

Mississippi Recreation and Park Association Constitution and Bylaws

ARTICLE I - NAME AND AFFILIATION

The name of the organization shall be the “Mississippi Recreation and Park Association, Inc.,” and it shall be affiliated with the National Recreation and Park Association.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purposes are to unite into one organization all parks, recreation and related professions. To encourage research and provide education in parks, recreation and related professions and to operate in such a manner as to enhance those interests in Mississippi.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Members of this Association shall be classified into membership categories and must have fulfilled all financial requirements for membership.

Section 2. Membership in this Association is open to all persons regardless of race, creed, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

Section 3. The qualifications for membership in this Association shall be set forth and controlled by the Bylaws and amendments thereto.

ARTICLE IV - PERIOD OF EXISTENCE

The period of existence of this Association is continuing and unlimited. In the event of dissolution of this Association, any assets then remaining shall be distributed by the Board of Directors. However, such assets must be used for the purposes of advancing parks, recreation and related professions in Mississippi.

Mississippi Recreation and Park Association Bylaws

ARTICLE I - OFFICE

The location of the principal office of the Mississippi Recreation and Park Association shall be designated by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of this Association are:

Section 1. To unite into one organization all parks, recreation and related professions and interested citizens within the State of Mississippi.

Section 2. To promote benefits and values associated with parks, recreation and related profession participation and to encourage and stimulate the improvement of opportunities offered by local, state, regional, public-serving, private organizations and federal entities.

Section 3. To stimulate protection, preservation, and acquisition of recreational resources, to promote the proper planning, development, operation, and maintenance of these recreational areas, and facilities, to secure more effective use of public and private land or water areas.

Section 4. To encourage research, discussion, and evaluation of matters affecting parks, recreation and related professions and to provide a medium through which members of this Association may present, discuss, solve, or otherwise assist in the solution of problems of mutual concern which exist among members, occur within other groups, or emerge from related movements.

Section 5. To sponsor and conduct parks, recreation and related professional conferences, activities, institutes, clinics, meetings, and other in-service training programs for members and non-members of this Association.

Section 6. To promote and encourage sound and more effective recreational programs, activities and treatments for the citizens of Mississippi.

Section 7. To disseminate information, to improve public understanding and acceptance, and to promote greater financial support for individuals and agencies employed in parks, recreation and related professions.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Members of this Association shall consist of persons engaged in or have a vested interest in parks, recreation and related professions who have paid membership dues.

Section 2. The Mississippi Recreation and Park Association strongly encourages each member to join the National Recreation and Park Association.

Section 3. Membership in the Association shall be designated as Professional, Agency, Student, Allied Organization, Citizen or Retiree, Young Professional and Educational Institution.

Section 4. The regulations concerning eligibility for membership shall be as follows:

PROFESSIONAL: Individuals employed full-time in leadership, supervisory, or administrative capacities in the delivery of parks, recreation and related services or the management of related resources who possess the education, experience and training commensurate with the requirements of the position.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL: Individuals age 35 and under employed full-time in leadership, supervisory, or administrative capacities in the delivery of parks, recreation and related services or the management of related resources who possess the education, experience and training commensurate with the requirements of the position.

AGENCY: Parks, recreation and related public and private agencies, departments, bureaus, commissions, districts, authorities, institutions or other organizations.

STUDENT: Persons enrolled full-time in a college or university program in parks, recreation, or related studies.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: Institutions of higher learning with programs in parks, recreation, or related studies.

ORGANIZATION: Commercial businesses, special interest groups, clubs or other groups that support the objectives of the organization, and/or promote, and facilitate parks, recreation and related programs, services or treatments.

CITIZEN: A citizen member of the Association is a citizen advocate, including those who serve on park and recreation boards or advisory councils; including elected or appointed individuals such as commissioner, trustee, mayors, and town council members; and volunteers.

RETIREE: Persons retired from full-time leadership, supervisory, or administrative capacities in the delivery of parks, recreation and related services.

Section 5. The annual membership dues and membership benefits shall be established by the Board of Directors. All membership dues shall be paid on the anniversary date. Memberships are for one calendar year and must be renewed accordingly.

