEEDS Leadership Meeting

Examples of Chapter Activities

Chapters participate in a variety of educational and leadership experiences, such as:

- Developing a local chapter website or social media page to engage in online dialogue
- Hosting campus activities that support SEEDS goals and mission
- Organizing field trips and outdoor learning experiences
- Inviting guest speakers and ecology professionals
- Hosting ecology career panels or seminars
- Sending student delegates to professional meetings in ecology or related fields



Becoming a SEEDS Chapter

SEEDS welcomes new schools and student groups to join its national network and work toward increasing awareness and interest in ecology. Ecology and ecology-related (e.g., Biology, Environmental Science, Earth Science) clubs that are already in existence, as well as newly formed student groups interested in ecology and the SEEDS mission, may apply to become a SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapter.

Learn more about applying: <https://esa.org/seeds/chapters/chapters-locations/start-a-chapter/>

Chapter Requirements

To maintain Active Good Standing and qualify for SEEDS support, each chapter must:

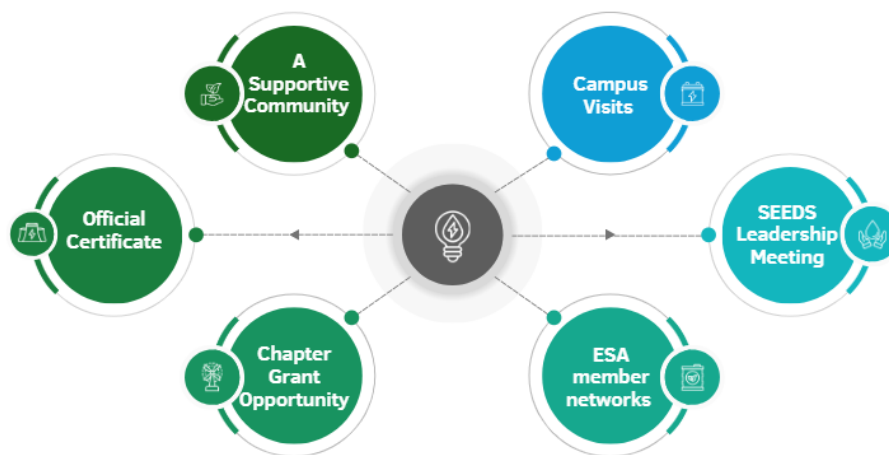
- Support the mission of SEEDS promoting ecology opportunities for underrepresented students and communities
- Have at least one faculty advisor or sponsor who demonstrates dedication and commitment to the chapter's students and mission
- Designate a student representative to serve as the main liaison with SEEDS staff
- Maintain a minimum of five student members
- Submit annual Chapter Reports to SEEDS staff

Note: SEEDS Chapter members are *not required* to be ESA members, and no membership fees are charged.

Chapter Benefits

SEEDS Chapters enjoy a variety of benefits designed to support growth and long-term impact:

- A supportive community amongst undergraduate students interested in Ecology
- Official Certificate recognizing the chapter's participation
- Subscription to the SEEDS Newsletter with program announcements such as Field Trips and ESA Annual Meeting Travel Awards
- Chapter Grant opportunities to establish or sustain chapter activities
- Potential campus visits from SEEDS staff conduct a presentation or workshop on the program or careers in ecology
- Potential to have student leaders participate in the SEEDS Leadership Meeting
- Access to other SEEDS Chapters and ESA member networks



BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

Goals and Outcomes

Environmental change presents challenges that increasingly affect communities across the nation particularly communities of color, low-income populations, and Indigenous peoples. To achieve equitable and effective environmental outcomes, it is essential to increase the participation of African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American students in ecology and environmental sciences.

A diverse and well-trained ecological workforce is vital to addressing issues that affect air, water, food, energy, wildlife, natural resources, and sacred spaces. To meet these challenges, SEEDS emphasizes community engagement, inclusive thinking, and innovative problem-solving.

Through the ESA SEEDS Chapters Engagement Program, students gain opportunities to:

1. Deepen their understanding of ecological systems and functions
2. Explore diverse career paths within ecology and environmental science
3. Organize local or regional culturally relevant field and community activities
4. Develop leadership and communication skills for policy and stakeholder engagement
5. Build personal and professional networks in the ecological field



SEEDS Chapter Engagement Plan

The Engagement Plan is guided by ideas proposed by SEEDS Chapters. SEEDS aims to maintain consistent communication with chapter leaders and advisors through initiatives such as virtual calls, where members share ideas for activities, fundraising, and collaboration.

Potential engagement opportunities include:

1. Regional undergraduate conferences highlighting student research and professional development
2. Local or regional field experiences and campus Bioblitzes that connect students with local ecosystems and scientists
3. Collaborative thematic projects to build a sense of cohesion in the SEEDS chapter network, such as water sustainability programs or urban ecology studies
4. Additional chapter-led initiatives that align with the SEEDS mission

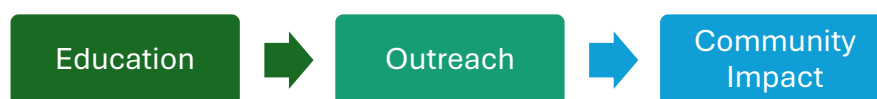
PURPOSE

Why Start an Ecology Club?

Ecology clubs serve many purposes beyond promoting ecology. They support personal and career development, foster a sense of community, and create networking opportunities that enhance students' overall college experience.

Education and Awareness

Club members expand their knowledge of ecology by applying classroom principles through real-world experiences. They also help educate and raise awareness across campus and in the community. Outreach efforts such as workshops, events, or cleanups encourage others to adopt environmentally sound practices. In turn, these initiatives promote the college or university, showing the community the positive impact of student involvement.



