



# **National Leadership Council**

## **Volunteer Manual**

**April 2020**

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## Definitions

**Annual Meeting:** the yearly membership meeting of TU and the time/location of the Annual NLC Business Meeting

**Board:** the group of people who manage and control the business, property, and affairs of TU; comprised of not more than 22 At-large and not more than 10 Grassroots Trustees

**Critical Focus Area (CFA):** the short-term priorities (1-2 years) of the NCA needing immediate and focused action

**National:** the entirety of TU but usually specifically referencing the Board of Trustees and/or staff; often pertains to specific policies, procedures, campaigns, events, etc.

**National Conservation Agenda (NCA):** the document expressing the highest priorities of TU and used to chart the course for all components of TU – national staff, councils, chapters, and members – to work together on a shared enterprise to implement TU’s mission

**National Leadership Council (NLC):** the volunteer body that sets the direction of TU and is made up of one representative elected from each state of TU’s 36 councils; the entire entity

**NLC listserv:** the e-mail distribution list of the NLC maintained by the NLC Secretary and utilized for sending communication to and from individual NLC members; to be added to this list please contact the NLC Secretary

**NLC Representative or Representative:** the individual elected by each state council to represent it amongst the volunteer body of the NLC; an individual

**PRRS:** Protect, Reconnect, Restore, Sustain

**Protect:** to guard or shield from loss or degradation; often used in reference to land(s) that are “the best of what’s left”

**Reconnect:** integrating or re-integrating the parts of the whole; often used in reference to stream segments, fish populations, etc. disconnected by barriers

**Regional Meeting:** yearly gatherings of chapters and councils to focus on regional issues, chapter/council trainings, etc.; held regionally in the west, northeast, southeast, mid-south, and upper Midwest; also called Regional Rendezvous

**Restore:** returning a stream, fish population, or riparian habitat to its proper condition

**Staff:** the employees of TU (e.g., President and CEO – Chris Wood, Vice Presidents, Field Staff, Volunteer Operations Staff, etc.)

Sustain: the set of activities (e.g., membership growth and engagement, fundraising, marketing, etc.) that allow TU to continue implementing its mission

TU Bylaws: the guiding governance document of TU including the function, responsibilities, and governance of NLC

Volunteer Operations: the staff department assigned to work with the volunteers and volunteer leaders of TU

Workgroup(s): the individual or collective “committees” of the NLC working to address and propose solutions to conservation or organizational issues

## History of the NLC

As submitted by Larry Harris, Duke Welter and Tom Anacker on September 16, 2014

There is a plaque marking the birthplace of Trout Unlimited on the Au Sable River in Michigan. It states in part: “Trout Unlimited is a National conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of trouts and their environment and the perpetuation of the fine sport of trout angling”. Since 1959 the mission and vision of TU has focused on protecting, conserving and restoring trout and salmon watersheds. The early reference to trout angling these days is sometimes forgotten, but remains the “hook” that often brings in new members and keeps all of us in touch with the resources we work hard to protect.

Today, TU has grown in both membership and staff which has greatly improved our capacity to accomplish effective conservation work. We have vibrant and committed chapters and councils across the country leading the way on the local front. Recent surveys indicate that many new members now join TU because of our conservation activities. This growth and the increased scope of our conservation work necessitate good communication between the grassroots and TU National. This is the story of how the NLC has evolved to strengthen our role within the TU organization.

Prior to 1992 the Board of Trustees of TU consisted of 100 grassroots members. This format served the organization in its early stages of growth, but to more effectively carry out the protect, conserve and restore mission, a restructuring was necessary. So the **National Resource Board (NRB)** was established as the connection between the Grassroots and National TU. Each State Council selected a Director to serve on the NRB and there were 10 Regional Vice-presidents appointed, the latter group reporting to the Board of Trustees (BOT). The BOT also had At-Large members whose primary role was to raise money to support the growing body of work carried out by TU staff. The function of the NRB was to establish the National Conservation Agenda (NCA), which was identified during meetings with NRB members in their region. After a ten-year run and the continued growth of the TU organization, the NRB format needed to be retooled. TU leaders believed that there might be a better way to have the grassroots involved in the development and implementation of NCA.

In 2001 an outside consultant was engaged to study TU and the NRB and after many interviews, came up with a new organizational format: The **National Leadership Council (NLC)**. The TU By-Laws changed the role of this new leadership group to:

- To develop and amend, as needed, the Corporation’s National Conservation Agenda (NCA) and set priorities among issues included in that agenda.
- To implement the NCA at all levels of the organization
- To work on improving and increasing the organizational capacity of TU

During this restructuring, 10 Grassroots Trustees were added to the existing group of At-Large Trustees on the BOT. Two of the new Grassroots Trustees positions were filled by the officers of the NLC – the NLC Chair and NLC Secretary. In addition to serving as NLC officers and

Grassroots Trustees, these officers sit on the Executive Board of Trout Unlimited, and serve roles in leadership of the NLC. Each State Council selects a NLC member to represent them at National TU. This individual is responsible to communicate information about National activities and policies back to their constituents.

The new organizational structure was approved in 2002, and leadership set out to accomplish the goals set forth above. Two types of NLC Workgroups were established to address those goals: Organizational and Conservation. NLC members are asked to serve on one Organizational and one Conservation workgroup of their choice. In addition, the New Initiatives Workgroup was established to serve as the nomination committee to nominate NLC officers, Grassroots Trustees and Embrace A Stream Committee members, and to review and provide suggested amendments to the NCA. The NLC as a whole then votes on the NLC officer nominations and the NCA at the Annual Meeting. The vote for the Grassroots Trustee nominees is conducted at the Annual Membership meeting.

