

MOUNTAIN LAKE
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES
MANUAL



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MOUNTAIN LAKE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (MLVMC)

The Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council (MLVMC) is a professional affiliation of more than 300 vegetation managers, arborists and foresters. Members of the MLVMC are employed by small companies and large agencies in the areas of commercial, municipal, or utility arboriculture. Members also work for colleges and universities, research organizations, and all levels of government.

MLVMC is an organization with members in over 20 states, with the largest concentration centered in Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. The large base contributes to a strong regional group dedicated to industrial vegetation management issues. Membership allows members who wish to be involved to join the board of directors and have their voice and opinions heard. Also, members can attend the annual conference for recertification and continuing education credits.

The Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council was organized in 1955 and incorporated as a non-profit research and education group in 1967 in the Commonwealth of Virginia under chapter 2 of title 13.1 of the code of Virginia. The purpose of Mountain Lake, as stated in the by laws, are:

To promote improvement in the rights-of-way management, in particular, to encourage the further study and research in ecologically sound and aesthetic vegetation control and management, to analyze and disseminate information relating thereto, to encourage cooperation with other organizations whose interests parallel or complement those in this Council, and to represent the judgment of this organization in the matters of policy which affects rights-of-way.

The Council, with direction from a Board of Directors and its membership, has endeavored to fulfill these guidelines through research studies on improved methods of vegetation control on rights-of-way. In addition, the Council has acted as an advisory group to federal, state, and local agencies that have promulgated legislation affecting proper vegetation maintenance. The governing body has also intervened in cases where misleading or incorrect information could cause the industry to sustain severe penalties.

These activities are made possible by support and contributions from utility companies, chemical manufacturing and distribution firms, contractors, applicators, state highway departments, universities, and the US government.

Acknowledgements

This manual is intended to be used by council members as a guide to council operations, policies, procedures, and volunteer opportunities.

The Council wishes to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Council Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers, with whose support and guidance this manual was made possible.

We wish to extend a special thanks to the bi-laws committee – 2023-24 Board of Directors, Katrina Schnobrich, Koby Cutchall, Anna Davis and Steve Lowe for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this manual.

Our appreciation is also extended to our past presidents and officers: (this list is ongoing and will be added as more information is gathered)

2015- Todd Hagenbuch

2016- Pat Hipkins

2017- Scott Wirs

2018- Justin Mease

2019- Sam Vaughan

2020/2021- Brandon Dunlap

2022- Ben Bradburn

2023- Koby Cutchall

2024- Katrina Schnobrich

2025- Steven Lowe

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I. NAME AND OBJECTIVE

Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council (MLVMC)

The Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council conducted its first meeting in 1954, when a small group of vegetation managers and university researchers met at the Mountain Lake Resort and Hotel in southeast Virginia. As word of this annual gathering spread, the number of interested parties wanting to participate grew, and the organization broadened its scope of membership and activities. Incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1967, Mountain Lake has become an important forum for the exchange of techniques and ideas in vegetation management.

For over half a century, MLVMC has provided a forum for members to freely express and discuss concerns, desires, and techniques for vegetation management in an informal atmosphere. A continually expanding and diverse membership of dedicated vegetation professionals in both public and private sectors keep the Council vibrant and current. Centered in the eastern United States, where climatic conditions make vegetation control along rights-of-way of paramount importance. Mountain Lake Management Council membership includes representatives from chemical manufacturing companies, equipment producers and distributors, utility and forestry companies, transportation departments, consultants, contractors, university researchers, and government officials. This variety of membership makes the organization an invaluable source of contacts and a catalyst for new ideas in vegetation control and management. Eastern US serving 20 + states.

Mission of the MLVMC

The mission of the Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council is to bring together individuals with an interest in integrated vegetation management to exchange ideas, opinions and information. We will provide our members with the tools to make prudent and knowledgeable vegetation management decisions with the principles of excellence, fairness and integrity as the foundation of our profession. The MLVMC will promote the safe and responsible use of IVM products to enhance quality of life and the environment.

