

Terms of Reference of the Social Science Working Group of the Society for Conservation Biology

Article 1

Membership

Section 1. **Voting Members.** Any member of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) who has an interest in the objectives and the activities of the Social Science Working Group (SSWG) must join the SSWG to become a member. Only voting members may be elected to SSWG offices, serve on SSWG committees, and vote on official matters affecting the SSWG.

Section 2. **Non-voting Members.** An interested party, not a member of the SCB, may still join the SSWG as a non-voting member. While non-voting members cannot vote or serve in an official capacity, they may still attend SSWG sponsored events, participate in listserve discussions and help forward the goals of the Working Group.

Section 3. **Dues.** If the SSWG assesses dues, all members shall be responsible for payment.

Section 4. **Termination.** Membership in the SSWG shall terminate upon the occurrence of any of the following events: (1) member's notice of such termination delivered to the President or Secretary of the SSWG, personally, by email, or by mail, (2) a determination by the majority of the SSWG Board, by way of vote, that the member has engaged in conduct materially and seriously prejudicial to the interests or purposes of the SSWG. In such an instance, the member will be notified by the SSWG Board via the email on record.

Article 2

SSWG Board Composition and Governance

Section 1. **SSWG Board membership.** The affairs of the SSWG shall be governed by an elected SSWG Board comprised of 12 members, including three officers. Twelve members of the Board will be elected as At-Large members.

Section 2. **Officers.** There shall be three officers: President, Past-President and Secretary. President and Secretary shall be elected by the SSWG Board from among the twelve members of the SSWG Board. Officers' terms will begin on July 1. To be elected President a board member must have served a minimum of one year on the Board, as of when the officer term will begin. Should any officer need to resign their seat, a by-election for a Board member seat will take place and the SSWG Board will elect a member to fill the vacated officer position. All officers must be voting members of the SSWG for their entire term of office.

Section 3. **Terms.** . Members of the SSWG Board are elected for a three-year term at which point they are eligible to seek re-election. All terms begin on July 1 of the year of the election and end three years later on June 30. The President is elected by the SSWG Board from among the members of the SSWG Board and serves a two-year term as President (extendable to four upon SSWG Board approval) followed by a two-year term as Past-President at which point they could seek re-election to the Board as a member. The Secretary is elected to a two-year term by the Board.

Section 4. **Election to the SSWG Board.** All members of the SSWG Board (except President and Past President), shall be elected to the SSWG Board by voting members of the SSWG. Online elections shall be held annually, with approximately four seats being vacated each year as the relevant members of the Board end their three-year terms. All members of the SSWG Board must be voting members of the SSWG for their entire term of office. There are 12 seats that are part of the three-year election cycle and two seats (President and Past-President) which do not seek re-election from voting members of the SSWG until their term will be completed (i.e., if their leadership term as Past-President is ending on June 30th of a given year they may run in the spring election for re-election to an At-Large seat starting July 1st).

Section 5. **Nomination and Election to an Officer Position.** At least 3 months prior to an officer position becoming vacant, the Chair of Membership and Nominations will ask for self-nominations from voting members

of the SSWG Board. If more than one self-nomination is received, the Chair of Membership and Nominations will arrange for an election.

Section 6. **Nominations.** Nominations for elected members of the SSWG Board shall be solicited by the Nominations Committee of the SSWG Board. The Nominations Committee will consist of the Chair of Membership and Nominations Committee and at least two other members of the SSWG, one of which may also sit on the Board. The Chair and Nominations Committee will select a final slate of candidates (two for each empty seat) from among the nominations that represents a full diversity of disciplinary training, professional status and geographic location. All nominees must be voting members of the SSWG. The slate of nominations shall be submitted by the SSWG Secretary to the membership at least one month prior to the deadline for receipt of ballots by email.

