

Starting a SOUL Branch Office

No less than three SOUL members who feel they have the time and resources to organize and run a successful branch may open a SOUL Branch.

Branch Mandate

Branches are geographical operational units of SOUL. Their purpose is to extend the geographical reach of SOUL, its message, its mission and its purposes. Branches will accomplish this by offering services and activities that meet the needs of their membership.

Branches shall have full autonomy to conduct their business within the limitations set out in the bylaws of the Society.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Form special interest groups as and when requested by the members
2. Offer educational programs in support of the Society's mission and purpose.
3. Keep financial records of the branch and report the branch's financial position to the Board of Directors at least quarterly.
4. Keep minutes of all meetings and report the branch's activities to the Board of Directors at least quarterly.
5. Communicate with the Board of Directors via the Vice President of the Society.
6. Submit all membership applications and dues received to the SOUL Board - Membership Secretary at least monthly.

No branch, staff, working committee or officer of the Board of Directors has the power to incur legal or financial obligations on behalf of the Society without prior written consent by the Board of Directors. These mandates do **not** constitute such consent.

SOUL (Society for Organic Urban Land care) is a not-for profit society first registered under the Society Act of British Columbia on July 31, 2002. SOUL's fiscal year is August 1 through July 31.

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 8548

Victoria, B.C., Canada

V8W 1L4

info@organiclandcare.org

The Society for Organic Urban Land Care (SOUL) was formed to respond to the growing need for ecologically responsible land care practices. A growing awareness that we need to manage our landscapes using environmentally sound practices is creating a demand for professionals who have the knowledge and credentials to practice Organic Land Care.

Our Mission

"Promoting and supporting organic practices in our communities through education, certification and standardization."

Our Goals

- To foster and promote the practice of organic land care
- To provide opportunities for education in all aspects of organic land care.
- To establish and promote guidelines, standards and specifications for all aspects of organic land care.
- To establish procedures for certification for organic land care practitioners
- To establish and develop a means for the exchange of information and ideas between the public and the organic land care industry.

An elected Board of Directors drawn from its membership governs SOUL.

Bylaws

SOUL and its Branch Offices are required by the Society Act to abide by SOUL's registered bylaws which are available on the web at http://www.organiclandcare.org/files/branches/Bylaws_2005.pdf

Organic Land Care Standard

The Organic Land Care Standard is the base upon which SOUL was built. The Standard outlines acceptable land care practices and products for use by SOUL Certified practitioners. The Standard can be found at http://www.organiclandcare.org/files/standards/Organic_Land_Care_Standard_2007.pdf and is available for download. SOUL encourages each of its members to review and follow the guide of the Organic Land Care Standard.

Membership

All persons, businesses, and organizations wishing to join SOUL must complete a membership application form that can be either downloaded and mailed from http://www.organiclandcare.org/files/members/SOUL_Membership_Brochure_2009.pdf or completed on the website and paid by debit or credit card online.

SOUL membership begins on the date of member sign-up and continues for twelve months ending on the last day of the sign-up month of the following year. Example: Member joins Feb. 15, 2009 membership persists until Feb. 28, 2010.

SOUL offers the following membership types with commensurate fees:

Public member -	\$30.00
Professional member -	\$30.00
Supporting member -	\$250.00
Affiliate member -	no fee

Membership applications and fees collected at the Branch level should be forwarded to SOUL's Board - Membership officer for processing. Membership fees are split 66%/33% between the Branch and SOUL Central respectively. The portion of the membership fee retained by SOUL central is used to offset marketing and administrative costs.

SOUL Certification

Professional organic land care practitioners can become SOUL Certified by taking SOUL's Certification examination. Courses provided through seminars and on-line by GAIA College help prepare a student to take the examination. Once Certification is obtained the practitioner will be allowed to use and display the SOUL Certified Symbol as shown at <http://www.organiclandcare.org/professional-members/professionals.html>

Members wishing to enquire about the process of applying for SOUL Certification should contact SOUL's Board – Education & Certification officer.