Personal Development

Active members develop valuable skills such as public speaking, organization, management, and leadership. All members benefit from learning collaboration, teamwork, and the value of participation.

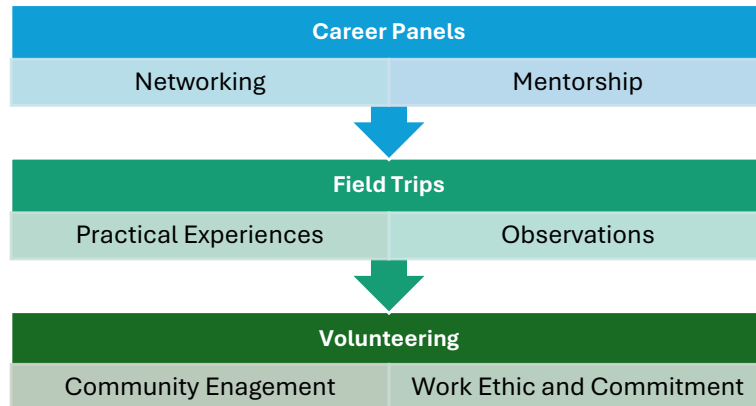
Social

Ecology clubs provide social connections for students with similar interests. Being part of a club helps students engage more deeply in campus life, often leading to a more positive and fulfilling college experience.



Career Development

Ecology clubs also serve as tools for career exploration. Activities such as field trips, guest speakers, and conferences expose students to various ecology-related career paths and professionals in the field.



INTEREST ASSESSMENT

Is There an Interest in Ecology on Campus?

Before starting a club, it's important to assess student interest. The success of any club depends on engagement, which begins with understanding how students may want to participate and what type of activities they value.



Informational Meeting

Hosting an informational meeting is one of the best ways to gauge interest; students can share ideas and explore what kind of club they want whether focused on outdoor activities, community outreach, or campus events.

Before the meeting:

- Choose a day, time, and accessible location (student union, classroom, or lounge)
- Coordinate with the student affairs or activities office if using campus facilities
- Promote the event through flyers, social media, and email. Announce it in science classes, campus radio, or student newsletters

During the meeting:

- Discuss the club’s potential focus and goals
- Brainstorm names and advisor options
- Record all ideas and identify initial leaders to continue the registration or charter process

Student Survey

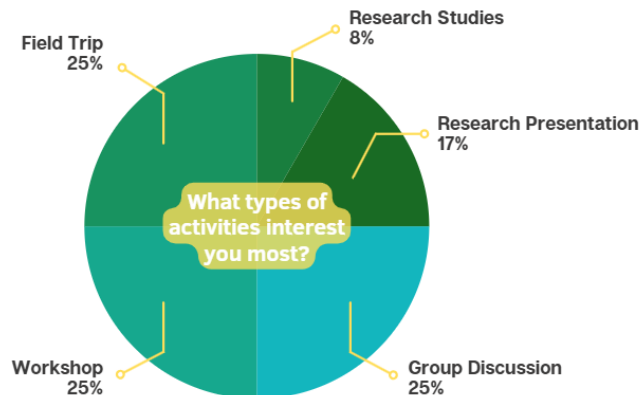
A student survey can help measure broader interest. Possible questions include:

- Is there a need for an ecology club on campus?
- Would you be interested in becoming a member?
- What types of activities interest you most?
- What meeting dates and times work best?
- What activities would you like to see an ecology club doing on/off campus?

Surveys can be shared online via social media or email, or printed and distributed in classes, dorms, student unions, and dining halls for a diverse sample.

Before launching a new club, ensure another organization doesn’t already serve a similar purpose. If one exists, consider forming an ecology **committee** within that group. Related clubs might include biology, environmental science, or outdoor recreation clubs. New ecology-related clubs and new student groups interested in ecology and the SEEDS mission are encouraged to apply to become a **SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapter!**

SURVEY RESULT EXAMPLE



REGISTRATION

What Do Schools Require?

Registration Process

The club registration process varies by institution. Some schools require only a brief form, while others have more extensive procedures. At minimum, registration typically includes the

organization's name, contact information, and a list of currently enrolled student members. Contact your student affairs or student activities office for registration information.

Many schools require annual re-registration, which could involve a small fee. Be sure to include this in the club's yearly budget. To ensure renewal, clubs must attend required meetings and follow all university policies and procedures.



Delegate Responsibilities

Starting a club involves multiple tasks and sharing responsibilities is key; form a **founders' or leadership committee** and assign tasks such as completing registration forms, drafting a proposal or charter, and setting initial goals. If your school requires a charter and by-laws, they may provide a sample format to follow.

If your school requires by-laws, see the Appendices section for a copy of a general by-laws; consider including:

- Membership requirements
- Meeting attendance expectations
- Dues (if applicable)

Choose a Faculty Advisor

Select a faculty advisor who is enthusiastic about ecology and committed to mentoring students. While many advisors come from science departments, don't overlook other disciplines professors in history, political science, or public policy may bring unique environmental perspectives.

Discuss what role an advisor would play in your club. Be clear about what responsibilities the club expects of the advisor so they understand what their role will be.



Maintain regular communication with your advisor. Include them in planning meetings, sharing minutes, and asking for input on events. Leverage their professional connections, they may help secure guest speakers, funding, or partnerships. And when hosting events, don't forget to invite your advisor!

THE FIRST MEETING

Who, What, When, Where...?

Arrangements

Once the club is properly registered, the next step will be to plan a meeting schedule. When selecting a time and place, consult with your leadership team and/or advisor to accommodate their schedule. Also, try to make sure that your meeting time accommodates as many students as possible. Once you have a day, time, and place in mind, you must reserve a room using your institution's room booking system or process.