After the current Strategic Plan was approved in 2008 the New Initiatives Workgroup revised the NCA to match how the TU mission was outlined in this Plan. In 2010 the NLC established the concept of identifying 6-8 critical focus areas to be appended to the NCA. These issues are identified by the NLC as being time sensitive and vital to the TU mission. Examples of critical focus areas include supporting the effort to stop Pebble Mine and the restoration of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Yellowstone Lake. Each year the issues are reviewed, and the list altered so as to address current issues most critical for the upcoming year.

## **Workgroups**

The various organizational and conservation workgroups were established to help implement the NCA at all levels of TU and to help build the organizational capacity of TU. Originally, the workgroups were developed to deal with the issues that were paramount in 2002. Some have endured while others completed their work and have been eliminated. As of 2014 the Workgroups are as follows:

### **Organizational**

- Communications
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Grassroots
- New Initiatives
- Youth Education

### **Conservation**

- Access
- Climate Change
- Delaware River
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Great Lakes
- Land Conservancy

- Native Trout
- Responsible Energy & Mining
- Tailwaters

Each of these workgroups has TU Staff assigned to aid them in their work. It is required that each workgroup be chaired by a NLC member, however anyone can participate as a member of a workgroup if they have a genuine interest in the group. We have seen Council Chairs, Chapter leaders and Grassroots Trustees participate in what is becoming an embodiment of the “One TU” philosophy.

### **Some NLC Accomplishments**

- Helped develop the TU Piscicide Policy
- Revised the NCA from 36 issues to 10 in 2002
- Added Land Conservation and Climate Change to the NCA
- Worked with BOT to revise the TU By-Laws
- Revised the NCA to Fit the TU Strategic Plan
- Identified and update Critical Focus Areas each year
- Approve Rechartering and Dechartering of Chapters
- Established Women’s Initiative Workgroup
- Established Climate Change Workgroup
- Worked to refine the Access policy of the BOT to fit the needs of the grassroots
- With the Board, formed the Stream Access Working Group (SAWG) to monitor access issues (a major problem for TU some ten years ago, but now a smooth operation)
- Helped develop and implement the Chapter Effectiveness Index (CEI)
- Passed a resolution against stocking of hatchery trout on top of native trout
- Developed a resolution and policy document on oil and gas development that prompted the BOT to establish a TU energy policy

### **NLC Leaders**

Kirk Otey, Chair, 2002-2006  
 Fred Rasmussen, Secretary 2002-2004  
 Duke Welter, Secretary, 2004-2006  
   Chair, 2007-2010  
 Larry Harris, Secretary, 2007-2010  
   Chair, 2010-2014  
 Tom Anacker, Secretary, 2010-2012  
 Mary Weiss, Secretary, 2012-2014  
 Mick McCorcle, Chair, 2014-2018  
 Paul Doscher, Secretary, 2014-2018  
 Jim Walker, Chair, 2018 -  
 Rich Thomas, Secretary, 2018 -



## **General Overview of the NLC**

The role of the National Leadership Council (NLC) and its rules for functioning are detailed in Article IV of the TU bylaws. The NLC is the volunteer body that sets the direction of TU and is made up of one representative elected from each state of TU's 36 councils. [Click here](#) for the roster of NLC members.

The NLC has three purposes:

- Establish the National Conservation Agenda (NCA)
- Facilitate implementation of the National Conservation Agenda (NCA)
- Build the organizational capacity of TU

The NLC accomplishes these three tasks by being a conduit between councils and TU national. NLC Representatives bring issues and concerns from their states to the national level and then bring decisions and initiatives from the national level back to their councils. The NLC meets annually in person at the Annual Meeting and via teleconferences throughout the year.

The NLC Chair and Secretary are elected annually by the members of the NLC and serve on the TU Board of Trustees. In addition, the NLC nominates grassroots trustees to serve on the Board as well as Embrace-a-Stream committee members.

NLC Representatives also serve on workgroups that focus on specific conservation or organizational issues that span more than two states. NLC workgroups are established to address regional or organization-wide issues. These workgroups are composed mainly, but not exclusively, of NLC members and are supported by one or more staff members. There are two main categories of workgroups: conservation and organizational. The current NLC workgroups are discussed elsewhere in this manual.

The composition and tasks of workgroups will change with time. To find out more about current NLC workgroups ask your council's NLC Representative.

The purpose of the National Conservation Agenda (NCA) is to chart the course for all components of TU – national staff, councils, chapters and members – to work together on a shared enterprise to implement TU's mission. The most recent NCA was adopted in September of 2016 and can be viewed in full elsewhere in this manual.

## The NLC by the Bylaws

### Straight from the Bylaws

#### ARTICLE IV National Leadership Council

Section 1. Purposes. The purposes of the National Leadership Council (“NLC”) are:

- a. National Conservation Agenda. To develop and amend, as needed, the Corporation’s National Conservation Agenda and set priorities among issues included in that agenda. The NLC shall promptly communicate all amendments to the National Conservation Agenda and its conservation priorities to all levels of the organization at the time amendments are made or new priorities established.
- b. Implementation of National Conservation Agenda. To direct the implementation of the National Conservation Agenda in projects that involve all levels of the organization, including the NLC itself, Corporation staff, state councils, local chapters and individual members. Nothing in this sub-paragraph is intended to alter the supervision responsibilities or requirements for Corporation staff members found in other parts of these Bylaws or in the Corporation’s personnel policies.
- c. Organizational Capacity. To plan and help implement national and regional initiatives designed to improve the capacity of the Corporation to fulfill its mission at all levels, assist volunteer leadership, state councils, local chapters, individual members and staff, facilitate communication between the Corporation and the Grassroots members. This area of the NLC’s responsibilities shall include communication with, training and advice to the volunteer leadership of the organization, improving the capacity of state councils and local chapters to fulfill the mission of the Corporation, integrating efforts of volunteer components of the Corporation and the Corporation staff in fulfilling the Corporation’s mission, and recruiting volunteer leaders.