Public Relations & Marketing

Public Relations

All media contact and representation on behalf of SOUL must be conducted by one of

SOUL's current board members as listed at
<http://www.organiclandcare.org/branches/board-of-directors.html>

Professional Web Site Listing

Professional members wishing to advertise their business name, address and a short bio on SOUL's web site can purchase a Professional Web Site Listing package for \$70 per year.

The listing application is part of the membership application procedure. Professional members wishing to purchase a Professional Web Site Listing subsequent to joining should contact SOUL's Board - Web Site officer.

New Branch Kit

New branches can put together their own kit that can be used at trade shows, branch meetings and other events. It can consist of any of the following items:

The following can be downloaded from the website and printed at a local printer. The files are located in a section of the website that is called 'Documents' at the top of the page, and that is only visible to those with website privileges. Each branch has a dedicated email address and if you log into the website with that email, the 'Documents' section will be visible. To start, you might print 100 of each if not going into a trade show of some kind and 250 if you are (perhaps less for the certification brochures).

1. Certification Brochures
2. Membership Brochures
3. OMG brochures
4. Optionally the 3 SOUL booklets (more involved/expensive)

The following can be purchased from the SOUL's Board – Marketing Officer (prices may differ):

5. Sign for Trade Shows (\$XX? From where)
6. Decals – small (Cost \$2? Retail \$5) and large (Cost \$4? Retail \$8)
7. T-shirts (Cost \$10? Retail \$15-20?)

The following can be purchased directly from Gaia College at a discounted SOUL price. Email info@gaiacollege.ca or call 250-709-2229.

8. Working With Nature – Textbook (Cost \$30 Member/TradeShow Price \$50)
9. The Essence of Organic Gardening (Cost \$10 Member/TradeShow Price \$15)

Trade Shows

SOUL encourages the Branch offices to participate in local trade shows that have the potential to provide networking and membership recruitment opportunities.

Branch offices may contact SOUL's Board – Events Coordinator officer for assistance in preparing their own trade show displays which assistance may include the provision of artwork, logo and sign templates, and marketing material formats.

Products

All SOUL products can be ordered from SOUL's Board - Marketing officer. The central office offers these products to the Branch offices with minimal markup to cover shipping and related costs.

Branches wishing to independently design and/ or order SOUL promotional materials must contact SOUL Board – Marketing officer. This officer will act as a product development liaison. SOUL's Board must approve all promotional items bearing SOUL's logo and/or full name. SOUL currently has T-Shirts, Lawn Signs, and Vehicle Stickers available.

Meetings/Events

Meetings can be monthly or as often as you want. You can hang out, have food, watch movies (SOUL Central has a few movies available for you to borrow), invite guest speakers (pay them if you want), or discuss events you would like to attend/put on. Examples of events: SOUL Victoria puts on an annual garden tour, SOUL Vancouver has regular guest speakers and has volunteer opportunities for OMgers, etc.

Minutes can be kept at the meetings. Example agenda and meeting minutes are in Appendices B, C and D.

Financials

Branch offices are asked to keep current "Income & Expense" and "Asset/Liability" financial records.

Basically, you need to keep track of every transaction, all money that comes in (from

SOUL Central for member dues and from merchandise sales), and all money that goes out (for trade shows, merchandise purchases, anything else). You also need to keep track of what you have (merchandise, other assets such as trade show tables).

A simple double-entry ledger or accounting software system is adequate for the task. All financial matters, including a request for financial templates should be directed to SOUL's Board - Treasurer officer.

To set up a bank account, contact SOUL's treasurer. It is preferred to go to VanCity Credit Union if there is one in your area, since we have most of our accounts with them. In that case, you need a letter from the SOUL Central Board, signed by two directors, giving permission to open a bank account for your chapter. The names of the 3 directors needs to be in the letter. We have a template.

If you go to another bank, you also need certified true copies of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws. The bank can take a copy of them and SEND IT BACK to SOUL Central, since it costs us \$50 to replace it.