Goals of the MLVMC

- Maintain a healthy, growing association.
- Effective and efficient member services through a yearly meeting providing: New Ideas, information exchange, demonstrations, recertification, and reviews of equipment options.
- Increase public awareness of ... industry standards in right-of-way vegetation management and their purposes.
- Promote research and increase the knowledge of vegetation management.
- Improve the transfer of technology from research to practice.

Volunteerism in the MLVMC

Since the MLVMC started in 1954, volunteers have powered the Council's dynamic growth. In turn, active participation by members in our various programs has provided them with multiple opportunities for personal and professional development. Volunteers are crucial to the success of the Council. It is the intent of the Council Board (hereinafter "Board") that volunteers should be recruited, adequately trained, and properly recognized for their valuable contributions to the Council, profession and general public.

MLVMC Policies & Procedures Manual

The purpose of the MLVMC Policies & Procedures Manual is to present a definitive document that will further the mission and goals of the Council by providing clear direction and guidance to volunteers and staff in carrying out the affairs of the Council. The document includes information about how the Council is organized, how it operates, and provides information to be used by the reader to understand their opportunities for sustaining the growth and success of the Council.

Objectives of Policies & Procedures Manual

The objectives of this manual are to facilitate the efficient and effective organization of the Council as a whole by:

- Outlining the organizational structure of the Council
- Defining the Council's various committees, programs and projects
- Providing a reference for policies and procedures adopted by the Council
- Providing support materials for volunteers

Instructions for Use

The Policies & Procedures Manual will be available in its entirety or by relevant section to any member who is interested in facilitating, coordinating or participating in any Council program or project. This manual is not meant to override the MLVMC bylaws. The bylaws can be found on the Governance page of the MLVMC website.

Provision for Change

By nature, the operations of an organization change with current trends, practices, and technologies in use at any given time. As such, any policies and procedures manual must be a dynamic document. Therefore, each page of the body of the MLVMC Operations Manual will be printed with a footer that gives an 'as of date'. This means that the organizational structure of the Council will be current as stated in the body of the manual 'as of' the given date. Any changes to the organizational structure of the Council, i.e., structure of the Board, addition of new standing committees, programs or projects, etc., will be added with a new 'as of date'. Every title page of the individual appendices will be printed with a footer that gives an 'as of date'. This means that the contents of the appendix will be current 'as of' the given date. Any changes to the Appendices; i.e., amendments to the constitution, new policies and procedures, etc., will be added with a new 'as of date'.

Disclaimer

As defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, a volunteer is "A person who renders aid, performs a service, or assumes an obligation voluntarily." This manual does not constitute an express or implied contract and may not be treated as such by a volunteer. This manual simply constitutes a set of guidelines to help each volunteer understand the organizational structure of the Council and carry out the responsibilities that accompany the various volunteer positions available within the Council.

II. OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Role of the Board

The role of the Board is to set policy and procedure that will ensure that the Council fulfills its legal, financial, operational and professional responsibilities, plan the future direction of the Council, and provide leadership to the members. According to the Bylaws of the Council, the business, property and affairs of the Council are managed and controlled by the Board. It is empowered to carry out the business of the Council.

In no case shall the Board obligate the Council financially beyond the available funds in the treasury without specific empowerment by vote of the members of the Council. It shall handle other Council affairs as may be brought to its attention by the committees or by individual members of the Council.

Except as provided in the Council Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, or applicable law, no Director, Officer, employee, agent, or representative of the Council may act on behalf of the Council, or hold himself or herself out to the public as authorized to act on behalf of the corporation, without the prior, express authorization or approval of the Board.