Publicity

Leave enough time before the first open meeting to publicize it. The use of social media is a great way to promote your club. If you are not sure about other advertising mediums on your campus, ask around to find out (i.e. posterboards, online portal, social media accounts). If you want to print flyers, posters, or send mailings, then this will require some work and potential upfront costs – ask your advisor or local library about free printing. Try to use free online tools, such as [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) for social media engagement. These tools help create the best-looking advertisements to engage with the greater student community.



Agenda

At the first meeting, be sure to welcome everyone and tell them briefly about the ecology club. Tell them about possible projects and then get their input. You should project that there is a plan, but you want to be sure to include them in it with their ideas. A brief brainstorming session may be helpful. Within the first or second meeting, the officer's responsibilities need to be defined, and nominations should be made.

It is helpful to have an agenda for each meeting to discuss upcoming events or topics, but it is not necessary. See section [GENERAL MEETING GUIDELINES](#) to learn more on how to run a successful meeting.

Parliamentary Procedure

If you choose to conduct your meetings in a very formal, parliamentary style, the most well-known is Robert's Rules of Order (visit their website for information). The book covers all issues of parliamentary procedure including calls to order, orders of business, motions, etc.

CLUB ORGANIZATION

How to Keep It Running Smoothly

Offices

Generally, there are four officer positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. We recognize that some chapters would not like to participate in a hierarchy structure, and we would suggest working with your leadership team and advisor on alternative leadership models and titles. Some other titles are Co-President, Co-founders, Committee Members, etc.

President

- The president is responsible for the overall operation of the club, including but not limited to: calls and presides over all meetings; reviews and approves all financial activities.

Vice-President

- The vice-president performs the duties of the president in their absence or inability to serve. The vice president performs other duties as needed to support the chapter.

Secretary

- The secretary keeps an up-to-date membership roster. The secretary keeps full minutes of all meetings and records all actions taken by the club. They maintain a complete file that includes minutes, copies of all contracts, and current correspondence.

Treasurer

- The treasurer is responsible for the general supervision of the finances. They prepare the budget, receive all payments due, collect dues, and issue receipts. The treasurer is responsible for the prompt payment of all bills. They also maintain up-to-date financial records and give a financial report at each meeting. Finally, they sign contracts when authorized to do so.

Committees

Another useful practice is to form committees, especially when a club has a large membership. This ensures that each member is involved and that the officers do not do all the work. A committee should operate as a team, draw on the skills and talents of each member, and work toward common goals to ensure club success. Effective committee members should have:

- a commitment to the club
- an understanding of the role of the Committee and their role within it
- leadership skills and willingness to accept responsibility
- listening skills

Common committees include fundraising, activities, membership, and leadership.

Leadership Committee

- The leadership committee should support overall committee members on their goals and outcomes. This can include planning future directions, developing policies and procedures, communicating with members and responding to feedback, and developing and managing external relationships and resources for committees.

Fundraising Committee

- The fundraising committee must first know the school and state policies for raising funds. For example, some schools will not allow door-to-door solicitation on campus. Once there are revenues, the club must also be aware of state laws regarding taxes. Sources of funds can include membership dues or fees, the student affairs office of the college or university, fundraising events or sales, and grants from philanthropic foundations.

Membership/Recruitment Committee

- The membership/recruitment committee ensures a regular influx of new members. This committee should also be on top of school policies (if applicable) for membership such as minimum membership requirements, GPAs etc.
- The most effective recruiting method is personal contact. Discuss what motivated current members to join. Ask each current member to try to bring one new member to the next meeting. Other effective recruiting tools are setting up tables in the student unions or quads, or through social media marketing.

Events/Planning Committee

- The events/planning committee supports the planning and execution of events for the semester. This includes delegating tasks, defining goals, timelines, and the impact and outcomes of event. This can include on or off-campus events. Use this template as a guide for event planning.

A Note on Membership/Recruitment:

Generally, people join clubs to meet new people, make friends and have fun; for an experience that will add to their resume; for opportunities to develop and use their skills and talents; and, for a chance to serve others and make a difference.

Tips for Engaging Members:

- Give each member responsibility and the authority to make decisions. Create a system of accountability.
- Orient new members. Meet them over lunch or coffee. Find out why they were attracted and their skills or talents.
- Take advantage of the unique skills and talents of your group members.
- Use social media to spread the word.
- Recognize a job well done.
- Make it fun to belong. Include social activities for a chance to relax.
- Use meeting times effectively. Start on time and end on time. Keep the meeting well organized.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers can be helpful at meetings (whether virtual or in-person) with new members. For ideas, check out <https://teambuilding.com/blog/icebreaker-games>.

SEEDS also has a version of Human Bingo, where students get to talk to and introduce themselves to one another to complete the entire sheet for a prize (or friendly competition!). You can email seeds@esa.org for this file if your chapter would like to use it and even customize it.



Tips for Recruitment and Promotion

Promoting your club and its activities helps raise awareness on campus, attract new members, and keep current members motivated. Be sure to participate in campus events such as club fairs at the beginning of the school year. Some ideas include:

1. Direct Outreach:

- Be sure to participate in campus events such as club/organization fairs at the beginning of the school year. This is a MUST! Organize a “posting party” where members distribute fliers or posters together and then regroup afterward for a casual gathering, like sharing pizza
- Engage in personal outreach, such as door-to-door announcements or classroom/lecture visits (with faculty permission)
- Collaborate with faculty and graduate students to speak briefly in classes about your SEEDS chapter

2. Digital & Social Media:

- Use social media such as Instagram, Facebook, X, Discord, or Slack to share updates and events
- Create an email list or a listserv (Google Groups) for interested members and event reminders
- Develop a consistent visual identity, such as a club logo or branding template (there’s a customizable SEEDS version for Chapters, email seeds@esa.org for the files).