Appendix A: Roles of Board Of Directors

SOUL Central is the operational arm of the Board of Directors. Its prime responsibility is to support the Board of Directors and the Branches in their activities to promote and further the goals of the Society, and to meet the needs of the membership. To contact any of the board members send an email through the Board Secretary at info@organiclandcare.org.

The prime responsibility of the Board of Directors is to develop policies and direct the operations of the Society to meet the needs of the membership.

The following mandates set out the responsibilities of the officers and committees of the Directors (Board of Directors)

President

The President is responsible for providing leadership and direction to the Board of Directors to assist in achieving the Society's mission.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Preside over all general meetings of the society including the AGM.
2. Supervise the other officers in the execution of their duties.
3. Act as official spokesperson for the society.
4. Monitor the financial position of the society.
5. Maintain the strategic plans and goals of the society.
6. Appoint Committee Chairpersons and Directors at large.
7. Ensure adequate communication between Board members

Vice-President & Branch Liaison

The Vice-President shall carry out the duties of the President in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall also assist the President on special projects as requested.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Serve as liaison with the Societies charter offices.
2. Build and maintain relationships with other 'like-minded' groups and NGOs
3. Build and maintain relationships with the media & government organizations.

Secretary

The Secretary shall act as a secretary at all meetings of the Board of Directors and meetings of the members.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Conduct the official correspondence of the Society
2. Issue notices of meetings of the Society and the Board of Directors.
3. Keep minutes of all meetings of the Society, the Board of Directors, committees, branches and any other special interest groups within the society.
4. Have custody of all records and documents of the society, excluding those required by the treasurer
5. Maintain an up-to-date register of members.
6. Have custody of the common seal of the society.
7. Prepare agendas for meetings of the Board of Directors with approval from the President.
8. Fulfill other duties as may be required from time to time by the president or the directors

Treasurer

The Treasurer is the Chief Financial Officer and is responsible for maintaining financial records including accounting for all revenues, dues, and disbursements of all funds in a responsible and controlled manner.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Develop and implement financial policies and procedures
2. Prepare the annual budget
3. Provide an accounting of the society's finances to the Board of Directors, members and others when required.
4. Maintain the financial records and books necessary to comply with the Society Act.
5. Receive, allocate and distribute all dues and other income as directed by the Board of Directors.

Standard, Education & Certification

Role and Responsibilities

1. Maintain and manage the standards of the Society.
2. Maintain and administer the certification processes.

Membership and Nominations

The Director of Membership and Nominations is responsible for implementing membership recruitment and retention programs for the Society and for the integrity of the membership database.

Role and Responsibilities

- Responsible for forming a Membership Committee
- Responsible for development and implementation of membership recruitment plans
- Responsible for development and implementation of membership retention plans
- Maintains the membership list and directory
- Responsible for soliciting and providing member names in consideration for vacant Board positions

Membership Committee Chair

Role and Responsibilities

1. Receive all required membership information
2. Update the membership list regularly, and at least monthly
3. Keep an accounting of membership dues received and forward all dues to the Treasurer
4. Welcome new members to the Society via welcoming letter
5. Issue membership certificates
6. Send membership renewal notices as instructed by the Membership and Nominations Board member.
7. Follow up with non-renewing members and report reasons for non-renewal to the Membership and Nominations Board member.

Funding

The Director of Funding will source potential funding entities and prepare funding documents for submission to these organizations. This director will also endeavor to develop economically viable business partnerships and practices which align with the goals and objectives of the organization and which provide funding for the operations and growth of the organization.

Public Relations & Marketing

The Director of Marketing is responsible for providing the Society with a targeted marketing effort to attract and maintain members of the Society.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Responsible to develop and maintain an annual marketing plan.
2. Responsible for establishing and overseeing marketing implementation committees and volunteers.
3. Responsible for public relations efforts to establish the Society's image and increase public awareness of the Society.

Website Development Volunteer

The Website Development Volunteer reports to the Public Relations and Marketing Director and the Education Director.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Keep all information on the website current
2. Add new information to the website as directed by the Marketing and Education Directors
3. Develop the graphics, layout and function of the website as directed by the Marketing and Education Directors.

