Policy Handbook

NORTHWEST VOYAGEURS
CANOE & KAYAK CLUB
Edmonton, Alberta
Preamble:

This handbook is designed to familiarize executive members of the NWV Canoe & Kayak Club with the structures and operations of the club. It hopefully provides the information necessary to anyone interested in an executive position or even simply how their club operates. This manual can be made available to any club member upon request.

The policies are meant to give an overview of the authorities and responsibilities involved in various aspects of the club and not to be prescriptive in how any job should or should not be done. Policies are organized into general classifications in the handbook rather than simply as job descriptions so as to better explain the club as a whole rather than the specific executive duties.

It is extremely important for executive members to familiarize themselves with the handbook in order to make their job easier and more rewarding. Since many positions have overlapping duties or responsibilities, executive members need to read more than just their own role description.

The handbook should not be viewed as an “End All”, but should continue to be developed and modified since people and circumstances will always be changing.
Northwest Voyageurs Canoe & Kayak Club

Policy Handbook

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Section 100 Introduction

101 – Objectives of the NWV

Under the Societies Act Application, dated 20th October 1988, the Objectives of the above named Society are as follows:

To promote canoeing and kayaking activities in the Province of Alberta and in pursuit of that objective to serve the following other purposes:

(i) To improve the canoeing and kayaking skills of the members of the Society;

(ii) To make members of the Society and the general public more aware of the hazards and necessary safety precautions for participating in the canoeing and kayaking;

(iii) To promote a greater awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage of rivers and lakes by our members and the general public;

(iv) To promote touring by our members and the general public of historic Voyageur water routes within the Province of Alberta.

102 – Bylaws of the NWV

The bylaws of the club are a separate document. They are approved by the Societies Act and are revised by the executive from time to time.

103 – NWV Member’s Handbook

The club has prepared a Member’s Handbook for all members. It details equipment requirements, river grades or skills required, river hazards and safety precautions, and other valuable information on what to do when going on a trip. The Member’s Handbook is a separate document that is sent to new members by the Membership Chairperson. It is revised by the executive from time to time.

104 – Trip Coordinator’s Handbook

The club has prepared a Trip Coordinator’s Handbook for members responsible for coordinating club trips. The Trip Coordinator’s contains information and suggestions for organizing an enjoyable and safe paddling experience. It is revised by the executive from time to time.
Section 200 Governance – Executive Role Descriptions

According to the bylaws, the Officers of the Club include the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Past President. The club also functions with a number of Directors (5 – 12) who are responsible for specific areas. A person may hold more than one Director positions; but in such case, would still only cast one vote.

The positions of Archives Director, Conservation Director and Members at Large may or may not be filled at times, depending on interest and the needs of the club. These and other positions may also be combined with another position.

All records, lists, information and data related to club activities, properties and membership collected by members of the club are the property of the NWV Canoe and Kayak Club. Executive members are expected to treat this information as belonging to the club and not as their personal information.

201 – President

The President typifies the NWV to the outside world. He/she is the major contact for other clubs and associations and promotes publicity for the club and its activities.

The president is the chair of the Executive committee and general meetings. He/she:

- Guides all discussions at the meetings.
- Knows the club constitution and bylaws.
- Knows the rules of order, announces business, states and restates questions and informs members of points of order.
- Votes only to break deadlocks by casting a tie-breaking vote.
- Establishes the agenda for executive meetings and general meetings with the help of the Executive.
- Ensures that the new Agenda and previous meetings’ minutes are distributed to Executive Members.
- Prepares a monthly report on club or Executive meetings for the next Newsletter.
- Keeps all copies of all Executive and AGM minutes for a period of 5 years.
- Has signing authority for the club (with the Treasurer)
- Initiates and promotes new projects and activities.

202 – Vice-President

The Vice-President assumes the functions (authorities and responsibilities) of President in his/her absence. His/her main role is to:

- Assist the President in activities and duties requested
- Have signing authority for the club (with the Treasurer)
- Maintain and annually revise the club’s handbooks.