Section 2. National Leadership Council Membership.

- a. Qualifications. The NLC shall be composed of one NLC Representative from each Trout Unlimited state council, an NLC Chair and an NLC secretary. To be eligible to serve as an NLC Representative or officer, an individual must be a member of the Corporation in good standing, must have served in a statewide TU office or a chapter leadership position and must be familiar with coldwater resource and TU organizational issues. NLC Representatives should also have the following qualifications: knowledge of coldwater fisheries issues of concern to their state; knowledge of their state’s council and chapter organizational needs and concerns; proven communication skills; the ability to work effectively with staff and volunteer

components of the Corporation; and experience in implementing, directing, or organizing conservation efforts.

- b. States Without Councils. The NLC may from time to time approve representation on the NLC for states or geographic areas without organized councils. The NLC shall develop criteria and procedures for approving such representation and those criteria shall include (but are not necessarily limited to) the presence of a large number of TU members in the state or geographic area or the presence of a large and active chapter in the state or geographic area. No state or geographic area without an organized council may be represented at the NLC until the NLC has approved that state or geographic area for representation and has approved procedures by which that state or geographic area nominates and elects an NLC Representative. Those procedures shall be written and registered with the National Office of the Corporation. If the NLC approves representation from a state or geographic area without a council, the representative from that state or geographic area must have held some elected leadership position in a TU chapter within the state or geographic area. If at any time after approving a state or geographic area without a council for representation on the NLC, the NLC decides that such state or geographic area no longer meets the guidelines and criteria for representation on the NLC, the NLC may vote to eliminate that state's or geographic area's representation on the NLC.
- c. Duties. Each NLC Representative shall be responsible for representing his or her state on the NLC and acting as a liaison between the NLC and his or her state and for communicating with the council, chapters and members in his or her state on issues of national concern to the Corporation and on the proceedings of the NLC. Each NLC Representative shall also coordinate with his or her state council and the NLC on implementation of the National Conservation Agenda and the NLC's organizational development efforts.
- d. Nomination and Election. Each state council shall include in its council bylaws procedures for nominating and electing its representative on the NLC. Each council's selection process shall, at a minimum, provide every active chapter with a voice in the selection process. Each state council's procedures and amendments and changes to the procedures shall be reviewed and approved by the NLC, which shall establish a procedure for such review. NLC Representatives shall serve terms determined by the councils, but no NLC Representative shall serve more than five consecutive years on the NLC.
- e. Vacancies. Subject to the foregoing limitations and conditions, each state or geographic area with an NLC Representative shall elect an NLC Representative to fill any vacancy on the NLC created by the death, disability, removal, or resignation of its NLC Representative. Such NLC Representative so elected shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the NLC Representative whom he or she replaces. State councils, or other states or geographic areas with NLC

representation, shall promptly notify the National Office of the Corporation of any election pursuant to this paragraph.

- f. Removal. Any NLC Representative who shall be absent from two consecutive meetings of the NLC shall be automatically removed and the state council notified unless such absence is excused by the Secretary of the NLC. The NLC, by two-thirds vote at a regular or Special Meeting, may remove any NLC Representative whenever, in its judgment, the interest of the Corporation would be best served.

### Section 3 – National Leadership Council Officers.

- a. Officers. The officers of the NLC shall be the Chair and Secretary of the NLC. Nominees for these positions shall be put forward by the Nominating Committee of the NLC. The nominees shall be selected by the NLC at its Annual Meeting and must receive a majority of the votes of NLC Representatives present at the meeting. If no nominee put forward by the Nominating Committee receives a majority of the votes of NLC Representatives present, or if the Nominating Committee fails to put forward any nominees, the NLC may elect a Chair and/or a Secretary of its own initiative. To be eligible to serve as NLC Chair or Secretary, a person must be a current or former NLC Representative. If a current NLC Representative is elected as Chair or Secretary, the state or other geographic area represented by that person shall elect a replacement to complete his or her term. The NLC Chair and the NLC Secretary shall each serve no more than four consecutive one year terms.
- b. Chair. The Chair of the NLC shall preside at all meetings of the NLC and shall be the chief liaison between the NLC and the Board of Trustees. The NLC Chair shall also be a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair of the NLC shall have the authority to appoint chairs of NLC committees, who shall be NLC members.
- c. Secretary. The NLC Secretary shall keep the minutes of the NLC in one or more books provided for that purpose; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with these Bylaws or as required by law; log attendance at all NLC meetings; notify state councils and National Staff of NLC actions; and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the NLC Secretary by the NLC Chair. The NLC Secretary shall also be a member of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- d. Removal. The NLC, by two-thirds vote of its members, may remove any Officer of the NLC whenever, in its judgment, the interest of the Corporation would be served thereby.
- e. Vacancies. If the office of the Chair of the NLC becomes or is vacant for any reason, a successor shall be elected or appointed by the NLC from among qualified members of the NLC to hold office for the unexpired term. If the office of Secretary of the

NLC becomes vacant for any reason, a successor shall be appointed by the Chair of the NLC from among qualified members of the NLC to hold office for the unexpired term.