Responsibilities of the Board

Members of the Board have three levels of responsibility: constitutional, corporate and individual. Constitutional responsibilities are those listed in the Council Bylaws (See MLVMC website). Corporate responsibility refers to following Board policy and procedure according to those Bylaws. Individual responsibility refers to individual Board members fulfilling any assignment as a Council committee member or an appointed representative of the Council, according to the purpose of the committee or the nature of the representation on behalf of the Council. Board members are expected to adhere to the following principles of preparation, attendance, participation, and evaluation:

Preparation:

- Read the Council Bylaws and any other portions of the MLVMC Policies & Procedures Manual that state the purposes, objectives and methods of operation of the Council and are relevant to their position on the Board.
- Submit any agenda items to the Secretary and President prior to a Board meeting.
- Prepare for each Board meeting by carefully reading the agenda and its support materials.

Attendance:

- Endeavor to attend all scheduled Board meetings. Minimum 4 meetings.
- Arrive on time and plan to stay for the entire meeting.
- Virtual meetings are the preferred method to hold meetings

Participation:

- Act as a liaison between the Board and at least one standing committee. In preparation for a Board meeting, they are expected to review the Board agenda with their committee's chair. Following a meeting, members of the Board are expected to deliver a comprehensive report to their committee, providing an update on any Board action.
- Endeavor to represent the membership and ensure that their needs are met.
- Participate effectively in the Board meeting by keeping an open mind until all the facts and viewpoints on issues have been presented. Once a decision is made on an action item, Board members are expected to support the Board's conclusions in principle, even though they may have personal reservations about them.
- Serve as a resource for building support for the Council with individual members and the public.
- Complete and submit all assignments on time.

Evaluation:

- Consistently review and evaluate the programs and activities of the Council.
- Consistently review and evaluate the actions taken by the Board as a whole by monitoring how the actions are being implemented in the short and long run and bringing up any concerns with the Board, as appropriate.

Structure of the Board

In addition to sharing in the performance of the Board as a whole, individual members have specific roles to play in the governance and direction of the Council. Sections V and VI of the Council Bylaws establish the structure, election procedure, term of office, duties and voting procedure for members of the Board.

Board Position Descriptions

In addition to the duties outlined in Sections VI and VII of the Council Bylaws, the following position descriptions describe the nature and duties of positions on the Board:

President

Basic Function:

Serves as President of the Council, representing the entire membership. Directs other officers, presides as chairperson over Board actions, acts as chief spokesperson for the Council and oversees administration of all Council policy and projects.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Presides at all meetings of the Council's Board.
- Calls special meetings of the Board, as required.
- Keeps the Board and Council committees informed regarding the operations and policies of the Council.
- Selects or approves chairs for all Council committees. Outlines the purposes and duties of the committees, monitors their progress and is an ex-officio, non-voting member of all committees.
- Directs the Board in formulating policies and programs that will further the goals and objectives of the Council.
- When necessary, recommends changes in Council's structure (Board, committees, etc.) to the Board.
- May act as a spokesperson for the Council to the public, press, legislative bodies, and other related organizations.
- Monitors Council expenditures to assure operation within the annual budget.
- Promotes active participation in the Council on the part of the membership. Report on the activities of the Board and Council to the members at the annual meeting.
- Presides over the Council's Annual Meeting.
- Performs such other duties as customarily pertaining to the office of President.

Vice President

Basic Function:

Assumes the responsibilities of the President in his/her absence. Assists the President in carrying out the functions of that office and performs specific duties delegated by the President. This position is used as an orientation for the future President. The VP also works with next year's local committee to actively plan the following year's meeting.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Assumes the duties of the President in their absence.

- Assists the President with the overall administration of Council affairs including Council meetings, programming, educational seminars, and membership recruitment and retention.
- Presides over the Local committee for the upcoming annual conference
- Performs duties assigned by the President which may include serving as chair of one or more of the Council committees.
- Assists the President in the performance of his or her duties, whenever requested to do so.
- Attends Annual Meeting and special meetings as directed by the President.
- Represents the association with other Councils or organizations as requested by the President.

Secretary

Basic Function:

Ensures the maintenance of minutes of all Board and Council committee meetings and Council memberships.