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203 – Treasurer

The Treasurer:

- Maintains a ledger to record each fiscal period’s revenues and expenses, as well as changes to the club’s assets.
- Maintains an income statement and balance sheet, and presents these documents at the monthly Executive meetings.
- Deposits all funds paid to the club for membership, training, boat rentals or product sales.
- Has signing authority (with the President or Vice-President) and reimburses fellow members for out of pocket expenses related to club business, activities and functions.
- Pays vendors directly for club expenses.
- Reconciles the bank accounts against deposits made and cheques written.
- Maintains an inventory of equipment and calculates the yearly amortizations for the club’s equipment. (This includes old equipment fully amortized after 5 years).
- Prepares an annual return to Alberta Consumer & Corporate Affairs
- Prepares the final statements at the end of the fiscal year and arranges for their audit. Audited financial statements are presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- Keeps all financial statements for a period of 7 years (6 audited and the current year).
- Prepares a proposed budget at the November Executive Meeting for the upcoming year to be voted on and approved by the Executive.

204 – Secretary

The Secretary:

- Assists the President with the agenda and minutes for Executive and General Meetings.
- Records the names of members in attendance at Executive and AGM meetings.
- Takes minutes of Executive and AGM meetings and provides the President in advance with copies of such.
- Maintains complete files of newsletters, financial statements, club meeting minutes, important club forms and documents that are regularly used.
- Answers correspondence directed to the club as a whole when requested by the Executive.
- Has charge of the seal of the Society, and copy of the By-Laws and policies.
- Maintain possession of a key to the club’s postal box.
- After five years, the records are handed over to the Archive Director for retention.

205 – Membership Director

The duties of the Membership Director are to:

- Process new and renewal of memberships in a timely fashion.
- Send information packages to potential members.
- Send Members Handbook to new members.
- Regularly check and update the Membership list for completeness of Waiver forms, ages, gender, level of paddling and other pertinent information.
- Produce Membership Lists and membership statistics as required and provide these to the Newsletter Editor and Secretary.
- Report to the Executive on the number of memberships and the total number or participants who have registered in the club.
- Collect monies paid for memberships and forward them to the Treasurer at the monthly Executive meeting. (in the summer, prearranged plans are made concerning the transfer of data).
- Pick up mail and direct club enquiries to the appropriate Executive member. (This may alternately be part of the Secretary's duties)
- Keep membership lists and information for a period of 5 years.
- Maintain possession of a key to the club's postal box.

206 – Newsletter Editor

The Editor's main responsibility is to prepare and distribute the Monthly Newsletter (There is NO issue for July and August). Preparation for each issue begins after the monthly Executive Meeting. It is to be distributed at least two weeks prior to the next general meeting to ensure distribution.

The Newsletter should include trip schedules, club courses, trip reports and announcements of club meetings or other club events. The President should include a report on the last Executive Meeting as well. Information of general interest is often also included (space permitting).

The membership list is generally mailed to members in the spring after the membership drive is completed. (i.e. June). Newsletters are sent to all members up to and including the March issue of the following year, at which point expired memberships no longer receive a copy. A copy may be sent to other interested organizations and to interested stores.

The Editor should maintain a file of Newsletters and give an extra copy to the Secretary.

The Editor is also responsible for handling any advertising in the Newsletter as directed by the Executive and advising the Treasurer to invoice advertisers.

207 – Web Master

The main responsibility is to maintain the club's website. A website enables potential members to connect with the club. Pictures of club trips are posted on the website to illustrate the different types of trips that are open to club members.

Duties include:
- Posting the newsletter to the club's website monthly.
- Monitoring the club's e-mail and forwarding inquiries to the appropriate executive member.
- Maintaining pictures posted to the website.
- Arranging the rights to the website domain.

208 - Publicity Director

Duties include:
- Promoting the club by placing advertising in newspapers, on radio, and in appropriate stores as directed by the Executive.
- Producing advertising brochures and/or posters for club events, especially club events designed to attract new members (i.e. Open House, paddling course agendas)
- Maintaining a list of venues where brochures and posters are advertised.
- Ordering merchandise for sale by the club.