Section 4. Regular Meetings. The NLC shall meet at least twice a year. One of the meetings of the NLC shall be held each year at the same place as and contemporaneously with the Annual Meeting of the Corporation's members. Other regular meetings of the NLC shall be held at a time and place decided by the NLC and may be held by conference call. Notice of such meetings shall be similar to that required for meetings of the Board of Trustees pursuant to Article V section 9. All Trustees shall be invited to attend meetings of the NLC, but shall not be obligated to attend.

Section 5. Special Meetings. A Special Meeting of the NLC may be called by, (a) the Chair of the NLC; or, (b) in the absence of the Chair, by the Chief Executive Officer and President of the Corporation; or (c) upon the request of ten NLC Representatives. Ten days notice of any Special Meeting shall be provided to each NLC Representative and NLC officer and shall state the purpose of the Special Meeting. The Special Meeting shall take place at such time and place as may be set forth in such notice and may be held by conference call.

Section 6. Action Without Meeting. The NLC may act upon written proposals and motions by mail, FAX, or electronic mail after reasonable advance notice when requested by the Chair of the NLC or by the Chief Executive Officer and President of the Corporation. Such written proposals and motions shall, to the extent possible, provide full and complete reports of the issues and the arguments advanced both for and against each proposition. Each NLC Representative or Officer who responds to the request of the Chair of the NLC or the Chief Executive Officer and President of the Corporation by voting by mail, FAX, or electronic mail shall be considered as having been present at a meeting of the NLC for the purpose of determining whether or not a quorum was present.

Section 7. Proxies. Proxy voting shall not be permitted at any meeting of the NLC.

Section 8. Substitute NLC Member. In the event an NLC member is unable to attend the Annual Meeting of the NLC, the NLC Secretary may permit a substitute attendee appointed by the council to attend and vote at the NLC meeting, provided the council gives notice to the NLC Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Section 9. Quorum and Manner of Acting. A majority of the members of the NLC (including NLC Representatives and officers) shall constitute a quorum necessary for the transaction of business at any meeting of the NLC. The act of a majority of the NLC members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the NLC, unless the act of a greater number is required by statute or by these Bylaws. The Chair of the NLC shall preside at meetings of the NLC. In the Chair's absence, the Secretary of the NLC shall preside. If both shall be absent, the NLC members present shall elect a Chair and a secretary for such meeting.

Section 10. Conflict of Interest. No NLC member shall enter into a contractual relationship with the Corporation unless approved by the NLC and the Board of Trustees.

Section 11. Notices and Meetings of Board of Trustees. All NLC members shall be invited to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees, but shall not be obligated to attend.

Section 12. Committees. The Nominating Committee of the NLC shall nominate individuals to serve as Grassroots Trustees and as NLC officers. The Chair of the NLC shall select and appoint the members of the Nominating Committee of the NLC and may appoint non-NLC members to the nominating committee, so long as 75% of the members of the nominating committee are NLC members. The NLC may create and its Chair shall appoint the members of any committees or working groups, including persons who are not NLC members, that are necessary or desirable to further any of the purposes of the NLC.

Section 13. Policies and Procedures. The NLC may promulgate any policies or procedures which are necessary or desirable to carry out the tasks and functions delegated to it by these Bylaws.

## The Bullet-point Version of the NLC in the Bylaws

The following summary was graciously prepared by Jeff Witten in February 2017.

### Purpose

- develop and amend the National Conservation Agenda (NCA) and set priorities
- promptly communicate all amendments and priorities to all levels of the organization
- direct the implementation of the NCA in projects that involve all levels of the organization (but not alter the supervision responsibilities of Staff)
- plan and help implement national and regional initiatives designed to improve the capacity of the Corporation to fulfill its mission at all levels

### Membership

- Qualifications – one NLC member per state council, must have been a statewide officer or chapter leader
- must be familiar with coldwater resource and TU organizational issues
- should also have knowledge of their state's council and chapter organizational needs and concerns
- NLC may approve representation on the NLC for states or geographic area without organized councils

### Duties

- NLC member shall represent their state acting as liaison and for communicating with council, chapters and members on issues of national concern and proceedings of the NLC

### Nomination and Election

- Council bylaws to include procedures for nominating and electing the NLC member with a voice from each active chapter
- Any NLC member who shall be absent from two consecutive NLC meetings shall be automatically removed or by a two-thirds vote on the NLC

### NLC Officers

- The Chair and Secretary are nominated by the Nominating Committee and voted at Annual Meeting
- If elected Chair or Secretary were NLC rep, state is to elect a replacement
- Chair and Secretary serve no more than four consecutive one year terms
- Chair shall be the chief liaison between NLC and BOT and is a member of the BOT, of the BOT Executive Committee and Vice Chair of the BOT
- Chair shall appoint Chair of NLC committees
- Secretary shall keep the minutes, log attendance, make all notices, notify council and Staff of the NLC actions

- NLC officers can be removed by two-thirds vote

### Regular and Special Meetings

- NLC shall meet twice per year, one of which shall be at the Annual Meeting, other meetings by conference call, all BOT members are to be invited but not required to attend
- Special meetings may be called by the Chair, the CEO or by the request of 10 NLC members

### Action without meeting

- NLC may act on written proposals and motions by email

### Proxy voting is not allowed

### Substitute NLC member

- The Secretary may permit a council to appoint a substitute to attend and vote at Annual Meeting with 24 hour notice

### Quorum

- A majority, including members and officers, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting

### Conflict of Interest

- No member shall enter into a contractual relationship with TU unless approved by the NLC and BOT

### Notices and Meetings of BOT

- All NLC members shall be invited, but not required, to attend BOT meetings

### Committees

- The nominating committee of the NLC shall nominate Grassroots Trustees
- The NLC Chair may select and appoint the members of the Nomination Committee and may appoint non-NLC members so long as 75% are NLC reps

### Policies and Procedures

- The NLC may promulgate any policies or procedures which are necessary or desirable to carry out the tasks and functions delegated by these bylaws



## **Practical Application of the NLC Bylaw Responsibilities**

This manual has focused almost exclusively to this point on the theoretical expression of the duties of the NLC as explicitly described by the TU Bylaws. That theoretical expression would be meaningless, however, unless it is accompanied by an understanding of its practical applications. The following sections describe how the NLC turns the theory of the Bylaws into practice.