3. Campus Media & Public Spaces:

- Promote events through campus media, including radio, newspaper, newsletters, email lists, and the school website
- Post flyers and announcements on bulletin boards in the student union and academic buildings
- Set up information tables or booths the union, dining hall, or residence halls
- Use sandwich boards (A-boards) on campus to draw attention to upcoming events

4. Creative & Collaborative Ideas:

- Partner with other clubs or organizations (e.g., photography or trail associations) for joint events or promotions
- Use teasers (short one- or two-word signs) to build curiosity.
- Look at what other SEEDS Chapters do on Instagram ([@esa.seeds](https://www.instagram.com/esa_seeds)) and social media; chapters have done cat-making beds for local animal shelters, have held clothing swaps to reduce clothing waste and done documentary viewing parties and discussions to list a few – the creative opportunities are endless!



Planning Activities

What is the goal?

The goal of the activity will decide the planning. There should be a balance of activities that are for entertainment, education, outreach, fundraising... Activities with a goal of entertainment should be fun, and details like music and decorations will be more important. Educational activities would include field trips or workshops. Outreach would include working with community schools or community cleanups.

How many people will be involved?

Will the activity include club members, interested prospective members, community members...? Will it be open to anybody? This will be decided by the activity goal but take in consideration the costs, materials, location...

What are the costs?

You must know how much the activity will cost in relation to how much money is available and then decide if the activity is worth the cost. Sometimes a fundraiser for a specific activity is worth it. Costs to consider include transportation, rental and gasoline, food/snacks, venue rental.

Set the date and location

First, decide the date. When choosing a date, check the school calendar, community calendar, athletic schedules, religious and cultural holidays, midterms, finals, semester breaks. Next, decide where it will be held. Remember to consider the number of people involved, and the facilities needed. Make any necessary reservations for venues with the Student Activities Office. If the event is outside, plan for rain locations or rain dates. Within the venue, think about where things will be located.

Contact the student activities office

Some schools require on-campus activities to be approved by the Student Activities office in advance. Consult your Faculty Advisor or Student Activities Office about your school's particular regulations.

Brainstorm and assign tasks

Brainstorm all the tasks that will need to be accomplished. Create a checklist of tasks and then assign specific responsibilities to officers or chapter members. Develop a realistic timeline. If the event is too large for your club, consider cosponsoring the activity with another club or with a department.

Publicize

The larger the event, the more advertising there will need to be. Use campus methods like campus TV, radio, flyers, student union bulletin boards and free tools such as social media.

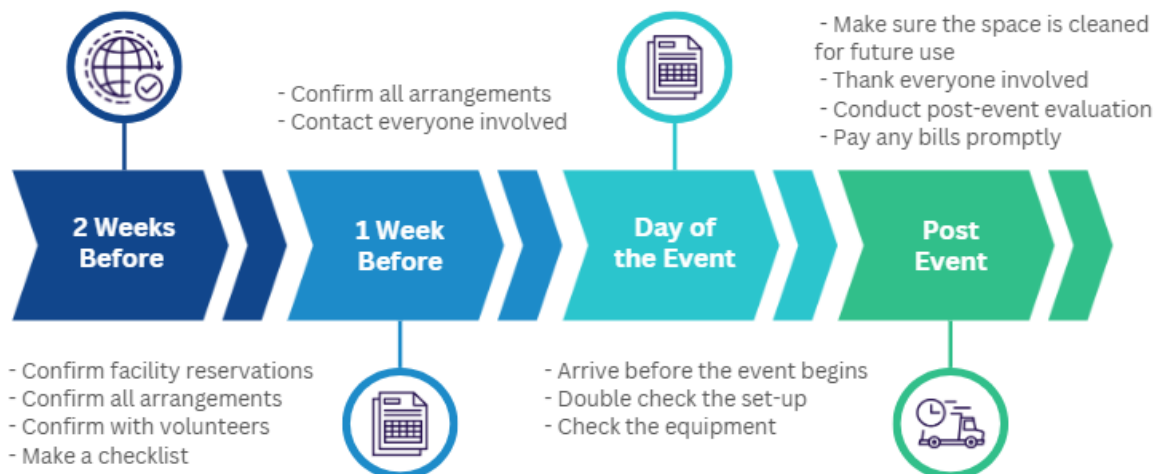
Do not assume anything

The only thing that will happen is what the club arranges to happen. For example, when you think about reserving a room on campus, do not assume that the room will have furniture or a podium, or a microphone ...

Planning Timeline

Depending on the event, below is a general outline to help you start planning on-campus events, activities, and/or meetings.

- 2 Weeks Before
 - Confirm facility reservations and set-up
 - Confirm all arrangements for speakers/performers including transportation.
 - Confirm with volunteers of their responsibilities.
 - Make a checklist of last-minute details that must be taken care of (supplies, decorations, refreshments).
- Up to 1 Week Before
 - Confirm all arrangements: set up, clean up, food service, last-minute publicity, technical services, security, schedules, staff duties, payments...
 - Contact everyone involved and make sure they know when to be where.
- Day of the Event
 - Arrive between 30 minutes to 1.5 hours before the event begins.
 - Make sure the set-up is going on schedule.
 - Check the equipment, and make sure it works properly.
 - Make sure you have the necessary payments. Obtain and save receipts.
- Post Event
 - If you are responsible for cleaning up, make sure it is completed for future use
 - Thank everyone involved. Write a letter or note to anyone who contributed to the event, including your advisor, donors, and team.
 - Conduct post-event evaluation; communicate suggestions to future planners and sponsors.
 - Pay any bills promptly.
 - If the event is canceled or rescheduled, all affected parties must be notified immediately.



