



Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Chapter Guide

**Everything you need to know about forming and sustaining
a new ANWS Chapter**

Jan. 1, 2012

Introduction

This guide is designed to assist individuals seeking information on how to become a new chapter within the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. There are a number of prerequisites as well as responsibilities that come with being an Association chapter and it is hoped that this guide will be a useful road map to help form a new chapter.

Our Vision

It is the passion and raw power of the extraordinary fighting fish known as the steelhead that is a symbol and inspiration to the *Association of Northwest Steelheaders*. The optimism and strength of this iconic fish emboldens our organization to labor passionately for the conservation and protection of the Northwest's sports fisheries and their habitats. Just as the steelhead recognizes the waters of the river they were born and runs a gauntlet of gillnets, sea lions and dams, our Association has overcome numerous challenges to emerge stronger and more vigilant in the pursuit of **our mission: "Anglers dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and their habitats for today and tomorrow."**

While there exists numerous groups in the Pacific Northwest advocating for fish and wildlife conservation, none have the history and the broad appeal to as many outdoor constituencies as the *Association of Northwest Steelheaders*. Last year we celebrated our 50th year of successful work on behalf of Northwest fish and fisheries, and we hope you will join us as we begin the next 50 with a Washington-based chapter!

Chapters are the heart and soul of our organization, and they are as varied as the people that are members of them. Steelheaders chapters participate in family-friendly fishing events, organize habitat improvement projects and river cleanups, conduct kids fishing events, and/or improve public access to our local waterways. The chapter will be what you make it, and the Association will be behind you every step of the way to help ensure its success.

While there exists a bevy of groups in the Pacific Northwest advocating for fish and wildlife conservation, none have the history and the broad appeal to as many outdoor constituencies as the *Association of Northwest Steelheaders*. Today, the mission of this nearly 50 year old nonprofit organization is carried out by a team of two paid staff in Portland, Oregon, a dedicated board of directors, ten functioning chapters and over 1,200 dues paying members located in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Two bodies of leadership guide the organization. The Executive Committee is comprised of Board officers, Regional Directors and directors of special subject areas such as River Rights, Natural Resources, Education and Communications. This committee's charge is to develop policy recommendations for the Board of Directors to consider who are largely comprised of Chapter presidents and members of the ExCom. All the participants are grassroots anglers with a passion for sport fishing and natural resources conservation.

The entire team is unified and guided by three principal directional themes:

- Advocating for fish and their habitats at the local, state, regional and federal level
- Protecting and expanding the public access to waterways
- Educating anglers, youth, veterans and the general public

These themes offer strength and substance to all the organization's policy efforts so that competing pursuits can be assigned a secondary role to these higher priorities. Yet, there is unswerving support by the Association for its membership and Chapters within the parameters of its by-laws.

Our Goals

Merging the four themes results in a template that succinctly captures the essence for goal development and yields this vision for our organization to follow:

Responsible and enjoyable sport angling with good access to healthy, abundant and sustainable fisheries in Northwest's healthy watersheds.

From this overall vision, the following become directional mileposts for our journey:

- Advocate healthy watersheds with good fish habitat and clean water for fish and Oregon's citizens.
- Help provide abundant, healthy and sustainable sport fisheries.
- Grow the Association of Northwest Steelheaders to allow us to be more effective toward our mission.
- Insure the public right to use of the beds and banks of navigable rivers.
- Grow the funding for our activities and the administration of these activities.
- Provide educational programs and materials to connect the public to fish, fish habitat and fishing, and the issues these subjects are facing.
- Give Oregonians an understanding of who the Association of Northwest Steelheaders are and what we are about to gain their general support.
- Cultivate the strengths of our organization and pursue areas of improvement to optimize our utilization of resources and maximize efficiency.

With the legacy of the organization fueled by its accomplishments, the ***Northwest Steelheaders*** is moving forward in the 21st Century to translate its directional themes into programs that aim to reverse the ongoing damage to fish and their habitats by way of advocacy, education and direct intervention.

Stories continue to accrue over declining wild steelhead stocks (***13 out of 18 species of steelhead and wild salmon are now federally listed as endangered or threatened***). This subsequently raises crucial questions about ocean conditions, diminished habitat, sports fishing and the use of hatchery practices. To not address the species' decline may signal a wider and greater problem that could be detrimental to other species --- including humans.

In order to address these issues, the mission of the organization is largely carried out by its chapters. The individual chapters are community-based groups and are part of a network of like-

mindful groups seeking balanced solutions to issues affecting the achievement of the Association's mission while providing angling, habitat restoration and educational opportunities for its membership and their communities. The grassroots character of the Chapters enables anglers in the same community to meet and share common interests as they educate and advocate for fisheries by conducting local meetings, events, restoration and enhancement, hatchery work, and river keeper activities. They also teach and mentor the future of our fisheries - Kids!