### **National Conservation Agenda (NCA)**

The Bylaws direct the NLC to develop and amend, as needed, the Corporation's National Conservation Agenda and set priorities among issues included in that agenda. Further, the NLC shall promptly communicate all amendments to the National Conservation Agenda and its conservation priorities to all levels of the organization at the time amendments are made or new priorities established.

In summary, the NCA has been in existence since 2002 and undergone periodic intense review for modification to ensure it correlates with the TU Strategic Plan. This responsibility is facilitated by the NLC's New Initiatives Workgroup as previously described in "History of the NLC." Between these intense reviews, however, annual modifications also facilitated by the Workgroup are often made. Typically in the spring of each year, the Chair of the New Initiatives Workgroup sends out through the NLC listserv a Request for Proposals (RFP) for amendments (i.e., additions, deletions, or edits) to the NCA. All proposals received are reviewed by the entire Workgroup to determine if a motion to amend the NCA is to be brought forth to the entire NLC for consideration at the NLC Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. Since the NCA is intended to be a comprehensive agenda (i.e., list) of all TU conservation activities rather than a list of individual or "pet" projects it is a common occurrence that proposals submitted can be categorized within the existing agenda. Nevertheless, new proposals are encouraged to be submitted as this process is one of the key ways TU is alerted to new and important conservation activities.

### **Critical Focus Areas (CFA)**

The Critical Focus Area concept was devised by the NLC to address specific issues which demand specific importance and/or priority in a given year. Although every line item in the NCA is certainly important and receiving attention from one or more chapters, councils, and staff there are issues that arise from time to time demanding urgent action or providing time-sensitive opportunity. Such issues often span multiple levels of TU and demand special focus. Due to the limited resources (e.g., finances, time, etc.) of any organization to address such urgent or time-sensitive issues, the CFA list has been intentionally limited to no more than eight issues. For that reason, a special procedure has been established to amend the CFA (included below).

Similar to the annual NCA review, the Chair of the New Initiatives Workgroup in the spring of each year utilizes the NLC listserv to send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for amendments (i.e., additions, deletions, or edits) to the CFA. Both current NCA issues and all

proposals received are reviewed based on the criteria outlined in the procedures. These criteria guide the New Initiatives Workgroup in their annual motion to the entire NLC regarding any potential amendments to the CFA list.

## **Procedure for Establishing Critical Focus Areas of the National Conservation Agenda**

The National Conservation Agenda expresses the highest coldwater conservation priorities of the organization. These priorities are established by TU's grassroots governing body the National Leadership Council to reflect the concerns of the broadest range of the membership. They include both long-term priorities, and the areas of more immediate concern called Critical Focus Areas (CFAs).

A CFA may be established whenever concrete actions to address immediate concerns can be planned and resourced. Although urgency is explicit in establishing a CFA, so is a high probability of measurable success in no more than a 24 month time frame. The number of CFAs must be limited to no more than eight to avoid diverting attention and resources from the overall priorities of the NCA.

The New Initiatives Workgroup of the NLC manages the CFA process, monitors progress on all CFAs, and presents findings and recommendations to the NLC yearly at TU annual meetings at a minimum. Throughout the year it can receive or prepare recommendations for adding new CFAs, and/or for changing or deleting existing CFAs. Approval of those recommendations must be by a majority vote of a quorum of the NLC at its annual meeting or at the next NLC meeting following any recommendation by the NI WG.

The processes for reviewing the status of existing CFAs and for recommending new CFAs are time- sensitive. The goal is to provide all NLC members with well-considered CFA action recommendations prior to the approval meeting, in time for them to review these proposals with their councils.

Any TU member in good standing, any chapter, or any council, through any NLC member, or any NLC member on their own behalf, and any NLC Workgroup may submit a proposal for a new CFA or for the deletion of a CFA to the NI Workgroup. Any such Proposal intended for the annual review should be forwarded electronically, along with the information below, to the NI WG by the NLC representative not later than April 1st, or May 1st. Any proposal that is not submitted in time for final action at the TU Annual Meeting will normally require a minimum three (3) month period for final action by the full NLC.

Format: The proposal should include the following:

1. Title - A short title for the CFA.
2. Issue – A brief description of the issue and its significance in terms of the TU mission and in specific reference to TU's strategic plan and the current National Conservation Agenda.
3. Objective – A short-term (24 month or less) achievable and measurable objective.
4. Justification – document the value proposition of the CFA.

- a. Mission Impact: e.g. higher value would impact native and wild Salmonids and their habitats, achieve measurable improvements on the TU Conservation Success Index, impact the 'protect' zone of the TU mission model, address an element of the TU Strategic Plan, etc.
- b. Organizational Impact: e.g. higher value would benefit TU's, rather than another organization's mission.
- c. Resources to be committed: e.g. higher value would accrue from grassroots resources, i.e. clear identification of a sponsoring group's, council's or chapter's skin-in-the-game.
- d. A planned activities Timeline, and a proposal analysis that demonstrates the goals, planned activities and resources are meaningful and realistic.
- e. Leadership: Clear identification of a lead entity that will provide leadership and progress reporting for the proposed CFA. Include identification of proposing NLC Representative, proposing Chapter, Council, and/or Staff group representative that will provide on-going reporting of status and progress toward completion. Also include the NLC New Initiatives WG member expected to provide Liaison for reporting.