GENERAL MEETING GUIDELINES

The key to a successful meeting is planning and organization. Below are ideas to think about when holding meetings with your chapter.

Writing an Agenda

An agenda forces the group to follow an orderly progression of topics. Disperse the agenda several days prior to the meeting. This will allow the members to give their input by email prior to the meeting. It will also allow members to come to the meeting with input. Don't forget to get the advisor's input on the agenda too.

Arrange the topics on the agenda accordingly. Put the topics that will require the least amount of time at the top of the agenda and end the agenda with the topics that will require most of the time. This way, you will be able to dispense with more topics in a shorter amount of time.



Meeting Minutes

Another key part of the organization is the meeting minutes. The minutes serve as a permanent record and can be used for planning the next meeting. The minutes should be typed and distributed to all club members and advisor(s) in a timely manner after the meeting. Ideally, they should be ready within a few days after the meeting. Minutes should include:

- Name of organization/committee/office
- Type of meeting
- Date and location
- Name of the presiding officer and secretary
- Notation of reading and previous minutes and how they were approved
- All the major motions
- Adjournment - note the date, time, and place of the next meeting

Running the Meeting

Typically, a student leader starts a meeting and is great practice for public speaking. Start on time, model good behavior. If the officers start the meeting late, then members will be more likely to arrive late on a regular basis.

Whether the meeting is run formally or informally there are many factors to consider:

- The meeting room should have the proper number of chairs, with just enough.
- Chairs should be arranged in a random arrangement, such as a semi-circle, facing the front. Group interaction is necessary for a successful meeting to be held. A block or classroom style of seating eliminates face-to-face discussions.
- Make sure that meetings last no more than one hour.
- Make meetings fun with snacks, icebreakers, videos, and guest speakers.

- Watch closely and learn to read non-verbal communication. Watch for signs of boredom and disinterest.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming provides the opportunity for getting members involved and working alongside one another to share ideas for future events, meetings, or activities. To hear everyone's points, set a time limit of 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of your group and topic or issue.

- Break participants into groups. The best group size is between 3 to 12 people.
- Record all responses in key phrases on a board or sheet so that everyone can read them.
- Be spontaneous, just call out responses.
- Don't criticize, praise, or judge.
- Do not discuss ideas before everyone is finished.
- After all the ideas have been given, the group can discuss and evaluate ideas and select the best ones.
- Be sure to use the ideas generated. Otherwise, the group will see their time, energy, and creativity unappreciated.
- Expect that only 5 to 10 percent of the ideas that come from a brainstorming session will be practical.



Goal Setting

Setting goals with your leadership or chapter members supports a collaborative collective. It is worth getting other members perspective in goals for the club or semester vs one person planning an entire semester of activities.

- *Seek Input* - for maximum effectiveness, goals must be set with input from the entire group. People support what they help create.
- *Prioritize* - based on group members' input, rank the goals from most to least important. Divide long-term goals into smaller short-term goals.
- *Set Target Dates* - allow adequate time to accomplish goals and set deadlines for reaching the goal.
- *Seek Approval* - periodically review goals with the group to ensure continued support.
- *Restate the Goal* - when a project comes up that will help in accomplishing one of the group's goals, refer to that goal and remind the group that this is their chosen goal.
- *Evaluate Progress* - evaluate things that could keep you from or are keeping you from reaching your group's goals. Develop a plan to remove the obstacles.

- *Be Positive* - a positive attitude will be a catalyst in getting members motivated and keeping them involved.

Effective Group Communication Dynamics

Managing group communication dynamics is an important skill for leaders and to keep members in the loop and engaged. Below are some tips on how to effectively communicate with chapter members:

- Sending a message effectively
 - Use personal pronouns such as "I" and "My"
 - Make your messages complete and specific
 - Verbal and non-verbal communication should be similar to not cause confusion (i.e. not frowning when giving good news, etc.)
 - Say important things more than once and in a different way
 - Periodically ask for feedback in the way messages are being received
- Receiving messages effectively
 - Paraphrase the message back accurately and describe your perceptions of the meaning of what was said
 - Clarify until the sender and receiver agree on the message
- Pattern of communication
 - Observe who talks the most. Try to have everyone say something at every meeting
 - Observe who talks to whom, when, and what triggers the behavior
 - Interruption is very harmful, have people wait for their turn
- Beware of competition among members
 - A competitive climate blocks communication
 - A cooperative climate leads to increased group cohesiveness and the ability to get more things done



Funding Sources: Where to Get the Money and How

Before planning any fundraising, consult your school's Student Activities Office as most fundraising requires prior approval. Knowing both your immediate objective and long-term goals is vital to the selection, planning, and implementation of a fundraiser.

Why Fundraise?

Fundraising is an important step in having financial resources to thrive and spread the mission and impact of SEEDS. Fundraising helps cover expenses such as travel costs, equipment, and supplies, allowing your chapter to host events and activities that enrich the student's experience. Below are some ideas and strategies to consider when looking to fundraise for your chapter.

Fundraising Ideas/Strategies:

- House-plant sales by propagating plants – this might not provide a ton of funds but enough to start some funding. Think about gathering plants or having plants donated to propagate in the winter to be ready for a Spring sale.
- Host a Used-book sale; books could be donated by professors, staff, or even ask a local library.
- Look at local nonprofit funding sources to apply for. "Friends Of" organizations at local parks or libraries can help support your chapter.
- Reaching out to local stores for gift cards/support for smaller events i.e. Target, Walmart, local stores (see Letter of Support example in the Appendix)
- Reach out to local Field Station to potentially host events for SEEDS activities
- With your Faculty Advisor, look at internal grants from their university
- Using university connections to apply grants with student programming in mind i.e. campus lab including SEEDS on Research Days, Expos, etc.