Association chapters are community-based groups established to form a cohesive statewide core of influential angling leaders and activists who work together for fisheries and their habitats. Experience has demonstrated that the prestige of a local chapter is enhanced by affiliation with a larger statewide organization such as the Association. Having the support of local chapters throughout the Pacific Northwest increases the Association's impact to the benefit of angling.

Benefits of the Association to Chapters

Once a chapter is formed, the group can look to the Association to provide the following benefits: **1 . Umbrella 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation** - The Association is the holder of this important designation on behalf of all the Chapters. Without this status, each Chapter would have to go through the time-consuming and costly process to apply to the Internal Revenue Service for their nonprofit designation and assume the administrative burdens of being an autonomous entity.

2. Secretary of State and Department of Justice permits: The Association holds permits in the States of Oregon and Washington as charitable organizations. These Department of Justice and Secretary of State permits, which must be renewed each year with a fee, allow the Chapter to solicit donations, conduct raffles, and hold fundraising events.

3. Advocacy – The Association pays and manages an independent contractor who acts as the Northwest Steelheaders Legislative Advocate. He not only interfaces with government agencies and elected officials on issues directly impacting our mission but also provides important advice and counsel on public policy statements being considered by the Board of Directors. Considerable reporting requirements to the State Ethics Commission are also required when organizations employ a lobbyist. The Association office is the body that follows up on these reports each quarter. Other Advocacy actions undertaken by the Association involves monitoring and exploring legal action on current events that precisely relate to issues affecting fish, fisheries, climate change, river access, wildlife conservation, angler education and many others affecting the interests of our members. As a National Wildlife Federation affiliate, ANWS is also able to advocate successfully at the federal level.

4. Liability, Directors and Officers Insurance – The Association pays the annual insurance premiums for these important policies to protect all chapters and their leadership.

5. Raffle Ticket Sales – The Association also pays for the raffle license, printing of the tickets and submitting reports to the State Department of Justice on this annual fundraiser which Chapters receive 50 percent of the total income of tickets sold.

6. Grant writing and solicitation of individual donors – The Association staff is responsible for preparing and submitting fundraising grants to foundations and corporations and meeting with donor prospects to raise money to support some Chapter programs and events

7. Communication materials – The design and production of some of our membership and informational brochures, signs and banners are coordinated from the Association office. The Association also manages a website and Facebook that includes chapter information, and produces a monthly e-newsletter and quarterly magazine that includes chapter information that goes to all members.

8. Staff support: ANWS employs a fulltime executive director and part time office manager who assists chapters on memberships, fundraising, and reporting, and submits updated Chapter membership contact information to Chapter leaders.

Other Services Provided by the Association Home Office

- Assistance with chapter formation.
- Work with Chapters to develop and conduct programs.
- Help raise and allocate funds.
- Membership recruitment, renewal and record keeping services, including assignment of members residing in the Chapter's territory.
- Education support in the form of resource materials and program development.
- Advocacy support in the form of resource materials.
- Publications that establish a common Association identity and distribute information of interest to members and the public.
- Timely communications regarding current Association issues, programs and policies.

Getting Started

A minimum of ten interested individuals are needed to organize a chapter of the Association. An informal meeting of a few key people interested in forming the chapter is the first step in planning. Other steps include:

1. Assemble team of founding members.
2. Someone on the team contacts the Association home office and informs it of your interest to form a new chapter.
3. Obtain from the Association a chapter startup guide (policies and procedures, Association report forms, communication materials, etc.) and Association bylaws.
4. Hold first meeting of founding members to:

- Set a time and place for the first organizational meeting.
 - Decide on a name for the new chapter.
 - Designate demographic territory of chapter by zip codes.
 - Assemble contact list for invitations to general membership meeting.
 - Identify roles and designate “acting” officers, committee chairs and who will preside until a President is elected.
 - Select someone to publicize in the local media that an organizational meeting will be taking place and contact the people on the aforementioned list who might be interested in becoming a member.
 - Prepare an agenda for the first organizational meeting.
 - Develop a rough annual budget based on an interim outline of projects.
5. Hold first organizational/general membership meeting.
- Identify which meeting attendee is interested in becoming a member of the Association and be a member of the new chapter.
 - Identify “acting” officers and ask if anyone is interested in running for one of the offices (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer)
 - Hold formal election of officers and board members.
 - Present information on the Association, by-laws and set up committee chairs to coordinate areas such as Communication, Education, Membership, Natural Resources, and Government Affairs.
 - Review draft budget.
 - Begin to outline an overall direction for the activities of the new chapter.

