

# Georgia Green Party By-Laws

adopted by consensus May 4, 1996; as amended by the Party Nominating Conventions June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998 , April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1999, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

## I. Name

The name of this organization shall be The Georgia Green Party.

## II. Values

### A. Ten Key Values

The Georgia Green Party holds the following ten key values in common with other Greens:

- Ecological Wisdom
- Grassroots Democracy
- Social Justice
- Peace and Non-Violence
- Decentralization
- Community Based Economics
- Feminism
- Respect for Diversity
- Personal and Global Responsibility
- Future Focus on Sustainability

## III. Ratification and Amendment of By-Laws

### A. Ratification

Provisions of these by-laws will be considered to have been ratified if the Founding Convention on May 4, 1996 reaches consensus on these by-laws as amended by that Convention or failing to reach consensus, if 75% of those in attendance approve these by-laws as amended by that Convention.

### B. Amendment

These By-Laws may be amended at an Annual Convention, if notice of intent to consider the adoption of the proposed amendment was published in the notice of the meeting, and if the proposed amendment was previously reviewed by the Coordinating Council. The Convention may suspend the requirement to review and publish notice by unanimous consent.

## IV. Decision Making

### A. Meetings

#### *1. Annual Convention*

The Annual Convention shall be the highest decision making body for the Georgia Green Party. All affiliated locals in good standing are eligible to send voting delegates to an Annual Convention. Unaffiliated individual members in attendance at an Annual Convention may caucus to select voting delegates to participate in the business of the Convention. The Coordinating Council shall convene the Annual Convention. The Convention may establish organizational policy; amend or, by unanimous

consent, suspend its Rules; adopt and amend and repeal platform planks and position statements; elect Coordinating Council members and a Delegation on National Green Party Affairs to fulfill the duties outlined in VI.B. and establish program guidelines on behalf of the Georgia Green Party. If, in the call for the Convention, notice is given of a Nominating Convention, then the Convention shall also have all the powers and responsibilities provided in O.C.G.A. 21-2-170 relative to nominating candidates for publicly elected office; and the power to open or close any race in Georgia to Green candidates. The Coordinating Council shall provide at least four weeks' notice to all members, with the exception that two weeks notice shall be sufficient for the first Annual Convention. The Coordinating Council shall prepare a proposed agenda for each Annual Convention which shall include a report of the decisions and actions of the Coordinating Council and the Quick Decision Council, including an accounting of funds received and disbursed from organizational accounts.

## ***2. Coordinating Council Responsibilities and Discretion***

The Coordinating Council shall plan each Annual Convention providing for a Nominating Convention in accordance with the Georgia Code when deemed appropriate in their judgement or in the judgement of the previous Annual Convention. The Council may meet in person or by telephone conference. The Council may adopt rules providing for the conduct of business by mail referendum for when a Council meeting, properly publicized, fails to achieve a quorum. The Coordinating Council shall provide for notice, adopt and amend the Rules and Regulations of its Nominating and Annual Convention, implement decisions and administer its own policies and those of the Convention and perform other tasks necessary for the functioning of the Georgia Green Party. The Coordinating Council may adopt policies and procedures to forward the purposes of the Party and not inconsistent with policies established by an Annual Convention. The Coordinating Council may endorse events or actions or join coalitions, alliances or networks on behalf of the membership, and initiate or respond to communications on behalf of the membership. The Coordinating Council shall convene two meetings of the Coordinating Council with one meeting immediately following adjournment of the Annual Convention. The Coordinating Council may convene such other meetings of the Council as are required to serve the mandate and needs of the Georgia Green Party. At each meeting of the Council held upon adjournment of the Convention, the Council shall name a treasurer, clerk and two co-convenors. At subsequent meetings of the Council, the Council may choose to replace those servants of the Georgia Green Party who have resigned or failed to attend two or more Council meetings in a year. The Coordinating Council shall publish to every member of the Council and to every affiliated local of the Georgia Green Party notice of these meetings at least two weeks prior to each meeting. A quorum for such meetings shall consist of at least a simple majority of the active members of the Coordinating Council, except that no Council member shall be considered active, where the Council has given notice of its intention to remove that member due to that member's failure to attend two or more Council meetings held previous to the Council action to give notice to remove and where a third or subsequent Council meeting properly called, convenes without that member's presence. The Coordinating Council may delegate its responsibilities and authority to committees of one or more members accountable to the Council and to the membership.