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Forwarding pertinent information to Webmaster for posting on the website.

209 – Trip Schedule Coordinator

The main responsibility is to produce the annual Trip Schedule. The first draft of the schedule should be submitted to the executive meeting in March and then revised for the April Executive meeting. The schedule should run from the middle of April to early October and encompass beginner, intermediate and advanced trips during the year. Trips should be coordinated around club courses if possible. Courses should also be included on the Trip Schedule. The final copy is to be forwarded to the Newsletter Editor for publication.

The Trip Schedule Coordinator is also responsible for recruiting Trip Coordinators. Prospective Trip Coordinators could include last year’s coordinators and any prospective new coordinators. An advertisement in the club newsletter should be made to make members aware that coordinators are needed. A trip scheduling meeting of interested trip coordinators is recommended. Each trip coordinator should be contacted personally. Each coordinator should be provided with a Trip Coordinator’s Guide (2006 current edition). The guide outlines instructions for coordinators and trip participants. The Trip Schedule Coordinator should review the Trip Coordinator’s Handbook prior to start of the paddling season.

Other duties include:
- Notifying the Newsletter Editor of any changes in the Schedule.
- Arranging alternate coordinators for trips when necessary.
- Book any campgrounds which are difficult to obtain.
- Collect participation statistic information from trip leaders (water flow information, number of participants, stretch of river, etc) and forward this information to the Water Resources Branch.
- Maintain files of trip schedules and statistics.
- Encourage Trip Leaders (or their designate) to write up a report on the trip for the Newsletter.

210 – Canoe Program Coordinator

The Canoe Coordinator:
- Organizes canoe training courses, safety course and other related activities.
- Arranges for instructors and takes registrations for the canoeing courses.
- Plans, with the Tripping Director and instructors, appropriate dates for courses to be offered. (These are usually in June and early July)
- Maintains an annual list of courses, instructors available and participation statistics.
- Encourages club members to become assistant leaders and register in certified instructor courses. (These are subsidized by the club). These courses are offered by ARCA and CRCA.
- Prepares course outlines for courses and presents the outline to the executive for review prior to advertising the courses.

211 – Whitewater Kayak Program Coordinator

The Kayak Coordinator:
- Organizes kayak training courses, safety and other related activities.
- Arranges for instructors and takes registrations for kayaking courses.
- Maintains an annual list of courses and participation statistics.

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- Organizes and books pool time for indoor drop-in sessions and courses. (Kayak courses are run during the winter months)
- Encourages club members to become assistant leaders and register in certified instructor courses. (These are subsidized by the club). These courses are offered by AWA and CRCA.
- Club members expressing an interest in recreational kayak will receive instruction during the summer in an informal setting.

212 – Social Coordinator

The Social Coordinator:
- Plans and arranges general meetings, including speakers, presentations, etc, and refreshments; the club executive should be consulted and grant its approval prior to final arrangements being made.
- Books meeting rooms for the General and Executive Meetings.
- Maintains an annual list of activities and useful contact phone numbers.

213 – Equipment Manager

The Equipment Manager:
- Tracks and maintains Club equipment
- Works with the Canoe and Whitewater Kayak Coordinators to ensure the club has the proper equipment to meet club member's needs.
- Purchases and sells equipment (with Executive approval)
- Organizes rental and placement of club equipment with boat managers
- Maintains an annual inventory of all club equipment and the location of it. (A copy of this is required by the Treasurer).
- Anticipate and recommend the purchase of new or replacement equipment or boats that will be needed for the upcoming year.
- Makes sure that all rental equipment is complete and in good order prior to the next season.
- Replace any lost or faulty equipment, with Executive approval.
- Reviews and recommends changes in rental fees; and publishes the rental fees in the Newsletter.
- Checks the boats during the season on a regular basis and arrange for any repairs.

214 – Archives Director

The archives document the history of the club using club Newsletters, as well as other sources and makes this information available to the membership.