Products Committee Chair

The Products Committee reports to the Public Relations and Marketing Director.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Identify proposed resale items for consideration by the Board
2. Source and cost various products for sale by SOUL and its branches
3. Order, price, inventory, and distribute products for sale.

Special Events Committee Chair

The Special Events Committee reports to the Public Relations & Marketing Director.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Identify industry trade events for participation by the Society
2. Develop exhibits for events
3. Coordinate other special functions or events as directed by the Marketing Committee.

Newsletter Production Committee Chair

The Newsletter Production Committee reports to the Education Director and the Public Relations and Marketing Director.

Role and Responsibilities

1. Solicit and edit articles for the newsletter
2. Sell advertising space in the newsletter
3. Layout and print the newsletter
5. Distribute the newsletter including posting the newsletter on the Society's web site

Appendix B: Example Meeting Agenda

AGENDA
PHONE CONFERENCE
SOUL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, January 14, 2010
7:00 pm

1. Call to order
2. Approve minutes of December 2009 meeting
3. Reports of Officers
 - a) Treasurer report
4. Reports of Committees
 - a) Membership
 - b) OMG
5. Reports of Chapters
6. Old Business
 - a) Ontario Landscape Alliance
 - b) Certification – Christina
7. New Business
 - a) Organic Islands Festival - Christina
 - b) New Branch package – Phil
 - c) Professional members with 2 businesses - Christina
8. Adjourn meeting

Appendix C: Example Meeting Minutes

SOUL Meeting
November 13th 2008

In Attendance: Martin, J.R., Lisa, Barb, Lee, John, Miel.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm.

Adoption of minutes : deferred until next meeting.

Treasury report made by Barb.

Membership: SOUL has 109 members total; 54 in the Vancouver branch.

Events:

Lisa and Martin reported that SOUL's participation in the Aggasiz Social Justice Film Festival was a great success. For many people it was their first encounter with SOUL, and they expressed a lot of interest in who we are and what we do. SOUL's participation in future events of this nature is highly recommended.

Finances:

The treasurer reported that a dialogue has begun between herself and SOUL Central in regards to receiving 'seed money' for the Vancouver branch, which has been determined should be given to each branch at it's inception to help fund associated start up costs.

A discussion then began which centered upon the allocation of applicable membership funds by SOUL Central to each of the branches. It was recommended that the SOUL bylaws be reviewed so that it is ensured that the funds in question are allocated accordingly.

Visioning Meeting:

To continue the visioning process which was begun at the AGM in May, another meeting has been scheduled to take place on *Sunday, December 7th at 10:00 am*. The meeting will be located at the Canada Way Education Center, and all members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Christmas Party:

Barb has most graciously volunteered to host the annual SOUL Christmas party! It will be taking place on *Saturday, December 13th*. Details to follow...

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Appendix D: Example Minutes Template

MINUTES SOUL BOARD MEETING Date

1. Call to order: *(time)*
2. Attendance: _____
Regrets: _____
3. Approve minutes of *(previous)* October 2009 meeting
Discussion: _____
Approved (possibly with amendments): _____ *Seconded:* _____ *Carried/Not carried*
4. Reports of Officers
Treasurer report *(never cite actual figures in Minutes, as this is a legal document)*
Discussion: _____
Approved: _____ *Seconded:* _____ *Carried/Not carried*
5. Reports of Committees
Membership
Discussion: _____
Approved: _____ *Seconded:* _____ *Carried/Not carried*
OMG
Discussion: _____
Approved: _____ *Seconded:* _____ *Carried/Not carried*
6. Old Business
Farmers' Markets
Discussion: _____
Action: _____
7. New Business
Proposed Garden Tour
Discussion: _____
Action: _____
8. Adjourn meeting: *(time)*
Next Meeting: *(date)*

If there is no report available for the meeting, it's 'Tabled'

If there is no quorum at the meeting, votes don't count and things are tabled until the next meeting or, if time is of the essence, you may poll the missing votes by email.