## ***3. Quick Decision Council Meetings***

The Quick Decision Council (QDC) shall meet at any time at the call of either of the Co-convenors. They may meet in person, by telephone, telephone conference or by electronic conference where decisions are confirmed by telephone or other voice contact. They may make time critical decisions on behalf of the membership that are in the spirit of existing policies, procedures, programs and platform statements adopted by an Annual Convention or the Coordinating Council. A decision shall be considered that of the

QDC if a good faith effort was made by the participating members of the QDC to contact all the members of the QDC.

#### *4. Meetings of Committees*

Committees shall meet as often as necessary to accomplish the task for which they were created. At the first meeting of a committee, the members shall select a convenor who shall be responsible for reporting to the Co-convenors and for calling all meetings of the committee.

### **B. Democratic Decision Making Process**

The Georgia Green Party and its Coordinating Council, Quick Decision Council, committees and other sub-groupings shall seek consensus on all matters put before them. The Georgia Green Party shall use those rules adopted on December 8, 1995 at the founding meeting of the Georgia Green Party Organizing Committee unless subsequently amended; and its various parts may provide for their own democratic rules of process for reaching decisions when consensus can not be achieved. The judgement of whether an adopted process is in fact democratic shall rest with the membership at an Annual Convention, if the process was challenged and then sustained by a simple majority. The membership is encouraged to utilize the processes outlined in C.T. Butler's *On Conflict and Consensus* published by Food Not Bombs Publishing, Room 306-35; 1430 Massachusetts Avenue; Cambridge MA 02138; 617/864-8786.

### **C. Participatory Democracy**

The conduct of decision making by the Georgia Green Party shall be in accordance with procedures that encourage a participatory democracy. The Coordinating Council may establish policies establishing notice requirements for proposals and meetings, standards of accountability for the various parts of the organization to the membership and other rules that encourage democratic participation in the decision making of the Georgia Green Party.

## **V. Structure**

### **A. Coordinating Council**

#### *1. establishment*

There shall exist a Coordinating Council to consist of between four and fifteen members. The delegates, at an Annual Convention, may establish policies which provide for the size, terms, duties, the qualifications and election of the Coordinating Council. At least half of the members of the Coordinating Council shall be women and at least half shall be people-of-color.

#### *2. election of members*

The Coordinating Council shall be elected for two year, staggered terms at the Annual Convention. The terms of office for members of the Coordinating Council shall begin on the first day of July immediately following the elections (unless the term has been set by a policy of the Coordinating Council or of the Convention) and shall continue until a replacement shall have been elected and assume office. The Convention may choose to elect the Council by a system of cumulative voting, modified for gender and race balance, where each delegate is afforded as many votes as there are seats to be filled by the election; and may cast any number of their votes for one or more nominees; or alternately the Convention may choose to elect the Council by a system of single transferable vote, modified for gender and race balance, where each delegate shall rank each nominee to state their preference among the candidates. Within the requirements of gender and racial balance, those candidates most frequently preferred by the delegates shall be seated on the Coordinating Council. Unused votes shall be transferred to the highest ranked candidate who may be helped by a particular ballot so that no vote is "wasted." Within the requirements of gender and racial balance, those candidates receiving the largest vote counts shall be seated on the Coordinating Council.

### *3. removal of members*

Members may be removed by a majority vote of the Coordinating Council for violation of the values and political practices of the Georgia Green Party or for repeated failure to participate at meetings of which they have been notified, where the removal of a Council member was advertised in the notice of the meeting; or by majority vote of credentialed delegates at any Annual Convention.

### *4. the division of responsibilities*

At the first Coordinating Council meeting following the election at the Annual Convention, there shall be an election from among the members of the incoming Coordinating Council of two Co-convenors, a Clerk, a Treasurer and such other coordinators as provided for by the delegates of the Annual Convention. The officers shall serve for a one year, renewable term beginning on the first day of July following each Annual Convention and continuing until a replacement shall have been elected and assume office.