The Archives Director:
- Looks after club documents to ensure that the history of the club is maintained.
- Maintains a resource library on canoeing and kayaking in Alberta and other provinces and territories. This material may include books, topo maps, government publications and trip reports submitted by club members.
- Maintains a complete library of the club’s newsletters.
- From time to time, publishes a list of documents, videos and other materials that are available to club members.
215 – Conservation Director

The Conservation Director represents the club on environmental issues regarding river or water management issues relevant to the club. This is done with consultation and approval of the Executive. This person should also maintain a file of river and water management information and relevant environmental issues.

216 – Members-At-Large & Special Qualifications

A maximum of two Members-At-Large may be appointed by the Executive to assist other directors. Two members with Special Qualifications may also be appointed by Executive to make decisions and carry on the business of the club. (They often act as extra liaison with members in the club for communication).

217 – Representatives to AWA and ARCA

The new Executive, at the first meeting in November, appoints:
   - Maximum of two members to represent the club at ACRA meetings

The President or Vice-President should be one representative to each organization

The Representatives:
   - Represent the club's views and vote on the club's behalf at meetings.
   - Report to the Executive and disseminate relevant information from meetings.
   - Maintains files of AWA and ACRA information.
   - Notify the Executive of events and available grants or subsidies.

218 – Past-President

The past President provides continuity of leadership within the club. He/she is an ex-officio member to all committees.

The term of office is one year.
Section 300 Finances – Revenue

The financial year is from October 1 to September 30.

301 – Membership Fees

Membership fees include insurance coverage, executive and general meeting expenses, membership in ARCA and AWA, and maintaining the viability of the club. Fees are reviewed annually by the executive and adjusted as required.

Renewal of membership is required at the beginning of the calendar year.

Memberships paid after October 1 (new financial year) are considered as next year’s subscriptions. Memberships after September 1 are at half price.

302 – Grants

Grants, from ARCA, for equipment and instruction, are applied for by the President and Treasurer before December 30 (ARCA year end); these grants often require club members to work Casinos for ARCA in order for us to qualify.

Grants may also be applied for from AWA.

303 – Fund Raising

The Executive may decide to hold extra fund raising ventures (Casino applications) from time to time if deemed necessary.

304 – Sale of Equipment & Merchandise

From time to time, outdated and/or unused equipment may be advertised for sale to club members in the monthly Newsletter. The Canoe & Kayak Coordinators and Equipment Manager are to monitor the use and condition of equipment and make recommendations to the Executive for the disposal or sale of equipment.

Merchandise, in the form of t-shirts and crests with the club logo are offered for sale to members. This merchandise is usually held by the Membership Director. The Publicity Director is responsible for ordering new material, with the approval of the Executive.

305 – Courses and Training Fees

A. Canoe

The fee for regular canoe courses includes the use of club canoe, if needed. Participants must be club members. The fee is based on the number of participants and the recovery costs for the club after paying instructors.

The fee for the River Rescue course is subsidized by the club.
B. Kayak

The fee for kayak courses is set annually depending on the number of sessions and the swimming pool rental fee for the club. Kayak instructors recommend a fee for participants for each upcoming winter. The course usually consists of 7 pool sessions and a 1 day river practice.

C. Instructor Course

The club will pay the registration fee for a number of members to upgrade their instruction skills by paying registration fees for recognized Canoe or Kayak Instructors Courses. The Executive will decide annually on the need, interest and financial ability for instructor upgrading.

Instructors are then expected to instruct three courses in the future.

306 – Rental Income

Rental income helps to offset the cost of maintaining the fleet. The rates include paddles and PFD’s for canoeists and helmet, paddle and spray skirts for kayakers. Boat managers are to have a supply of rental forms for members to use.

Members taking courses do not pay an additional rental fee for boats if one is needed.

Boat rentals are only intended for club member’s use on club trips because of liability concerns. Requests by outside groups are to be brought to the Executive for consideration.

