



**Healthy Land
Clean Water
For Life**

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About Chapters

What is a chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society?

A chapter is a local branch of the international Soil and Water Conservation Society, identified in this document as the “parent Society.”

What is required to be a chapter?

The parent Society requires the following to form or be recognized as a chapter:

- Appoint a chair, a chair-elect, a secretary, and such other officers as the chapter may deem necessary, all of whom shall be dues-paying members.
- Hold one meeting per year.
- Maintain at least 10 members who pay dues to the parent Society.
- Select a delegate to represent the chapter at the House of Delegates Meeting, which is held in conjunction with Annual Conference.
- Report changes in chapter bylaws to the parent Society Board of Directors for approval. Indicate changes for ease of review by parent Society Board of Directors. Modified bylaws may also require approval by members and submission in line with federal and state laws.
- Complete a not-for-profit annual 990 tax form.

What is requested of a chapter?

The parent Society requests the following additional items from chapters:

- Submission of an Annual Activity Report to the parent Society. This report includes chapter information, such as policies, operations, maintenance of legal and tax status, current officer information, annual activities conducted, and interest in consideration for chapter awards.
- A copy of their not-for-profit annual 990 tax form.
- Ongoing correspondence regarding actions taken for distribution through the parent Society’s communication channels and for posting on the online calendar.

What does a chapter do?

Chapter activities may include but are not limited to:

- Facilitating a board of directors to set and implement an annual work plan
- Holding meetings to provide training and networking opportunities
- Publishing newsletters to share information and opportunities
- Giving awards and scholarships
- Recruiting and retaining members

What benefits does a chapter receive?

Chapters receive the following benefits for meeting the requirements listed above:

- A portion of the dues paid by individual members in their jurisdiction at the conservationist level and higher, with the exception of gift memberships*
- A portion of the dues paid by group memberships in their jurisdiction*
- Chapter Notes – a monthly correspondence with information and resources for chapter leaders
- Resources from the parent Society
- Eligibility for chapter award nominations

**Chapters must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to receive funds from the parent Society. They must abide by their own bylaws and federal and state laws to maintain this status. This commonly includes, but is not limited to, holding elections for officers, facilitating a board, financial actions, and conducting activities that meet their chapter mission and objectives.*

From chapter to community

If a chapter is unable to fulfill the requirements of being a chapter and 501(c)(3), it may dissolve by following the direction of their bylaws and state and federal laws.

The parent Society requests a letter of notification regarding dissolution.

Ahead of dissolution, the parent Society will offer existing chapters assistance in maintaining chapter status.

Should a chapter dissolve, its members will be considered a community by state boundaries should no other chapters exist within the state. While they will no longer receive all the benefits of being a chapter, members within the community will still receive individual membership benefits.

The purpose of the community is to classify the members within the state and still allow for targeted outreach, opportunities, and partnerships between the state's membership and the parent Society.

Contact memberservices@swcs.org for chapter support.