The NI WG will base its preliminary recommendations on the status of all current CFAs and the probability of a vacancy on the list of eight. It may refer proposals to other NLC WGs, and to TU staff for substantive recommendations. For annual reviews, it will submit final recommendations to the NLC not later than June 30th for consideration. NLC Representatives should provide their council's concurrence/non-concurrence and/or comments by August 31st to the NLC Secretary/NLC NI WG Chair to finalize the annual meeting agenda.

Any update to the NCA / CFAs will be posted to the TU Website within 10 business days of the NLC action, appropriately dated with that approval date.

## Communication

The primary method of communicating the NCA/CFA is the TU website. The Bylaws direct the NLC to implement the NCA in projects that involve all levels of the organization indicating that care should be taken to ensure the NCA and/or any amendments and priorities are comprehensively communicated (e.g., presentations to the Board of Trustees, Action Alerts to all chapter/council leaders, presentations by NLC reps to their councils, etc.). Further, themes identified (e.g., Strategic Opportunities, emphases on certain PRRS elements, etc.) in the NCA should receive special attention in communications presentations throughout the organization.

## Implementation of the NCA

The Bylaws task the NLC to assist in the implementation of the National Conservation Agenda in projects that involve all levels of the organization, including the NLC itself, staff, state councils, local chapters and individual members. It should be noted this directive is not intended to alter the supervision responsibilities or requirements for staff (i.e., NLC members **do not** receive supervisory status over staff with this directive but instead are encouraged to work in partnership with staff and other volunteers when possible).

Implementation of the NCA (and CFA) within the NLC occurs primarily within the Workgroups. Each of these Workgroups, whose activity is summarized in following sections, generally works to create guidance and/or programs. Examples include the Climate Change Awareness and Education Campaign, Responsible Energy leading the formulation of a Responsible Energy Development White Paper, Land Conservancy creating a Funding Plan for chapters and councils, etc.

Communication of the NCA can also help to facilitate its implementation. By ensuring the NCA is well-known throughout all levels of the organization it is possible for the entire organization as well as individual entities (i.e., Board, staff, councils, chapters) to create Strategic Plans, Work Plans, budgets and other planning tools reflecting priorities that will achieve the overall TU mission. Further, effective two-way communications will identify areas in which skills training is necessary to ensure volunteers and staff at all levels are sufficiently capable of implementing the NCA.

## Capacity

As published previously in this manual, “to plan and help implement national and regional initiatives designed to improve the capacity of [TU] to fulfill its mission at all levels...” The list goes on and could go on even longer when you contemplate the various ways in which one could define capacity. Distilling it to its simplest, the Bylaws directive to the NLC is as follows: improve the ability to achieve the TU mission.

There are numerous ways in which the NLC works to improve this ability. In fact, many of the chapter and council resources have had their origin in NLC Workgroups (e.g., 50+ fundraising ideas gathered in 2012, diversity tools and programs, Chapter Effectiveness Index, Youth Education and Women’s Initiatives Chairs, etc.). Similarly, some of the web conference trainings have either had their subject matter origins in the Workgroups or been conducted by NLC Representatives. Or, perhaps your NLC Rep has utilized the materials from one of these training sessions to personally train your own chapter or council. In essence the NLC, in collaboration and partnership with Volunteer Operations, is the primary entity within TU that does almost anything and everything to increase the ability of TU to achieve its mission.

## NLC Workgroups

### Conservation Workgroups

#### Great Lakes

Focuses on various Great Lakes issues, including aquatic invasive species, coaster brook trout, water quality and quantity issues.

### **Native Trout**

Facilitates native trout restoration, with emphases on Yellowstone Cutthroat restoration and stream temperature monitoring. Working with Trout Unlimited science staff, the workgroup recently put out a stream temperature monitoring handbook to assist chapters and councils in running local stream monitoring programs. The workgroup also serves as a resource group to assist chapters and councils in support of various conservation efforts.

### **Climate Change**

What will the potential of a changing climate have on the cold water resources we all respect and enjoy? Climate Change, and the extent to which it is man-caused, is a divisive issue; the Climate Change Workgroup respects that. We will develop an education and awareness program based upon the scientific background provided by TU Staff and others. With adequate scientific understanding, we all should be concerned about the impacts to our coldwater fishery resources. How much risk should we accept? Can we afford to risk the future of trout and salmon?

### **Delaware River**

Represents TU on efforts to develop fish-protective minimum flow agreements in the Delaware River Basin.

### **TU DARE (Driftless Area Restoration Effort)**

Arises from TU's Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE) in the unglaciated region of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois, bringing together local, state and federal agencies and private conservation groups to organize and fund watershed restoration projects across the 24,000 square mile region.

### **Responsible Energy**

Focuses on efforts to protect coldwater fisheries from the various modes of energy production: coal and hard rock mining, oil and gas drilling, wind, solar and nuclear.

### **Land Conservancy**

Works to develop TU's Conservancy Fund, akin to Embrace-a-Stream program, to assist land trusts and other conservancy groups in acquiring land and easements to protect coldwater resources and access to them.