Section 7. **Balloting.** . Electronic ballots shall be received from the voting members by a duly announced deadline and shall be counted by one or more members of the SSWG Board or agent(s) authorized by the SCB Board. The candidates receiving the largest number of votes on the ballots shall be declared elected.

Section 8. **Vacancies.** If the office of President is vacated for any reason, the Past-President shall assume the duties of the President while the Chair of Membership and Nomination seeks self-nominations from the remaining SSWG Board Members. All other vacancies occurring during a board member's term shall be filled during the next regular election, should it fall within 6 months of the vacancy. Otherwise, a special by-election will take place.

Section 9. **Special Elections.** A special election may be held at any time to fill a vacancy on the SSWG Board. All members of the SCB will be invited to vote.

Article 3

Duties of SSWG Board Members

Section 1. **President.** The Officer role of President shall organize and preside over meetings and mailings (including electronic mailings) intended to substitute for meetings. The President may officially represent the SSWG on business of the SCB.

Section 2. **Past-President.** The Officer role of Past-President helps mentor the new President and can represent the group on business of the SCB upon request of the President.

Section 3. **Secretary.** . The Officer role of Secretary shall record minutes, administer correspondence between the SSWG and the SCB, maintain historical records, and a roster of members.

Section 4. **Non-Officer SSWG Board Member.** Board members not currently serving in an Officer role will participate in monthly call-in board meetings and provide input as requested into the activities of the SSWG. In consultation with the President, Board members will either Chair or participate on one or more of the Committees.

Article 4

Committees

Section 1. **Program and Conference Planning.** This standing committee shall work with the SSWG Board and the SCB executive to coordinate social science content at the ICCB and SCB Chapter meetings as well as other related conservation conferences. The committee will also assist the Vice-President in arranging the program and activities schedule for the SSWG, including the Members' Meeting and any alternative mechanisms intended to substitute for meetings.

Section 2. **Membership and Nominations.** This standing committee shall encourage membership in both the SSWG and the SCB, especially among underrepresented groups. The Chair or designate will liaise with SCB's Diversity Committee on issues of mutual interest. The committee shall assist the Secretary in maintaining the list of the SSWG's membership and shall help facilitate any mailings to the membership. In preparation for annual elections the committee shall put out a call for nominations to the membership, strike a nominations sub-committee

to evaluate nominations and select a diverse set of candidates and coordinate with SCB on the running of the election.

Section 3. **Communications.** This standing committee shall provide advice on development of printed, electronic, and other media of the SSWG such as newsletters and websites. This committee also shall work with the Membership Committee and other committees of both the SSWG and the SCB to achieve the outreach and marketing goals of the SSWG.

Section 4. **Student Affairs.** This standing committee shall facilitate the participation of undergraduate and graduate students in activities of the SSWG and the SCB. This committee shall be responsible for communicating student issues to the SSWG and the SCB.

Section 5. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice.** This standing committee supports the SSWG's commitment to fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and just conservation community. It advises on strategies to promote diverse representation within the group, ensures accessibility and inclusivity in programming, and collaborates with SCB's DEIJ committee to advance equity and justice in conservation science and practice.

Section 6. **Organisational Capacity.** . This standing committee strengthens the SSWG's ability to function effectively and sustainably. It supports governance processes, leadership development, internal systems, and strategic planning, and may lead initiatives to enhance institutional learning, partner engagement, and operational resilience across the group's activities.

Section 7. **Ad-Hoc Committees.** . The SSWG Board may at any time decide to form an ad hoc committee to address a particular issue. Ad hoc committees shall be chaired by a member of the SSWG. Chairs shall be approved or appointed by the President with the approval of the SSWG Board and will serve at the pleasure of the SSWG Board. Committees shall be composed of interested members of the SSWG Board and the voting SSWG membership. The Chair shall be responsible for appointing or approving the other members of the committee, and these members will serve at the pleasure of the Chair. All committees shall, at any time, be accountable to the SSWG Board.