Fundraisers and Sales

The following are sites to review the goods and services offered by a variety of fundraising companies:

- [Fundraising Products to Help Your Org](#)
- [Amazing Fundraising Ideas](#)
- [Fundraising Ideas & Products Center](#)
- [ABC Fundraising](#)
- [The Fundraising Directory](#)

The following sites are central sites, especially for colleges and universities:

- [Campus Fundraiser Ideas](#)
- [College Fundraising Ideas](#)
- [Fast Track Fundraising](#)

SEEDS OPPORTUNITIES

SEEDS Chapter Grants

The SEEDS Campus Ecology Chapter program offers [Chapter Grants](#) to support Chapter activities and projects which further the mission of SEEDS. This funding ensures the program can support innovative Chapter project ideas that promote ecology to underrepresented students. Each project must clearly support the mission of SEEDS – stimulating and nurturing the interest of underrepresented students in ecology – and incorporate ecological science and its communication through education and/or research.

Examples of Projects:

- **Chapter Collaborations:** joint projects with other Chapters, travel or distance communication costs, creative ecology, conservation projects with a regional focus, or regional undergraduate conferences. We strongly encourage chapters to work with others within reasonable proximity or virtually.
- **Outreach activities:** local or regional field experiences, campus BioBlitz's to encourage ecological knowledge and connection to local scientists and professionals, sustainability events, projects with K-12 students and/or teachers, community members, etc.
- **Research activities:** supporting opportunities for students to conduct and communicate ecology research. This should be student-led research by the chapter and should not be the independent study research of a single student or faculty adviser/s.
- **Career development:** hosting a seminar series for students on campus.
- **Student development:** field trips for students to become exposed to areas of ecological interest.



SEEDS Spring 2025 Grant Awardee, Duquesne University, Powdermill Specimen Collection Trip

General Grant Guidelines

Scope and Size of Awards

Funding for Chapter Grants is subject to availability of funds. In the past, we have awarded grants from \$300 - \$5,000. Please [check our website](#) for current information. The amount requested should be reflective of the size and scope of the project. ESA is in the position to provide funding for SEEDS chapters solely through the generous support of our donors. It is our policy that we do not pay any indirect or overhead costs (0%) on grants or awards given to selected individual or institutional recipients in our program activities.

Eligibility

1. The SEEDS Chapter must provide evidence that it is in good standing with the college or university and with the SEEDS program. This requires submitting a list of members and officers with their emails (at a minimum), a brief report of past activities and future plans as evidence of good standing, maintaining accurate activity and financial records, submitting reports when required, and meeting membership requirements. Any late or outstanding issues may deem the Chapter ineligible for a Chapter Grant.
2. New Chapters must be established for at least 30 days (from the date of the acceptance letter) to be eligible for a Chapter Grant.
3. Projects must be led by undergraduate Chapter members.
4. Proposals must be signed by the Chapter President, and a faculty adviser must serve as project director.

Selection Criteria

Obtaining a Chapter Grant is a competitive process and awards will be made based on the strength of the proposal and the cost-effectiveness of the proposed activities in furthering the mission of SEEDS and promoting ecological science education and/or research. A higher ranking will be given to projects with broad impact and to those that include additional supporting or matching funds (anything from a small campus fundraiser to large institutional support). A selection committee of Ecological Society of America members will only evaluate complete proposals.

Evaluation and Reporting

ESA will monitor the effectiveness of the project through periodic assessments. Awardees are expected to provide brief, informal updates to ESA staff throughout the term of the special project by email and/or social media. A final report must also be submitted no later than 60 days after the indicated project end date.

Chapter Grant Proposal Submission

Each proposal must include an abstract, project description, budget narrative, and appendices, and must follow the proposal guidelines. It is recommended that Chapters closely follow the guidelines [posted on our website](#) for a competitive proposal and for any changes to the program.

Field Trips

Ecology field trips are the cornerstone through which SEEDS introduces diverse students to the range of ecological systems and research in the United States. Students spend three-four days at an ecologically significant site, such as a field station, research laboratory, or national park, learning about the science of ecology, exploring career options, and seeing the practical applications of ecology. Students have the opportunity to find out more about what ecologists do through hands-on experiences with professionals, receive training in specific areas, and build networks with students and professionals.



Colorado Mountain Research Station, September 2025

Leadership Meetings

Held annually, the [SEEDS Leadership Meeting](#) is an opportunity for SEEDS Chapter student leaders to engage in a dialogue about the connections between science and society. The meeting provides a venue for SEEDS participants to develop 21st-century skills and understanding in



Black Rock Forest, September 2025

communications, policy, community outreach, and education, rounding out their experience as young scientists. The Leadership Meeting was an extension of the SEEDS Undergraduate Research Fellowship program and since 2007 it has grown to include nominated SEEDS chapter leaders and other students recognized for their leadership potential. ESA Governing Board members have joined us as guest speakers and since 2008, we have been delighted to have the participation and support of ESA Presidents who have graciously set time in their busy schedules to join the students.

ESA Annual Meeting

To support and promote the participation of underrepresented students in the field of ecology, SEEDS offers [Undergraduate Student Travel Awards](#) to participate in the ESA Annual Meeting every year. For 25 years, the ESA SEEDS program has been supporting students to participate in this annual gathering of ecologists, which brings together over 3,500 scientists to communicate their research. As well as hearing from experts in a variety of fields, you will be under direct mentorship from those same experts as you select your own meeting mentor! This is an amazing opportunity to be exposed to many different realms of science and to develop professional and personal skills – as well as a great resume builder.

We also offer [SEEDS Graduate Alumni Travel Awards](#) to former SEEDS students who continued their education to a graduate degree and wish to attend the ESA Annual Meeting and serve as near peers in the support network for SEEDS undergraduate students.