### *5. responsibilities of the Coordinating Council*

The Coordinating Council shall convene the Annual Convention and Coordinating Council meetings, provide for notice, implement decisions of the Convention, make annual written reports to the membership, encourage the participation of affiliated locals in the decision making and activities of the Georgia Green Party and perform other tasks necessary for the functioning of the Georgia Green Party - including, but not limited to: convening meetings, planning agendas, hiring, supervising and terminating the employment of staff, contracting for services, making reports of their activities, decisions, expenditures and incomes to the membership, preparing a proposed agenda for consideration by the Annual Convention, adopting a budget amended by the input of the delegates at the Annual Convention, compiling and maintaining a record of discussions and decisions by the Annual Convention, the Coordinating Council and the Quick Decision Council, coordinating a phone tree, responding to inquiries, coordinating the volunteer efforts of the membership, organizing fundraising efforts, and tabling events.

### *6. quick decision council*

There shall exist a Quick Decision Council (QDC) that shall consist of the two Co-convenors, the Clerk, and the Treasurer. The QDC may meet at the call of either of the Co-convenors to consider business requiring timely action on behalf of the membership. The QDC will report a written record of its decisions to the next Coordinating Council meeting or if the next Council meeting is more than a month away, then by mail to each Coordinating Council member.

### *7. filling vacancies on the the Coordinating Council*

Vacancies on the Coordinating Council may be filled at any Coordinating Council where the intention to consider nominations to fill a vacancy was published in the notice.

## **B. Committees**

The Annual Convention and the Coordinating Council may appoint committees to fulfill the charge established in their creation. A committee shall consist of one or more members, appointed at its creation, plus other members who wish to participate; unless the membership has been set by specific policy of the Convention or Council. Committees shall report to each meeting of the Coordinating Council on both their activities and their plans for future activities. The Coordinating Council may dissolve an existing committee which has fulfilled its charge, deviated from Green values or which fails to make a report of its activities to a Coordinating Council meeting. The Convention may set the membership on a Conference Committee charged with reporting back a consensus document, where the seats on the Conference Committee represent the tendencies and perspectives in the discussion proportional to their preponderance in the Convention.

## **VI. Affiliations**

### **A. Association of State Green Parties**

The Georgia Green Party shall be affiliated with the Association of State Green Parties, or such national Green Party, by whatever name, that may legitimately succeed the Association. The Georgia Green Party shall provide for an annual election of a Delegation on National Green Party Affairs with each member to serve a two year staggered term to represent the views and concerns of its membership in national matters with the Association of State Green Parties. The Delegation on National Green Party Affairs shall consist of a number of members sufficient to name one Delegate and one Alternate to each seat to which the Georgia Green Party may be entitled on the Coordinating Committee of the Association of State Green Parties, or on such other National Committee as may be created to govern any organization that may legitimately succeed the Association. By agreement of and from among those elected to the Delegation on National Green Party Affairs, delegates and alternates shall be designated to serve on the Coordinating Committee of the Association of State Green Parties, or on such other National Committee as may be created to govern any organization that may legitimately succeed the Association.

### **B. Coalitions, Alliances and Networks**

The Coordinating Council may join coalitions, alliances or networks whose goals and strategies are in the spirit of Green Values, Political Practices, existing policies, programs and platform statements adopted by the Annual Convention. The Coordinating Council shall appoint a delegate to each coalition - with which they associate the Party. The Coordinating Council may provide that the Delegation on National Green Party Affairs may make such appointments in the case of Coalitions, Alliances or Networks which are national or international in scope. Such a Delegate, however appointed, appointed to represent the Party in its dealings with a Coalition, Alliance or Network, may on their own authority remove the Party from a coalition when that coalition takes a position outside the values, practices, policies, programs and platform already adopted by the Party.

## **VII. Membership**

### **A. Qualifications and standards for members**

Membership in the Georgia Green Party shall be open to any local association or individual in Georgia who agrees with and will observe the following:

#### *1. Commitment to Green Values, Vision and Principles*

Members - whether chapter or individual - shall be in basic agreement with the Ten Key Values and the Political Practices of the Greens as a framework for organizing and political action.

#### *2. Admission and Participation*

An affiliated chapter in good standing shall participate in the Annual Convention of the Georgia Green Party. Regular participation in the Georgia Green Party shall be required for individual members assuming any elective, appointive, staff or committee positions in the Greens. The membership at an Annual Convention may adopt policies specifying standards for participation.

#### *3. Dues*

Members in good standing shall have their dues paid up to date as specified in policies and procedures adopted by an Annual Convention or the Coordinating Council. While no member shall be assessed for

dues to a confederal level in which s/he or they do not wish to be an active or supporting member, all members of the Georgia Green Party shall be encouraged to support the Greens at all confederal levels.