Article 5

Finances

Section 1. **Finances.** . The SSWG may be supported by external financial sources, including by grants, philanthropic contributions, and fundraising activities. The SSWG Board may choose to establish annual dues to support SSWG Activities. Assessment and amount of SSWG dues is left to the discretion of the SSWG Board. Funds of the SSWG shall be under the supervision of the officers. Audited financial records shall be reported to the membership.

Article 6

Policy

Section 1. The SSWG may make Resolutions and engage in Public Advocacy subject to the conditions described below.

Section 2. **Definitions.** . A "Resolution" is any public statement that reflects the position or view of the SSWG. "Public Advocacy" is any public activity by the SSWG in support of a SSWG Resolution.

Section 3. **Conditions for Declaration of Resolutions and Public Advocacy.** . Proposed Resolutions must be presented to a quorum of the membership of the SSWG and approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting. Presentations and voting may take place at a scheduled meeting, by mail, by email, or other feasible means that reaches the majority of the membership. A voting member who is absent may file an absentee ballot. Proposed Resolutions must include the following: (i) a statement of relationship of the Resolution to the objectives of the SCB, (ii) a statement of the need for the Resolution, (iii) scientific documentation

concerning the circumstances of the Resolution, and (iv) a list of the proposed recipients of the Resolution. Any Public Advocacy must be based on an approved Resolution. Proposed acts of advocacy must be presented to the membership of the SSWG at a scheduled meeting, by mail, or by email and approved by a majority of voting members. A voting member who is absent may file an absentee ballot.

Section 4. **Disclaimer of Responsibility by SCB for SSWG Activities.** The Social Science Working Group of the Society for Conservation Biology shall claim responsibility for all Resolutions and Public Advocacy enacted by its membership. All public documents or actions shall include the statement: Resolutions (or Advocacy) of the Social Science Working Group of the Society for Conservation Biology do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society for Conservation Biology as a whole.

Section 5. **Reporting.** . All Resolutions and supporting materials and descriptions of acts of Public Advocacy by the SSWG shall be forwarded to the President of the SCB with the Annual Report.

Article 7

Meetings

Section 1. **Members' Meeting.** A Members' Meeting shall be held, or an alternative mechanism for conducting SSWG business and facilitating communication among members arranged, at a minimum of once each year.

Section 2. **Procedure and Order of Business.** Meetings and voting deadlines shall be announced at least one month in advance via email or an alternate electronic form accessible by the majority of the membership. At the beginning of each meeting any SSWG or SCB business will be discussed prior to the scheduled program. The business portion of any meeting will be run by the President, or designate when President is not available.

Section 3. **Votes.** All votes of the SSWG on matters not specified in the Terms of Reference will be decided by a simple majority of those voting. Tie votes in Members' Meetings or in meetings of the SSWG Board will be broken by the presiding officer. Tie votes in committee meetings will be broken by the Chair.

Section 4. **Quorum.** 25 SSWG members, including members represented by proxy, will constitute a quorum of the SSWG membership; >50% of SSWG Board members constitute a quorum of the Board.

Article 8

Reporting

Section 1. **Annual Report.** . The Secretary, in coordination with the President, shall file reports on the SSWG's activities with the President of the Board of Governors of the SCB on the requested schedule.

Article 9

Continuation/Dissolution

Section 1. **SSWG Board Requirement.** If the membership fails to elect a SSWG Board, the SSWG shall be considered dormant. At such time the outgoing SSWG Board shall forward the SSWG's charter, bylaws, and remaining funds to the President of the SCB. The SSWG may be reactivated at any time within a period of two years by holding a Special Election. The purpose of the Special Election is to elect a SSWG Board.

Section 2. **Membership Requirement.** If the membership falls below 30 for longer than two years, the SSWG shall be considered dormant. At that time the outgoing Section Board shall forward the SSWG's charter, bylaws, and remaining funds to the President of the SCB. The SSWG may be reactivated when membership rises above 30.