Section 6. Any member who fails to pay dues on or before the anniversary date shall be automatically removed from membership in the Association but may be restored to full membership upon payment of dues for the current year. During the period of suspension persons shall forfeit all rights and privileges of membership.

Section 7. All applications for membership or membership renewal and dues shall be submitted to the MPRA Executive Director or the Board appointed designee who shall then approve membership as stated in the Bylaws.

Section 8. Only individuals in good standing who hold Professional, Young Professional, Organization, Agency, Citizen or Retiree membership classification shall have the right for one vote except that student and/or Educational Institution members shall be counted as a block of five (5) votes determined by popular vote among the student and/or Educational Institution members.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of this Association shall be President, President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, Past-President, District Representatives, the duly elected President of the Mississippi Therapeutic Recreation Alliance, Young Professional Representative, the University Representative, Member At-Large and the Citizen Board Member. The Student Representative is a non-voting officer. This shall constitute the Board of Directors

Section 2. All officers shall be elected by the membership as provided for in the Bylaws. If a vacancy occurs, the line of succession to the President shall be the President-Elect and then the Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 3. In order to become a candidate for the office of President a candidate must have served MRPA for a period of not less than two years as an elected or appointed director, officer or on an active committee.

Section 4. The duties of the officers shall be those common to the respective office held and are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Shall act as presiding officer at all board meetings and any meetings of this Association. He or she shall prepare for the office by learning all operational procedures specified or authorized in the Bylaws. Unless otherwise stated in the bylaws, the president shall be responsible for appointing all committee chairs.

PRESIDENT ELECT: Shall act as an administrative assistant to the President and shall preside in the absence of the President. He or she shall serve as the Association's parliamentarian. He or she shall serve as the committee chair of the Educational/Professional Development Committee.

SECRETARY/TREASURER: Shall ensure that true and accurate records of all proceedings of this Association, including District and Committee meetings are maintained. Shall be the custodian of all Association funds and shall disburse these funds. He or she shall ensure that true and accurate records of all receipts and reimbursements are maintained and shall submit an annual report of these records.

1. All financial matters shall be coordinated through the elected Secretary/Treasurer as outlined in federal and state regulations pertaining to non-profit status.

2. A designee approved by the Board of Directors may coordinate all financial matters through the elected Secretary/Treasurer. This includes all financial documents, reports, and expenditure of Association funds.

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE: Shall represent the interests of his or her district, the interests of this Association, and the interests of all parks, recreation and related professions. District Representatives shall attend all scheduled and called board meetings, work with the Educational/Professional Development Committee to develop educational opportunities for their District, submit one article each month for publication in the Association's newsletter, assist in budget development, and serve on the Association's Nominations/Election Committee. District Representatives shall be responsible for providing the Association's Secretary/Treasurer with written minutes of all District meetings. District Representatives shall conduct District elections and shall appoint a District Vice-Representative, Secretary, Athletic Committee Representative, Awards Committee Representative, Educational/Professional Development Committee Representative, and other officers or chairs as deemed necessary. District Representatives may also be asked by the Association's President to perform other duties from time to time.

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE: Shall represent the interests of all student and educational institution members of the Association. He or she shall attend all scheduled and called board meetings and serve as a liaison for all colleges and universities in the state with parks, recreation, or other related degree programs. University Representative shall assist students with the application process for Student scholarships offered through the Association and submit eligible nominees to the board Awards and Scholarships Committee prior to the annual meeting.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: Shall represent the interests of all young professionals of the Association and should serve as a liaison between NRPA and MRPA.

MEMBER AT-LARGE: Shall represent the interest of the general membership of the organization and serve on the Educational/Professional Development Committee. In the case of a vacancy in the position of President Elect, the Member At-Large shall assume the duties of the office for the remainder of the term the vacant position. At this time a new Member At-Large will be appointed by the officers of the Board of Directors to complete the term.

PAST PRESIDENT: Shall perform the installation of officers. Shall serve as chair of the Nominations/Elections Committee and serve as an advisor to the President.