### **Access**

The Working Group shall serve as the central contact point for all TU chapters and councils confronted with or actually engaged in issues related to the public's right to access rivers, lakes, and streams for purposes of fishing. Any chapter or council faced with such an issue, or desiring to become involved in such an issue, shall contact and consult with the Working Group. This consultation shall occur with respect to any access issue, including advocating for or negotiating voluntary access agreements with landowners.

### **Tailwaters**

Serves to help TU volunteers advocate for salmonid populations in tailwater fisheries. The workgroup explores issues, challenges and threats to tailwater fisheries and recommends direction and actions for TU staff and volunteers to take to advocate for these waters.

## Hard Rock Mining

Mining is a critical cold water issue and, as such, should remain a focal point for TU. Sulfide mining and acid drainage, as well as other types of extraction activities, present threats to cold water resources around the country. Local chapters and councils are the first line of defense when potentially damaging projects are proposed. This Workgroup can provide help (e.g., handbook of suggested plans and activities) to be more effective in their opposition to projects that have the potential to damage cold water resources.

## Organizational Workgroups

### Diversity Initiative

Mission: To create effective strategies and programs to recruit a more diverse membership profile in TU; encourage diversity within leadership at the chapter, state and national levels; and to ensure every chapter creates a welcoming environment for TU members of different genders, ethnicities, ages, and cultures to achieve the TU conservation mission.

### New Initiatives

Receives and evaluates proposals for changes to the National Conservation Agenda; evaluates major issues facing TU and explores potential solutions to those issues; solicits, evaluates and nominates new grassroots members of the Board of Trustees (for election by TU members); nominates NLC officers and Embrace-A-Stream committee members (for election by NLC representatives).

### Communications

The functions of the Communications Workgroup are to:

- A) clarify and communicate the role and function of the National Leadership Council to all parts of TU;
- B) facilitate communications within the NLC and its workgroups; and
- C) encourage and foster communications to and from the NLC to chapters, councils, members, trustees and staff.

### Grassroots

The mission of the Grassroots workgroup is to continuously assess and assist effectiveness of our chapters and councils and to develop tools and resources for improvement. The workgroup helps develop new chapter models to meet TU needs.

In 2015, the workgroup implemented significant revisions to the Chapter Effectiveness Index (CEI) and the workgroup intends to develop a Council Effectiveness Guide. Both of these tools are designed to help chapters and councils improve effectiveness to engage, retain and develop their grassroots membership. The challenge is to make the tools relevant, easy to use and provide our leaders with concise and accurate data that will allow them to better serve the diverse needs of the grassroots.

Currently, the workgroup is working on the National Conservation Agenda's "capacity" critical focus area and looking to provide additional tools that will build organizational capacity.

## Youth Education

Engages young people in activities that will foster in them the values to carry on the mission of TU and to secure for future generations TU's vision.

## NLC Representatives


Now that you are an NLC Member or are contemplating whether you might aspire to the position, how do you go about fulfilling the responsibilities that have been described within this manual?

As those responsibilities pertain to the NCA we hope this manual has been fairly clear. There are certainly, however, specific and tangible ways in which you can be a true asset to your chapter and council. The good news is that there is. It's been said the responsibility of the NLC can be summed up as the "conduit to communication" both to and from chapters/councils and national as well as vice versa. Further, it's been said numerous times at regional and national meetings that the key to being a "good" NLC is communication, communication, communication. This is, however, still theory. What follows are sections that will help you take that theory and put it into practice.

## Fulfilling your responsibilities

### The Basic Information

#### TU Website

As if you didn't already have it memorized: [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org). There are many resources available to you here, most by logging into the website through .

#### Trout Unlimited Leadership Manual

If you have not already done so in your previous TU leadership roles, take the time to familiarize yourself with [TU's Volunteer Leadership Manual](#). This manual has a host of information about everything TU!

#### Leaders Only Tools

This [section](#) of our website is dedicated to volunteer leaders and allows you to access rosters, print mailing labels, email your members, upload important documents, file your Annual Financial Report, make chapter or leadership changes, as well as view and download various membership reports.

## Tacklebox

In addition to the data accessible in the Leaders Only Tools and the information in TU's Leadership Manual, virtually every resource one might need to effectively and efficiently run a chapter or council can be found in the [Tacklebox](#).

Although you probably won't be able to memorize every morsel of information in these pages on the TU website (even if you could, be certain to come back often to check out new updates, information, and resources), becoming familiar with it will help you be an asset to your chapters and council. In fact, it isn't too much of a stretch to state that experts in the content on the website are the most valuable people in their state. The ability to provide quick guidance on the location of a resource – even if you don't know the content 100% - makes you invaluable!

## The Finer Details

### Succession

One of the most important things an NLC can do is identify who will succeed them in the position. Even though you might be beginning the first year of what will ultimately be a five-year term it's not too early to think about your successor. While there are numerous tales of folks who began thinking about succession late in the process, too often to disappointing results, there are few, if any, stories of regret for beginning the process too soon.

Why begin so soon if at all? Isn't my successor a concern for the leadership of the council when my term(s) expire? Absolutely not! Identifying your successor as early as possible will allow you to facilitate a smooth transition from one NLC to the next. This means you will be able to orient them to the protocols and procedures of the NLC, introduce them to the various Workgroups on which you serve as well as others that may be of interest to them or your council, introduce them to other Reps, and anything else that will help assure a seamless transition. Not only will this help your successor be the greatest asset they can be to your chapters and council, but also to the NLC and the rest of TU.