Specific Responsibilities:

- The Secretary role requires the position holder to attend every meeting (virtual or in-person) unless previously communicated with President.
- Acts as recording secretary for all business meetings and prepares for publication the minutes of the Annual Meeting.
- Presents the minutes to the membership at said Annual Meeting.
- Schedules and prepares the agenda for Board meetings in conjunction with the President.
- Prepares and ensures distribution of the minutes of each Board meeting to the Board members in a timely manner.
- Maintains current copies of bylaws, reports and minutes.
- Ensures the timely notice of all meetings of the Board and the General Membership, and of elections in accordance with Council Bylaws.
- Ensures that membership records are maintained and updated annually with registration and through CVENT.

- Keeps an up-to-date reference book of meeting minutes, reports, policies and procedures.
- Performs other duties as directed or assigned by the President.

Treasurer

Basic Function:

Ensures the integrity of the fiscal affairs of the Council. Provides oversight to the handling of all financial matters.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Provides primary budget planning and monitoring.
- Ensures the maintenance of accurate financial records.
- Reviews Council expenditures and financial status on a regular basis to ensure overall fiscal integrity.
- Maintains hard copy files of all financial summaries.
- Ensures that regular financial reports are submitted to the Board and presents an annual financial report to the membership.
- Ensures that surplus and reserve funds are invested in accordance with the Council investment policy and or with the guidance of the council board of directors.
- Ensures that the financial accounts of the Council are submitted to a CPA for an annual review and timely filing of all income tax reports and forms.
- Performs other duties assigned by the President.

Board Director

Basic Function:

Ensures that the Council is continually addressing the needs of its members and the profession of arboriculture. Ensures that the Council has a plan of action for the future that it can follow through leadership changes. Ensures that the Council meets all its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. Participates in setting policy and direction for the Council. In addition to these duties, each Director is responsible for the oversight of at least one standing committee.

Advisory Role

Basic Function:

Volunteer role appointed by the Council to provide insight from the membership and assist board members with delegable tasks related to annual meeting planning. The past president from the prior year is welcome to serve as an advisor in order to provide institutional knowledge transfers. Additionally, this role serves as an opportunity for individuals to become familiar with Council time commitments and responsibilities. Advisors are encouraged to run for a board seat the following year.

III. MOUNTAIN LAKE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING (ANNUAL MTG)

The Council will provide an annual conference, Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council Annual Program (MLVMC Annual Mtg), at a reasonable cost to membership. The MLVMC Annual Mtg will serve to provide educational opportunities as well as recruit and support membership. The Annual Meeting of the membership will be held at this event. The Annual Meeting shall be open to attendance by any and all interested parties. Attendance shall be expected by all Board Directors and Officers.

The two-day annual meeting is a highly anticipated event by the membership. A field tour of research plots allow participants to view firsthand the results of various vegetation control materials and application techniques, and to ask questions while at the site. In addition, equipment manufacturers and distributors provide field demonstrations of their products.

The Council also schedules a formal program of presentations with speakers ranging from vegetation managers in environmental groups to government agencies - all relating their topics to vegetation control on rights-of-way.

The combination of a formal program with field tours and demonstrations allows the annual meeting to serve as a continuing education and pesticide applicator's recertification opportunity. The Council is recognized from Maine to Alabama as an important source of training for recertification. The location of the annual meeting varies, allowing for geographical diversity. Exhibits are on hand to allow members additional sources of information exchange.

Annual Meeting Checklist and Timeline

September to May year before meeting (Right after Annual Meeting):

1. Confirm budget with board, historically \$50k-60k.
2. Identify possible venues within the target region that can accommodate the following and are available during the 3rd or 4th week in September of the following year. (Try to avoid overlap with Trees and Utilities.)
 - a. 150+ meeting attendees- may need to be adjusted if average annual meeting attendance rises.