ARTICLE V - NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Each approved Association District shall be charged with the responsibility of electing its District Representative in accordance with MRPA Bylaws.

Section 2. Annual District Representative elections shall be held no less than 30 days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. Failure of a District to hold proper and timely elections will result in the appointment of a District Representative by the President.

Section 3. Professionals, Citizen and Retiree members of this Association shall have one vote in all District elections.

Section 4. Verification of current membership status is required before casting a ballot. Only qualified MRPA members who work in a District may vote in that District's elections. Student and Educational Institution members shall be counted as a block of one (1) vote determined by popular vote among a District's members.

Section 5. District officers shall be Professional or Organization members of this Association and work in the District in which they serve. Appointed District officers shall be MRPA members.

Section 6. District Representatives shall appoint a District Nominations and Elections Committee for the purpose of nominating a District Representative and conducting all District elections.

Section 7. Election of the President, President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer and Member at Large shall occur at the Annual Membership Meeting.

Section 8. All Association officers shall be Professional or Organization members of the Association in good standing.

Section 9. The persons receiving the greatest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie vote, the Association's Board of Directors shall cast one vote to break the tie.

Section 10. Nominees for President, President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer and Member At-Large will be recommended by the Nominations and Elections Committee. Nominees must meet eligibility criteria for the appropriate position as follows:

- A. **PRESIDENT:** The President Elect shall assume the role of President after completing his or her term of office.
- B. **PRESIDENT ELECT:** Nominees should serve as a District Representative for at least one term at the time of office elections.
- C. **SECRETARY/TREASURER:** Nominees should have prior experience with budgeting and finance.
- D. **DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE:** Candidates shall be active members in the District in which they seek office and shall serve on an MRPA standing committee in that District for at least one year prior to elections. Standing committees include the following: Athletic Committee, Awards Committee, Educational/Professional Development Committee and Nominations and Elections Committee.
- E. **CITIZEN BOARD MEMBER:** Shall be a member of the Association for at least one year at the time of elections.
- F. **MTRA REPRESENTATIVE:** Shall be the current President of the Mississippi Therapeutic Recreation Alliance.
- G. **UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE:** Shall be nominated and voted on by student members during the annual meeting. Representatives shall have an individual student membership or fall under an Agency with an Educational Institution Membership.

- H. YOUNG PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: Shall be a member in good standing who meets the criteria of a Young Professional membership. The Young Professional Representative Shall be nominated and voted on by members during the annual meeting.
- I. MEMBER AT-LARGE: Shall be a member in good standing who has served on a District level committee through the Association. The Member At-Large will be elected by the membership during the annual meeting.
- J. PAST PRESIDENT: Shall be the immediate past President of the Association.

ARTICLE VI - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to set all Association policies and act upon all Association business in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. The Board of Directors may delegate such duties, as it may see advisable, to the various committee chairs with power to act.

Section 3. All members of the Board of Directors shall have full voting privileges and this Board shall have full power to interpret the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 4. The President and President-Elect shall serve a one (1) year term. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve a two (2) year term. District Representatives shall serve a two (2) year term. The Young Professional Representative shall serve a two (2) year term.

Section 5. The University representative shall serve a one (1) year term. The University representative may be elected for no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 6. If a member of the Board of Directors has three (3) unexcused absences within his or her term of office, the officers of the Board of Directors (President, President Elect and Secretary/Treasurer shall vote on whether to declare the position vacant.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 1. The Annual Membership Meeting of this Association shall be set by the Board of Directors being announced sufficiently in advance. This meeting shall be held for the purpose of reports from the Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and District Representatives.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held each quarter.

Section 3. Regular meetings of the District shall be held each quarter, prior to the scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors. District meeting dates, times and places shall be communicated to all District members at least two weeks in advance of meetings.

Section 4. Regular Board meeting dates, times and places shall be communicated to all MRPA members at least two weeks in advance of the meetings.

Section 5. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at the discretion of the President at any time it is determined to be necessary or beneficial. The entire membership shall be notified at least two weeks prior to a special meeting. The purpose of the special meeting shall be specified in the announcement of the meeting.

Section 6. All parliamentary authority not covered by the Bylaws of this Association shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order as amended.