While you're at the Annual Meeting, you'll be able to take part in hundreds of scientific presentations, pick up valuable skills in workshops and short courses, network with ecologists from around the world, continue to explore professional opportunities, see some of the most cutting-edge equipment in the field ... and take important steps forward in your career.



2025 ESA Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD

SEEDS Partnership for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) Fellowship

The [SPUR Fellowship](#) is the highest honor in the SEEDS program, and fellows are encouraged to be outstanding leaders in the future of ESA. The award supports the undergraduate student in designing and conducting an ecology research project of interest. SEEDS has established partnerships with field stations and mentors to offer exciting summer opportunities that will be tailored to meet your interests, career objectives, and growth as a scientist. For most opportunities, no prior research experience is necessary.

Other ESA-related Opportunities

ESA is the world's largest community of ecologists, so taking the next step and [becoming a member](#) is one of the best ways to continue to grow in science and meet ecologists from dozens of countries and hundreds of unique career pathways. As a member, you'll have access to our internal network of professionals, discounts on professional development opportunities like the Annual Meeting, training in policy advocacy, all content printed in our journals, and eligibility for publishing grants.

Plus, ESA's [Student Section](#) is one of the most vibrant parts of the Society - they support the Buell and Braun awards for presentations at the Annual Meeting, regularly meet to discuss strategies for success in school and the workplace and contribute to ESA decision-making as the voice of the next generation of ecologists. You can also join one of more than 30 other sections that cover a wide array of scientific and professional specialties and network more closely with people who share your specific interests.

And as your career steps forward, don't forget to get your [Professional Ecologist Certification](#) from ESA. This program offers an extremely accessible and affordable way to add a credential to your resume without needing to earn another degree and is built to ensure that your professional development needs are met in a way that allows you to grow over time. Plus, our partnerships with other organizations can open many doors to other credentials in the sciences!

SEEDS is Here for You!

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, feel free to reach out to us at seeds@esa.org.



APPENDICES

Social Media Best Practices

As we mentioned throughout the Handbook, social media is a great tool not just to create interest around your SEEDS chapter/ecology club in your institution but to grow your student organization. Here are some ideas:

Before you create your club's social media account(s):

1. **Create an email** for your organization: don't use your school or personal email.
2. **Create a Recognizable Logo** – The first step to marketing your club is to create a recognizable logo. Although not required it's strongly encouraged that you include the ESA-SEEDS logo. SEEDS offers a guideline to use the official SEEDS logo that is customizable to your institution. Email seeds@esa.org for the files and image guide.
3. **Strategize** – consider building a strategy that outlines your organization's social media goals, audience, voice, platforms, and management processes. Ask the following: Will you use social media to communicate with potential new members, or will you focus on reaching current members? Do you want to promote events, or spread a particular message? Who will manage the accounts, and what is the process for transitioning ownership as students graduate?

After you've created the social media account(s)

4. **Design Events for Social Media** – Try to use free online tools, such as [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) for social media engagement. These tools help create the best-looking flyers to engage students, you can use free templates and designs to help create designs.
5. **Find User-Generated Content**: find pictures or videos from other students and create a simple yet memorable hashtag that is exclusive to your club; use it and encourage others to use it, too. You may also do a poll or a contest/giveaway.
6. **Have Social Media Automation**: For example, automating all posts to your club's Instagram account so that they're also posted to the club's Instagram, Facebook X/ Twitter, Threads, accounts at the same time.
7. **Use Advertising**: student organizations usually have a small budget, but if an on-campus organization was looking to advertise online, social media marketing is one of the more affordable ways to do it.
8. **Make Online Events**: Take advantage of online events on social media and social media event listings for non-virtual events. In-person events are also crucial for the college experience and using social media enables your organization to track RSVPs, allow students to effortlessly share the event with friends, and publicize the event in relevant online communities.
9. **Collaborate & build relationships** with other clubs and students and remember to tag them in your posts and stories.
10. **Have fun!**

Additional Tips:

- **Uniformity**: For example, make sure that any time you update your organization's featured image on Facebook that the image is also updated for other social networks. Same thing for an announcement or event description.

- **Plan & Proofread:** Plan ahead of time what should be posted and try to keep the content varied/diverse. And check your grammar and spelling!
- **Recordkeeping:**
 - Archiving any social media posts or comments to your organization’s account in a document for reference and following up with any questions students ask.
 - Automatically save any images from your social media posts in an easily accessible location such as a Google Drive folder.
 - Collecting the information from any email receipts for the organization in a spreadsheet.

Be Respectful:

- **DON’T:** Don’t use your club’s social media accounts for personal use; separate the personal from professional. You are representing your chapter members, your institution, and ESA-SEEDS.
- **DON’T** steal images – ask for permission and give credit! There are websites for free-use of images such as: [Smithsonian Open Access](#), where you can download, share, and reuse millions of the Smithsonian’s images.
- **DON’T** be a spammer: Retweeting, liking, commenting, posting, and sharing is great, but keep everything in moderation.
- **DO:** Use a calendar notification to silence your phone when you start a club meeting to prevent distraction and disruption.
- **Be Active:** respond to inquiries and interact with followers and members on social media
- **Be Creative:** take advantage of all the different platforms and the features they have (such as adding links, and “donate” buttons. Save fun/innovative ideas for future posts and events

Letter of Support for Local Assistance

[Date]

Dear [Business Owner/Manager's Name],

We hope this message finds you well. We are writing on behalf of the [SEEDS Chapter Name] at [University Name], a student-led organization affiliated with the Ecological Society of America's SEEDS (Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability) program. Our chapter is dedicated to promoting ecological education, leadership development, and engagement in environmental science among students.