75+ overnight guests. – Try not to commit the group to a room block larger than 75. Also, make sure there are additional hotels nearby for overflow.
 - b. Has on-site or nearby golf course for annual outing. – Golfers = apprx 50.
 - c. Ballroom type space for the conference speakers. If the room cannot accommodate space for vendor tables, then another adjacent space is needed for 25-30 vendor tables.
 - d. Space for the opening evening networking mixer/late registration/name tag pick up as well as other meals.
3. Gather quotes based on the example 2.5-day agenda (attachment 1).
 - a. Questions to answer.
 - i. Can site provide food/drinks.
 - ii. Does this site have sufficient audio video capabilities?
 - iii. Does the site have space to host a welcome reception and day 2 evening event?
 - iv. Is there a local venue that could host offsite social events?
4. Vice President (VP) and Local Committee visit and vet the potential host venues.
 - a. Identify accommodation for overflow attendees if needed.
5. VP presents and reviews at minimum 2 venues and presents to the board. Discussion occurs, local committee makes recommendations on location and board votes on location for next year's meeting.

June to July of the year before meeting year:

1. VP signs contract for selected venue and Treasurer makes down payment.

2. Identify host utility that can assist with rights-of-way for field visit/tours.

August to September of year before meeting year

1. Attention shifts to assisting with current year meeting.

October to January of year before meeting/meeting year.

1. Start to identify a theme and secure keynote speakers, workshop presenters, and panelists for the conference.

2. If venue is not responsible for meals/catering, lock down a catering company for the schedule of events.

January to August of meeting year:

1. Coordinate with host lodging site for room block link to add to registration site before opening early bird registration.

2. Open online registration for attendees to sign up for the meeting. In 2024 early-bird registration was offered for 1 month at a discounted rate beginning in May. Regular registration ran through August and late/walk up registration at a premium in September.

3. Organize a list of sponsors and secure sponsorships if needed to help offset the costs of the conference.

4. Ensure agenda is set and ensure all licensing and CEU's are applied for

- a. Collect speaker bio's
- b. NY speaker form
- c. Other state requirements (bio, synopsis)

5. Develop and review board plan for managing on-site logistics, such as registration, check-in, and attendee flow throughout the venue.

6. Conduct a final walk-through of the venue to ensure all details are in place and address any last-minute issues.

7. Execute the conference according to the schedule of events and collect feedback for future planning.

August to September:

1. Final meeting details

Attachment 1 – Agenda Template

Monday		
TIME	FUNCTION	LOCATION
11:00-12:00	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING	X
12:00-5:00	EXHIBITOR SETUP	X
12:00 – 5:00	GOLF OUTING - Course	X
5:30-8:00	REGISTRATION	X
6:00 – 8:00	WELCOME RECEPTION	X

Tuesday

TIME	FUNCTION	LOCATION
6:30 - 12:00	EXHIBITORS OPEN	X
6:30 – 8:00	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	X
8:00 – 8:15	GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS-	X
8:15-8:30	INTRODUCTION OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS	X
8:30 - 9:30	Speaker 1	X
9:30 – 10:30	Speaker 2	X
10:30-10:45	BREAK WITH VENDORS	X
10:45-11:45	Speaker 3	X
11:45 to 1:00	BUSINESS LUNCHEON & ELECTION	X
1:30 – 4:00	FIELD TOUR	X
5:00-9:00	SOCIAL HOUR & NETWORKING	

Wednesday

TIME	FUNCTION	LOCATION
6:30 – 10:30	EXHIBITORS OPEN	X
6:30 – 8:00	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	X
8:00 –9:30	Panel of 4-6 Industry speakers -VM strategies, or 2 separate speakers	X
9:30 – 10:00	<i>Panel Questions</i>	X
10:00- 10:30	BREAK WITH VENDORS	
10:30 – 11:30	<i>Speaker 4</i>	X
11:30-11:45	CLOSE-MLVMC President/Host Utility	X
12:15 – 1:15	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING	X