307 – Advertising Income

Advertiser’s billing information is provided by the Newsletter Editor to the Treasurer for invoicing to the appropriate person or company.

Current rates for advertising in the Newsletter are $100/quarter page; $175/half page; and $300/full page advertisement.
Section 400 Finances – Expenses

401 – Administration & Executive

Administration expenses mainly involve reimbursement for executive room rentals, bank fees and photocopying. Other reasonable expenses are brought to the executive for consideration.

The executive has at times held a social dinner as recognition for the effort of its members.

402 – Newsletter

The Newsletter Editor puts together a monthly newsletter from 5 – 7 pages in length and all publishing costs are paid for.

403 – Publicity

To publicize the club and increase membership, there is a yearly brochure put out in April/May, a display of posters and a special display board for the Open House Night and other events.

404 – Insurance

The club’s liability insurance is supplied by the ARCA (Alberta Recreation Canoe Association) for all sanctioned and scheduled events. The club supplies an estimate of club members to ARCA and the club’s rate is based on this estimate.

Forms are to be kept for a 3 year period for insurance purposes. Any guest on trips is also required to sign a waiver form. These are also kept for 3 years.

405 – Instructors: Mileage & Expenses

Volunteer Instructors for club courses may be reimbursed the equivalent of the Alberta Government’s non-taxable mileage rate and any camping fees required for long distance, out of town courses.

406 – Membership to Organization: AWA & ARCA

The Treasurer is authorized to pay membership fees to the AWA (Alberta Whitewater Association) and ARCA (Alberta Recreational Canoe Association)

The executive votes and decides on membership in other organizations with input from the members.
407 – New Equipment

From time-to-time the executive appoints a small committee to decide on the specifics for purchasing canoes, kayaks or other equipment. The committee is given a maximum allowable cost for each purchase. These are voted on at Executive meetings.
Section 500 – Executive Meetings

501 – Quorum

A majority of the Executive Members constitutes a quorum. The Executive can consist of up to 5 Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Past President) and 12 Directors or Coordinators. The 4 Members-at-Large or Special Representatives are not considered in the requirements for a quorum.

502 – Voting

Motions at Executive Meetings are carried by a majority of those Executive and Members-at-Large present at the meeting.

The President, who normally chairs meetings, votes only to break a tie.

503 – Location

Executive Meetings are held at a centrally located facility. Time and place are advertised in the club’s newsletter, providing club members an opportunity to attend the meeting.

504 – Schedule

Executive Meetings are normally held on the first Tuesday of the month from September to June. They are not normally held in July and August.

505 – Agenda & Minutes Distribution

The Agenda is set by the President and is distributed to the Executive with minutes of the previous Executive Meeting. The Secretary assists the President as required.
Section 600 – Annual General Meetings

601 – Quorum
Quorum for a general meeting requires 15 members.

602 – Voting
Voting members are those “in good standing” for the previous year with the club. This means that they were members before September 30. New memberships after September 30 are considered members for the upcoming year and are not entitled to vote.

603 – Location & Date
The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held at a centrally located facility. Time and place are advertised in the club’s newsletter.

604 – Minutes Distribution
The minutes of the AGM are distributed to the Executive at the next Executive Meeting and at the following year’s AGM for acceptance by the members in attendance.

605 – Nominations
The Executive will appoint a Nominating Committee to organize and fill the slate for positions. The Executive will also appoint a member (not running for office or elected by acclamation) to act as the Chair for the Election portion of the AGM.

606 – Terms of Office
All Officers and Directors are elected annually at the AGM. As per the bylaws, an Officer (President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer) may only serve 4 consecutive terms in one position.
Section 700 – Instruction & Training

701 – Course Instructors & Certification

The club urges members to upgrade their skills and become certified as instructors. The club will pay registration fee for members wishing to become certified instructors provided they are willing to instruct 3 courses at no fee (mileage to be paid) in future years.

The Canoe and Kayak Coordinator should keep an updated list of both Certified Instructors and volunteer instructors.

ARCA will provide financial assistance to the club for Instructor Certification Courses.