(a) Dues for individual members who are also members of their local Green chapter may be set at a lower level than for unaffiliated individual members where those dues are paid by their local to the Georgia Green Party. The Coordinating Council shall adopt policies and procedures for accepting in-kind service in lieu of membership dues and/ or assessments on a sliding scale from applicants of modest means.

(b) The Annual Convention may provide for an annual assessment for affiliated local chapters, providing for a sliding scale to accommodate locals with small or poor memberships. The Convention or the Coordinating Council may provide for a policy on dues sharing and may provide for discounted local assessments for Local Affiliates who participate in a dues sharing program.

#### *4. Supporting Members*

Individuals and organizations that wish to support the Georgia Green Party or any confederation to which it belongs, but who do not wish to take on the responsibilities of membership may do so as provided in dues structures adopted as policy of the Georgia Green Party. Supporters shall be entitled to review documents and observe meetings, but shall not have the right to participate in the formal decision-making process, or to serve in any positions.

#### *5. Sustaining Members*

Individuals and organizations that wish to offer additional financial support to the Georgia Green Party or any confederation to which it belongs shall be called sustaining members of the Georgia Green Party. Sustaining members shall be entitled to review documents and observe meetings, but shall not have the right to participate in the formal decision-making process, or to serve in any positions unless they are also a member in good standing .

#### *6. Resignation*

Members - both individuals and chapters - may resign at any time from the Georgia Green Party and/or from any level of confederation and are asked to give written notification of the resignation to the Georgia Green Party and to other levels of confederation as is appropriate.

### **B. Membership Standards and Sanctions**

The Annual Convention or the Coordinating Council of the Georgia Green Party may adopt procedures for enforcing membership standards. The following shall be prohibited practices. Violations by any individual Green or affiliated local may be cause for sanctions including (as appropriate) reprimand, suspension, or loss of accreditation, recall or expulsion: 1) Committing the Georgia Green Party or an affiliated local or confederation to actions, endorsements or other policy positions outside that body's decision-making process; 2) Misrepresenting the decisions or policies of any such Green body; 3) Making false statements in an application for membership or affiliation to the Georgia Green Party; 4) Financial irregularity with Green funds; 5) Advocacy or practice of racial, sexual, national or religious oppression; 6) Advocacy or practice of violent political action by the Greens or any affiliated local; 7) Acting as a strike-breaker, agent provocateur or government or corporate informer; 8) Acting to willfully disrupt the freedom of speech, press or assembly of any individual or affiliated local of the Georgia Green Party; 9) Violating the principles of grassroots democracy as embodied in Article VIII.A. of these by-laws; 10) Continually failing, after receiving written notice, to participate regularly at the local level or for affiliated locals, failing two years in a row, after receiving written notice, to send a delegation to the Annual Convention; 11) Continually failing, after receiving written notice, to pay dues.

## **VIII. Political Practices & Green Etiquette**

### **A. Political Practices**

The Georgia Green Party is a confederation of local Green chapters and individual members unaffiliated with local chapters with a structure consistent with the principles of grassroots democracy, including:

*1. Accountability to membership base*

The Georgia Green Party shall remain structured so that its parts -- the Annual Convention, the Coordinating Council, the Quick Decision Council, committees, working groups and so forth -- are accountable to the membership base as manifested through the Annual Convention.

*2. Immediate Recall*

Representatives at every level shall always be immediately recallable by the bodies that choose them, as provided in these By-Laws, and policies and procedures of the Georgia Green Party.

*3. Imperative Mandate*

Imperative Mandate means that representatives must follow the instructions of the bodies they represent. Representatives are free to express their personal views but must vote as instructed. The Georgia Green Party may give their delegates mandates of discretion to act within the framework of local policy, so that compromises may be negotiated, and positions taken on issues not specifically discussed within the local. The use of non-negotiable mandated positions shall be the right of the membership, but should be carefully considered.

*4. Freedom to Speak and Caucus around Political Views*

Members in the minority on a decision may publicly dissent from that decision, and organize caucuses to promote their views, provided they clearly distinguish their position from that of the majority. To ensure that their views are represented at larger confederated levels of the organization, minorities may call for a procedure of political division in the allocation of mandated proportional votes.