Suggestions for Chapter Projects

- Promote or conduct environmental education activities in or with schools in the community or sponsor other similar projects such as the Eggs to Fry program.
- Sponsor a Kids Fishing Day.
- Host a fish-a-long outing or camping trip.
- Hold a how-to fishing clinic.
- Sponsor an outdoor event for families and kids.
- Act locally. Lead or participate in a local conservation campaign such as acquisition of a nature preserve, fish habitat, or local buffer zones, etc (the Association can bring substantial influence to your local issues).
- Sponsor a natural history and/or conservation or angling bookshelf in your public or school libraries.
- Host a Habitat Steward Training seminar series.
- Stream, lake or river cleanup or improvement.
- Participate in an Earth Day event that improve sport fisheries or fish habitat.
- Participate in National Wildlife Week activities that improve sport fisheries or fish habitat.

- Identify fundraising events such as doing barbeques for other community groups, sale of raffle tickets for donated angling related equipment, or begin planning for an annual banquet or picnic.

Importance of Reports

Introduction: The most carefully scrutinized tax returns are those submitted by not for profit organizations. Because the government is not receiving taxes from the income the Association generates, the IRS is very particular about how we go about creating that income. We ask that you complete and submit the required reports on a timely basis. Without this information the Association is unable to defend its status as a nonprofit known in the Internal Revenue Code as a 501(c)(3). This IRS determination is what allows us to use all our income for projects rather than being only able to use the income available after taxes have been paid. It is also very important for organizations willing to provide the Association with grants that we are a nonprofit organization.

The IRS determination may be revoked if we fail to comply with the regulations that you are about to learn AND we must be able to prove that we are in compliance with those regulations and the regulations of the State of Oregon. The reports your Chapter provides are that documentation!

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report (Chapter Financial Report) is the equivalent of the W-2 form that one receives from their employer. Without accurate financial reports from each and every chapter, the Association cannot file its tax returns. Nearly all chapters are very protective of their finances and are hesitant to provide that information to the Association. However, the funds set aside from your chapter's fundraising activities do not belong to the chapter. They belong to the state where the chapter is located and the Association has the fiduciary responsibility to manage these funds in an accounting context. Each chapter is expected to properly use their funds but it is the responsibility of the Association to properly document how those funds are being used. The Association's ONLY documentation of that use is the monthly chapter financial report. Hence, a Chapter's treasurers report needs to be submitted in a timely manner to the Association at PO Box 22065, Milwaukie, OR 97269. Excel documents are provided to the Chapter with explanations to make this reporting quick and painless.

Volunteer Hours Report

Why would the Association possibly need to know how many hours your chapter spends in volunteer efforts each month? Because the Association is a nonprofit, state and federal regulations allow only a limited amount of legislative lobbying and hence, the Association must carefully document both the time and money is spent in "assisting" law makers and commissioners in making the right decisions. There must be a document detailing the percentage of time and money spent on our lobbying effort remains ensuring that it falls within the guidelines set forth by applicable laws. In addition volunteer effort can be used as in-kind funding matches when applying for grants, and can be used in promotional documents to help grow membership.

Chapter President's Report

This report is easy and available takes only a few minutes. It outlines a chapter's accomplishments that occurred during the previous month and any significant points worthy to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee's attention

Reminders on By-Laws, Policies and Procedures

Many of the following guidelines are explained in the Association's By-Laws, Policies or Procedures. These are reviewed by and registered with the governmental bodies that regulate nonprofits and a Chapter's failure to adhere to them may be subject to a violation of laws, and thereby placing all Chapter officers and the Association in a precarious situation.

By-Laws

Years of work have gone into the creation of the association's by-laws. They may only be changed by a vote of the Board of Directors. Chapters may not modify them in whole or in part. They may, however, participate in the revision process.

Here are three key "highlights" of the By-Laws that need to be reinforced:

- **A chapter may not issue policy or directive**

The Association has a well developed procedure for the development of policy and it rests with the membership as a whole. It is the membership's responsibility to present suggestions for new policy through their chapter leadership or directly to the Association. The Executive Committee will then review the request and may chose to request additional information and/or clarification. It also examines the policy for legality, discrimination/equal opportunity, and conflict with law and existing policy. Once the proposed policy clears this hurdle it is introduced to the Association's membership for support and may be voted on at a Board of Directors' meeting.

- **A chapter may not enter into contracts**

This privilege is reserved to the Association level. If your chapter would like to enter into a contract it must be reviewed by the Assn. for legality, equal opportunity, and conflict.

- **A chapter may not employ staff.**

However, it may contract for work after being reviewed by the Association's insurance agent for liability and then subsequently approval by the Association.