702 – Liability Waiver

All members are annually required to sign a Liability Waiver for the club. Trip Coordinators and Course Instructors should check that participants have done so.

Guests are also required to sign a liability waiver.

All waiver forms are retained for a period of three (3) years.

703 – Canoe Courses & Training Sessions

The Canoe Coordinator is responsible for establishing a Canoe Course Schedule for the year. Courses arranged include courses for Beginners, Moving Water I (Class I), Moving Water II (Class II) and Moving Water III (Class III). Courses offered may vary from year to year, depending on the interest expressed by members.

Additional courses for River Rescue, Instructor Clinics and Stroke Improvement Courses may also be organized, depending on interest.

These courses should be organized with the Trip Coordinator in order to prevent conflicting dates for trips and courses of the same level. The Course Schedule is incorporated into the yearly Trip Schedule.

704 – Kayak Courses & Training Sessions

Whitewater Kayak Courses are normally run in the winter and are organized by the Kayak Coordinator. River courses are organized as a follow-up to the pool sessions with further training courses as need arises. The winter pool sessions dates are advertised in the Monthly Newsletter.

Touring kayak instruction may be offered by the club during the summer months as interest is expressed by club members.
Section 800 – Trips & Trip Coordinators

801 – Trip Coordinators & Trip Coordinator’s Guide

The Trip Schedule Director should ensure that each Trip Coordinator has a copy of the Trip Coordinator’s Guide (2006). The guide should be reviewed regularly and presented to the Executive for any potential changes.

Trip Coordinators should be familiar with the Guide, be competent paddlers and be familiar with the reach of the river that is being paddled. They should also have the confidence to lead a group of paddlers who may have wide range of skills and abilities.

802 – Liability Waiver

All members are annually required to sign a Liability Waiver for the club. Trip Coordinator and Course Instructors should check that participants have done so. Waivers are held by the Membership Director for a period of three (3) years.

803 – Trip Reports

A trip information form from the Alberta Environment department that provides statistics and information about the trip (number of boats, participants’ names, river flow rate or estimate) should be submitted to the Trip Schedule Director the week following the trip. These are required for the Club’s records and for the Alberta Environment department.

A trip report should also be given to the Newsletter Editor for publication in the Newsletter during the winter months; this is not mandatory, but is nice for people to read during non-paddling months.

804 – Personal Equipment

Members are required to provide their own equipment for trips and courses except for those available for rent from the club. Trip Coordinator and Course Instructors are NOT responsible for providing any equipment or gear.

It is Club policy that helmets are mandatory for all Grade III rivers and above and that PFD’s are worn at all times.

805 – Trip Planning

New Trip Coordinators need to review the Trip Coordinator’s Guide and are encouraged to check with former leaders to become familiar with a river before undertaking a trip.
Section 900 – Equipment

901 – Inventory & Location

Members may volunteer to be Boat Managers to store of the Club’s equipment at various locations around the city. The Boat Managers and the equipment they have are regularly published in the Newsletter.

Boat Managers should inventory equipment signed out to them at the start of each year. Any changes should be noted and forwarded to the Equipment Manager and Treasurer who must inventory them for audit purposes.

Equipment Managers should report damaged, destroyed or lost equipment, along with a recommendation, to the Executive for their consideration.

902 – Purchase of New Equipment

Suggestions for new or replacement equipment are to be presented to the Executive who will decide upon the need and merit for such. Normally, the Executive will appoint a sub-committee to investigate details and purchase the new or replacement equipment.

903 – Rentals

Boat and equipment rentals are intended for use by club members only.

The order of priorities for boat or equipment rentals shall be:

1) Training – courses and clinics
2) Club Trips

Members are responsible for returning all equipment and ensuring it is in the same condition it was rented in.

904 – Computers (etc)

Although the club greatly values the work by its volunteers, it cannot afford to purchase or provide Executive members with computers, printers, fax machines, or other equipment for their positions. Many members already have their own equipment to enable them to fulfill their role. This policy should be made clear to any potentially new Executive members.