As a local business that shares our commitment to community and sustainability, we would be honored to partner with you in support of our upcoming initiatives. These include:

- [List Idea(s)]

We are seeking support in the form of [briefly describe the type of support—e.g., financial sponsorship, in-kind donations, food for events, gift cards, etc.]. Your contribution would directly impact the ability to engage students in meaningful experiences that foster academic growth, environmental stewardship, and career development.

In recognition of your support, we would be happy to feature your business in our promotional materials, social media, and at our events [Be creative]. We believe this partnership can be mutually beneficial and help strengthen ties between the university and our local community.

We would love the opportunity to speak with you further about this collaboration. Please feel free to contact us at [email] or [phone number]. Thank you for considering our request and for your continued commitment to our community.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

President, SEEDS Chapter at [University Name]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

Letter of Support from Faculty Advisor

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the funding application submitted by the [Name of ESA-SEEDS Chapter] at [Name of Institution]. As the [Job Title] at [Organization], I have had the privilege of witnessing the transformative impact that SEEDS chapters have on students from diverse backgrounds and strong interests in ecology and environmental sciences.

The [Name of Chapter] has demonstrated a deep commitment to fostering scientific excellence, leadership development, and community engagement. Through activities such as field trips, mentoring sessions, research presentations, and outreach events, the chapter has created a vibrant space for students to explore ecological careers, build professional networks, and contribute meaningfully to environmental stewardship.

Funding for this chapter will directly support its efforts to: [list specific examples]

- Expand outreach opportunities for educating the community about ecology.
- Provide support for students to attend field experiences and scientific meetings
- Host workshops and seminars that promote ecological sciences and career readiness
- Strengthening mentorship and peer support networks within the student community

These initiatives align closely with the mission of ESA-SEEDS to enrich the ecological community and create a sustainable future for all. I am confident that with continued support, the [Name of Chapter] will not only sustain its momentum but also serve as a model for other institutions seeking to advance STEM.

Thank you for considering this request. I wholeheartedly endorse the [Name of Chapter] and urge you to support their funding application.

Sincerely,
[Faculty Advisor]

[Job Title]

[Institution]

Sample Club Constitution & By-Laws

Preamble:

We, the undersigned, wishing to secure for ourselves the pleasures and benefits of an association of persons commonly interested in ecology, constitute ourselves the (your club's name) and enact this constitution as our governing law. It shall be our purpose to conduct club programs and activities as to promote ecology on campus and in the community.

Article I: Membership

All persons interested in ecology shall be eligible for membership. Membership shall be by application and election upon such terms as the club shall provide in its By-Laws.

Article II: Officers

Sec. 1. The officers of this club shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Sec. 2. The officers of this club shall be elected for a term of one year by ballot of the members present.

Sec. 3. Vacancies occurring between elections must be filled by special elections at the first regular meeting following the withdrawal or resignation.

Sec. 4. Officers may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the membership.

Article III: Duties of Officers

Sec. 1. The President shall preside at all meetings and conduct them according to the rules adopted. They shall enforce due observance of this Constitution and By-Laws; decide all questions of order; sign all official documents adopted by the club, and perform all other duties pertaining to the office of President.

Sec. 2. The Vice-President shall assume all the duties of the President in his/her absence. In addition, he/she shall organize club activities, plan, and recommend contests for operating benefits, and advance club interest and activity as approved by the club. Sec. 3. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings, keep a roll of members, submit membership applications, carry on all correspondence, read communications at each meeting, and mail written meeting notices to each member. At the expiration of his/her term he/she shall turn over all items belonging to the club to his/her successor.

Sec. 4. The Treasurer shall receive and receipt for all monies paid to the club; keep an accurate account of all monies received and expended; pay no bills without proper authorization (by the club or its officers constituting a business committee). At the end of each quarter, he/she shall submit an itemized statement of disbursements and receipts. At the end of his/her term he/she shall turn over everything in his/her possession belonging to the club to his/her successor.

Article IV: Meetings

The By-Laws shall provide for regular and special meetings. At meetings, a minimum of one third of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article V: Dues

The club, by majority vote of those present at any regular meeting, may levy upon the general membership such dues or assessments as shall be deemed necessary for the business of the organization. Non-payment of such dues or assessments shall be cause for expulsion from the club within the discretion of the membership.

Article VI: Amendments

This constitution or By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the total membership. Proposals for amendments shall be submitted in writing at a regular meeting and shall be voted on at the next following regular meeting, provided all members have been noticed by mail of the intent to amend the constitution and/or By-Laws at said meeting. Robert's Rules shall govern proceedings.

By-Laws:

- I. Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep the constitution and By-Laws of the club and have the same with him/her at every meeting. He/she shall note all amendments, changes and additions to the constitution and shall permit it to be consulted by members upon request.
- II. Membership. Full membership includes all club privileges as well as rights to hold a club office and to vote for club officers. Associate membership includes all club privileges except for the right to hold office and vote for club officers. Membership applications shall be submitted at regular meetings.
- III. Meetings. Regular meetings shall be held on _____ of each calendar month. Special meetings may be called by the President upon the written request of any five club members. Notices shall be sent to members concerning special meetings and the business to be transacted. Only such business as designated shall be transacted. Such notices shall be sent so that they arrive not less than 24 hours before the meeting.
- IV. Dues. A regular monthly assessment of \$ per member is hereby assessed by the provisions of Article V of the constitution to provide funds for expenses.
- V. Interference committee. This committee shall consist of five members (appointed by the club President). The committee shall direct investigation, invite proper inquiries, establish technical facts and testimony, and report its results to the club.
- VI. (additional By-Laws may provide for technical, program, publicity, and other
- VII. committees, or other rules provisions not provided for in this sample constitution.