*5. Affirmative Action*

The Georgia Green Party shall take affirmative action to reach goals of sexual, racial and social diversity and balance in the allocation of responsibilities among members. The Coordinating Council shall be responsible for making participation in the organizing process of the Georgia Green Party open to all interested Greens and people reflective of the social diversity of Georgia. The Georgia Green Party shall communicate and work to develop the broad whole of Green thought and action, and to convey Green ideas to the general public.

*6. Rotation of Delegates*

The Georgia Green Party is encouraged to rotate their delegates in confederal representative bodies and in any coalitions they enter into on a staggered basis in order to ensure both broad participation in responsibilities and continuity from one meeting to the next.

*7. Democratic Decision Rules*

The Georgia Green Party and its parts -- the Annual Convention, the Coordinating Council, the Quick Decision Council, committees, working groups and so forth -- while free to set their own democratic decision making processes are encouraged to use agreement-seeking processes in which all points of view are fairly and openly heard. The judgement of whether an adopted process is in fact democratic shall rest with the membership at an Annual Convention.

*8. Freedom of information*

Meetings and records of finances, membership, minutes and so on shall be open to inspection by any member in good standing. A meeting may be closed by majority vote to consider personnel matters or a lawsuit to which the Georgia Green Party, an affiliated local or a member or elected servant of the Party is a party. The Coordinating Council shall see that the Georgia Green Party complies with all applicable state and federal laws relative to the disclosure of campaign finance information.

## 9. Strategic Diversity

A full range of non-violent strategies and tactics shall be considered permissible and desirable in pursuing Green social change, this includes but is not limited to rallies, demonstrations, boycotts, citizen's initiatives, civil disobedience, direct action, building alternative institutions, educational outreach, neighborhood organizing and/or electoral politics.

### A. Green Etiquette - for membership participation at meetings

1. The Greens are a movement of, for and by consensus of the people. Therefore, we as individuals and as a circle must be ever-vigilant against any of the sneaky tendrils of hierarchy. We are here to create change in the world. We are also here to heal the disempowerment inside us that is the root of the world's resistance to change. We are each responsible to contribute what we and only we can offer. But none of us is obligated to give what we don't have. Our energy, time, and patience are limited and only we know just how far they stretch.

2. We decide together what our priorities as a group are. We enter each meeting with a list of topics requested by individual members, and leave knowing what the group as a Whole has decided to do. No agenda is closed; the topic and order of discussion is open to question at all times. Respectful interruptions are sometimes essential to steer us where we should be going. Respect is the key to all our relations. Listening to others is the only way to be sure they will listen to us when our turn comes.

3. Consensus is the process of figuring out how the group feels about what it wants to do. Rather than trying to persuade, we are engaged in proposing-- asking and listening for each person's response. It is not the person raising a concern that blocks consensus-- it is the concern itself, after we have looked at it and agreed that it is our concern as well. A proposal changes as we respond until it is our proposal, and we all accept responsibility for carrying it out. Only then is it a decision of the Whole.

4. Watching out for the process is the responsibility of everyone present. When a few are talking instead of all of us, when leadership comes to rest instead of rotating, when we become less than equals, we depend on someone to balance us out. That person is you.

*On Saturday, December 9, 1995 the founding gathering for the Georgia Green Party Organizing Committee created a Platform & Infrastructure Committee to solicit input and develop our governing documents to be filed with the State. By the 2/10 work-session, the Platform & Infrastructure Committee had collected O.C.G.A. 21-2-172(c) statutory requirements for by-laws of a political body which nominates candidates by convention (2 pages), the Atlanta Greens By-Laws (12 page handbook), and the Greens/ Green Party (usa) Charter & Working Guidelines (12 pages). At the work-session, Hugh Esco was tasked with adapting the by-laws of the Atlanta Greens to serve a Georgia Green Party.*

*This document was adopted as the By-Laws of the Georgia Green Party and reflects Hugh's adaptation as it was amended by the Georgia Green Party Organizing Committee at a meeting called for that purpose on Saturday, May 4, 1996, in Atlanta Georgia and further amended by the Wrightsville Nominating Convention held on June 6, 1998 the Americus Nominating Convention held on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1999. the Americus Convention held on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the Athens Nominating Convention held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the Pooler Nominating Convention held May 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and the Brunswick Nominating Convention held June 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004.*