Section 7: No proxy votes will be accepted on behalf of a Board member in the case of an absence from any scheduled or called meeting. All members of the Board of Directors must be present in order to place a vote.

ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended as follows:

- A. At the Annual Membership Meeting where a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those casting ballots being sufficient for passage of the measure.
- B. All registered voting members attending the Annual Membership Meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Association business.
- C. By mailed ballot to all eligible, voting members where a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all returned ballots being enough for passage of the measure.

ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Association shall maintain a minimum of four (4) Standing Committees.

Section 2. Standing Committees are as follows:

Athletic Committee

The athletic committee will be responsible for helping expand recreational athletic activities throughout Mississippi.

Awards and Scholarships Committee

The awards committee will be responsible for developing and implementing a statewide awards program to recognize individuals, MRPA Districts, and related agencies throughout Mississippi. The committee shall conduct an annual awards banquet that will be part of the MRPA Conference. The committee will be responsible for soliciting and reviewing applications for student scholarships.

Educational/Professional Development Committee

The educational/professional development committee will be responsible for developing an annual education plan at the district and state level. The committee will be responsible for the annual MRPA Conference to include the education sessions and all other aspects of the conference. The Chair and one other member of the State Certification Board shall serve as Educational/Professional Development Committee members.

Nominations and Elections Committee

To consist of the immediate Past President and all current District Representatives. The nominations and election committee will be responsible for nominating the officers of this Association. Committee members shall review requirements of each position and conduct interviews with eligible candidates. Upon completion of interviews, the committee shall submit names of qualified candidates to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

Each committee will be responsible for developing policy and procedures that must be approved by the MRPA Board of Directors.

Section 3. The President shall appoint one person to serve on each of the committees. Each District Representative shall appoint one person from his or her District to serve on each of the committees.

Section 4. The President Elect shall serve as chair of the Educational/Professional Development Committee. All appointees of this committee shall serve a two-year term. District 1 and 3 members will be appointed in odd years. District 2 and At-Large members will be appointed in even years.

Section 5. Committee Chairs shall be appointed by the President from the committee members. Committee Chairs shall be appointed immediately following the Annual Membership Meeting.

Section 6. The Association shall maintain for any time period any Special or Ad Hoc Committee deemed appropriate and necessary for the purposes, aims, and objectives of the Association. Such committees may be designated by the President by means of simple announcement. The President shall appoint committee members for any special committee. The President shall also, by simple announcement, dissolve any existing special committee.

Section 7. The Executive Committee of this Association shall consist of the President, President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer and Member At-Large. The Executive Committee may conduct emergency Association business as deemed necessary. A full accounting of Executive Committee actions must be submitted and approved by the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Section 8: An Audit Committee may be established for the purpose of examination and verification of accounts and records kept by the Secretary/Treasurer. The committee may consist of individuals with a finance and/or budgeting background, not to include the Secretary/Treasurer.

ARTICLE X - INTEREST AREAS

Section 1. The purpose of a MRPA Interest Area is to facilitate greater involvement in the Association.

Section 2. An Interest Area consists of individuals who share common goals.

Section 3. No Interest Area shall act independently of the Association or enter into any contractual agreement or make any financial obligation without prior approval of the MRPA Board of Directors.

Section 4. Interest Areas shall abide by the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

ARTICLE XI - DISTRICTS

Section 1. The purpose of a MRPA District is to facilitate greater involvement of the Association membership by appealing to interests and proximity.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall have the power to establish and abolish districts according to the needs of this Association. The Board of Directors shall determine the boundaries for each District.

Section 3. Each District shall have one voting District Representative on the MRPA Board of Directors.

Section 4. No District shall act independently of the Association or enter into any contractual agreement or make any financial obligation without prior approval of the MRPA Board of Directors.

Section 5. Districts shall abide by the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

Section 6. Districts shall conduct business meetings, programs, workshops and similar activities to stimulate and increase membership, participation, education and professional development.

Section 7. Vacancies in elected District offices shall be filled by the President and confirmed by the Board of Directors within 30 days of notification of the vacancy.