### Participate

In order to be an asset, you must become involved. There are numerous opportunities for you to do so, including:

- Join one conservation and one organizational Workgroup...at a minimum. If there are more that interest you by all means volunteer to do so.
- Attend all your council meetings (this should go without saying).
- Attend all the meetings of your home chapter (don't forget your origins!).
- Attend the Annual Meeting every year. This is the only time each year where the NLC gets together in person and is a great opportunity to network and conduct the business of the NLC. To encourage your attendance National provides a \$1000 stipend for you or your substitute to attend.



- Attend at least every other Board meeting at the Annual Meeting. You'll likely be there anyway so stay for the Sunday Board meeting to understand what/how decisions are made at the highest level of TU.
- Attend your Regional Rendezvous. This is a great opportunity for you to learn from other chapter and council leaders as well as other Reps. They are also another great opportunity to network and address issues that may be uniquely relevant to your region.
- Participate in all NLC conference calls. Typically held 4-5 times per year and lasting about an hour, this is the time when you'll get the latest news and information that will help you fulfill your responsibilities.
- Participate in new Rep training. If this manual alone isn't enough, periodic trainings for new Reps will help orient you and guide you through everything you need to know to set you up for success.

In summary, there is not a shortage of places in which you can get involved. By getting involved you can help set the direction of TU, avail the NLC and TU of your talents and skills, and learn from the talents and skills of others.

### **Train the Trainer**

As you acquire all this information from your participation and knowledge of the TU website, share it! All of your effort to participate (i.e., your training) has prepared you to become the trainer. Whether it be the navigation of the website tools, how to use the Project Finder Reporting Tool, Succession Planning and Leadership Development or another tool that will help your chapters or council there is a high probability you will have the knowledge and skills to help increase their capacity.

If there is an area in which you are not comfortable or feel you lack the knowledge or skills to effectively help your chapters or council, don't hesitate to reach out for help. Other Reps are likely to be willing to help you out. Or, reach out to staff (e.g., Volunteer Operations, Science Team, etc.) who frequently put on trainings by request.

### **Accountability**

Hold yourself accountable for your own success. This manual has informed you of the many tools available to you to help you be successful. And, new ones are constantly being developed. Within the TU support structure there are very few, if any, reasons you can't be the asset you, your chapters, and council want you to be.

At the same time, hold others accountable. There are many people working very hard to ensure the success of the entire organization and you are undoubtedly one of them. Say what you'll do, do what you say, and expect to be held accountable. We certainly all have times when life intervenes in even our best intentions. Yet, we can't let that stop us. There are polite ways to hold each other accountable and we should be certain to utilize them when appropriate. There are also courteous ways to pass off duties we expected to complete in a timely manner but cannot. Ask for help when you need it and offer help when you can.

## Communicate

As the “conduit to communication” this is one of your most important responsibilities. It is important that you ensure consistent and appropriate communications *from* National *to* chapters and councils. It is also important that you ensure consistent and appropriate communication *from* your chapters and council *to* National.

### What to communicate?

Now that you’ve been participating in numerous ways it is important that you communicate the things you’ve learned.

Some of the types of things you might communicate *from National* include:

- Report on the happenings of the Annual Meeting, including the CEO address
- Report on the happenings of your Regional Rendezvous
- Report on the happenings of NLC Conference Calls
- Report on important policies and procedures
- Report on the activities of the Workgroups with which you participate
- Report on the activities of other Workgroups
- Report on the NCA and any updates
- Report on the CFA and any updates

Some of the types of things you might communicate *from your chapters or council* include:

- Potential conservation issues for the NCA or CFA
- Issues of organizational capacity that could be addressed
- Issues of chapter or council operations that could be addressed
- Issues ripe for regional or national collaboration
- Success stories from chapter/council events, challenges overcome, etc.
- Best practices you’ve learned

### Why communicate them?

There are reasons other than simply fulfilling your NLC Rep responsibility to communicate these and other types of things. Foremost, it is unlikely there is anyone in the world who does not like to be informed. Second, by maintaining an informed TU we engage all levels of the organization. In doing so, we might be surprised where our next subject matter expert comes from or perhaps we pique the interest of someone who becomes our next rock star volunteer leader – maybe your successor. Third, utilizing the example of the NCA and CFA, by communicating the priorities of National to chapters and councils and assisting in the development of their own agendas we are able to help ensure a cohesive and complementary approach to achieving our mission. There are many other reasons but these should be more than enough to convince you of the importance.

## How to communicate?

There is, unfortunately, no “silver bullet” for perfect communications methods that is guaranteed to work. In fact, with current technology there may be many more methods to communicate than there are things to actually communicate. A good place to start figuring out the best ways to communicate to your chapters and council is an honest assessment of the communications tools already in place. What are they? Do they work? Are they effective?

It’s a good bet that some of your current tools include e-mail, Facebook and other social platforms, a newsletter of some sort, and possibly many others. If they work, keep using them. If they don’t, it might be time to try some new ones. Regardless, have you consulted with the chapter members, leadership, and council to identify the preferred method of communications? There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction to discuss and determine the quantity, quality, and preferred method of communicating. For example, the list of things you might communicate from National includes report after report after report. Submission of written reports was, however, determined in one council to be the most effective and efficient way of communicating a great number of important items to a significant number of people. Specifically, the reports are written and distributed prior to the council meetings. Attendees are expected to have read the information prior to coming to the meeting. This allows discussion at the meeting to focus not on the conveying of information but, instead, on what it means and how it potentially impacts the chapters and council. This is what works for this council; have the face-to-face discussion with yours to identify what works best for you.

## Other Ways

This manual hopefully sheds some light on the ways in which you can fulfill your responsibility as an NLC Rep. There are, however, countless others. If you have something to add that you feel might be helpful to others please send it on to the Grassroots Workgroup. They will welcome input and continue to revise this manual as necessary.