

***Legal Technical Committee***

***Operational Guidelines***

***BACKGROUND***

The Directors of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) approved modifications to the structure and general operating guidelines associated with their various committees at its May 4, 2008 and later amended in 2012 and 2016. The SEAFWA Directors established the Legal Technical Committee with the following goal:

***GOAL:***

The Legal Committee is responsible for advising the SEAFWA Directors and making recommendations on legal matters and issues which may affect the ability of member states to fulfill their management responsibilities. This Committee shall review and make recommendations regarding the activities and programs for agency legal personnel at the annual conference. The Committee shall coordinate with other SEAFWA committees to provide such legal information and perspective as may be beneficial to the accomplishment of those committees’ responsibilities. The Legal Committee shall also be responsible for the conduct of the annual Legal Writing Award. Membership on this Committee should include a representative from each member state as recommended by the state Director. (<http://www.seafwa.org/committees/legal/> (last visited on June 30, 2021) (lightly revised for scrivener’s errors)).

***COMMITTEE CHARGES:***

In light of its goal, the Legal Technical Committee will

* **Coordinate** among its membership, state directors, and, if deemed appropriate by the committee, other stakeholders to identify and advise member states on legal matters and issues that may affect the ability of member states to fulfill their management responsibilities;
* **Coordinate** with other SEAFWA committees to provide legal information and perspective as may assist those committees in meeting their responsibilities;
* **Coordinate** the Legal Track presentations at the annual conference; and
* **Conduct** the annual Legal Writing Award.

***MEMBERSHIP and VOTING***

The Legal Technical Committee shall be comprised of an individual(s) from each member state as recommended by each state’s Director. All members shall be appointed by the President, unless otherwise provided for by other action of the SEAFWA Directors. More than one representative from a state member agency may be appointed to the committee; however, each state is limited to one vote per action before the committee.

A committee member or a state director may designate, in writing, a proxy in the event that the state representative is unable to participate in a meeting or any part thereof. A representative designated by proxy is authorized to represent the designating member in all matters before the committee, unless otherwise limited by the proxy. A proxy may be freely revoked by the person who conferred it. However, any action taken by virtue of the proxy while it was in effect remains valid.

***SUB-COMMITTEES***

The committee may, as it deems appropriate, elect to establish one or more sub-committees from time to time. The committee may also elect to dissolve a sub-committee. Any sub-committee remains part of the committee and reports to it. Only a committee member may serve as chair of a subcommittee.

***MEETINGS***

The annual meeting of the Legal Technical Committee will be held in conjunction with the Annual SEAFWA Conference. In the event that the Annual Conference is not held, the committee’s annual meeting will be held at a time and place determined by the SEAFWA Executive Committee.

The most effective committees are those with members who actively participate in its meetings and the work in between. Committee members’ attendance at meetings is strongly encouraged. A member may participate in a meeting by any means that allows for reasonable participation, including by phone and remote platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Google Meets.

Committee meetings are open to the public. Public participation in committee discussions shall be at the chair’s discretion. Only committee members may participate in deliberations on matters before the committee. Only committee members may vote on matters before the committee. More than one representative from a state member agency may be a committee member; however, each state is limited to one vote per item.

[Quorum issue to be discussed at the committee’s business meeting held during the conference.] The committee will continue to operate in a cordial and informal manner as it has been able to reach consensus on matters in the past.

Where any vote on a motion is taken, it carries where more than half of the quorum votes in favor. In the event of a tie, a motion fails.

Resolutions proposed by the committee must first be presented to the Resolutions Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Directors.

Committees that desire to solicit funding for any purpose in the name of the SEAFWA must obtain prior approval from the Directors or the Executive Committee.

***OFFICERS***

The Legal Technical Committee shall have three officers – a Chair, Vice-Chair, and an Immediate-past Chair. The chair shall be a committee member from the state where the upcoming annual meeting will be held. The vice-chair shall be a committee member from the state where the annual meeting will be held the following the current meeting. The Immediate-past Chair shall be the chair of the prior year’s annual meeting.

The terms of office for each shall be the calendar day after the conclusion of the SEAFWA annual conference until the last calendar day of the next SEAFWA annual conference.

***DUTIES OF OFFICERS***

The Chair is responsible for the effective administration of the committee and its contributions at the upcoming annual meeting. The Chair’s responsibilities and authorities include:

* Calling, scheduling, and noticing committee meetings, including preparing and communicating meeting agendas. Notice should be provided to committee members, the SEAFWA Executive Secretary or designee, and others as appropriate;
* Ensuring the committee’s goals and charges are met;
* Conducting committee meetings in a cordial, efficient, and effective manner to advance the goals of the committee. Meetings should conducted in a cordial fashion to promote participation, in an efficient manner so as to be courteous of others’ time, and in an effective manner to ensure that the purposes of the meeting and committee are met;
* Designating, with consent of the committee member, a committee member to serve as chair *pro tem* for a meeting or any part thereof should the need, in the chair’s discretion, arise;
* Communicating, as appropriate, committee business to the SEAFWA Directors, Executive Secretary, and others;
* Facilitating communications with other SEAFWA committees for the purpose of coordinating meeting presentations and, where appropriate, on other matters of overlapping concern and mutual interest;
* Drafting and submitting the committee’s annual report (draft form attached). This, and other reports duly requested by SEAFWA, shall be submitted within forty-five (45) days from the date of the meeting or request; and
* Other duties as may be deemed appropriate by the committee and consistent with the committee goals.

The role of the Vice-Chair and Immediate-past Chair is to provide continuity of leadership by allowing the upcoming chair to become familiar with the duties of chair and the current chair to benefit from the experience of the Immediate-past Chair.

**SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES**

 **Legal Technical Committee Report**

**Chair** (Insert Name),

**Meeting of** (Insert Date)

**City, State**

**Meeting convened** (insert start time);

**Chaired by** (insert name);

**Committee Members Attending:** (list by name)

**Scheduled Discussion Items:** (provide bulleted list with brief annotation about nature of each discussion)

**Other Discussion Items:** (provide bulleted list with brief annotation about nature of each discussion)

**Action Items and Recommendations:** (provide brief subject statement and specific action recommended)

**Committee Recommendation for Chai**r**:** (insert name)

**Meeting adjourned: (insert time)**

**List of current committee members and contact information:** (attach listing)

**List of interested participants and contact information:** (attach listing)

**List and description of active committee members:** (describe)

**Submitted by**: (Insert Committee Chair name)