

Procedure for Forming an Affiliated Chapter of The Coastal Society

Write down the purpose(s) for forming a chapter and affiliating with The Coastal Society (TCS).

Find two or three committed colleagues to assist you with the setup phase process.

Contact the national office of The Coastal Society as soon as possible to notify them of your interest in forming a chapter.

Request copies of The Society's organizational documents and a sample Letter of Understanding.

Ask for the names of TCS members in your area who might serve as a mentor during the setup phase.

Contact other TCS chapter leaders for advice and recommendations. Names and contact information can be found on the TCS website.

If forming a student chapter, establish an advisor who is a current TCS member and knowledgeable about TCS, and get the support of your department.

Your advisor can provide guidance with regard to activities and goals of the chapter, help you operate within the mission of TCS, and help ensure the chapter's continued existence after the founding members have graduated.

If forming a student chapter, research and complete necessary university requirements for forming a student organization.

This lends legitimacy to the organization and also helps build membership through publicity from the listing of organizations students can join.

Check the university's policy for sharing its non-profit educational tax status, filing tax returns, accepting and acknowledging donations, possible sources of funding, and assistance with holding funds like a bank, check writing, bookkeeping and generating financial reports .

Create a mission statement for the chapter that is aligned with the TCS mission statement.

In order to preserve the 501(c)(3) non-profit tax status, the chapter must have a mission that is educational.

Outline the goals and objectives for the chapter.

What do you hope to accomplish?

What benefits can you provide to members?

How can the chapter goals help meet the mission of The Coastal Society?

Goals, objectives and implementation actions must be in compliance with the non-profit regulations in your state and of the Internal Revenue Service, for example, no grassroots lobbying or working on behalf of a political candidate.

Start recruiting members.

Hold some events to attract potential members and accomplish your goals.

Identify potential members to invite. Look at local and state coastal resource management agencies, university professors and students, private sector industry and consultants, other environmental organizations, tourism and recreation sectors, interested citizens. If forming a student chapter, consider whether you will focus on students in a specific department, or more broadly in departments with a similar interest in the environment.

Design a membership application modeled on the TCS application (on web site).

Select initial officers.

Officers might include the president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, and a national liaison if the president will not have this duty. Other opportunities for those who want to be actively involved include membership chair, public relations, event chairs.

Draft a constitution or bylaws which determine the way your organization will conduct its business.

The TCS Bylaws may be used and adapted to the chapter's needs. They must include provision for: annual elections, an annual financial report (see Treasurer), procedure for amending bylaws. The fiscal year is the calendar year.

Draft a budget for the first year of operations.

*Develop cost estimates for accomplishing the goals and objectives.
Develop sources of revenue such as dues, fund raising events, sponsorships.*

Determine the dues structure of the chapter in relation to TCS.

It is strongly recommended that the members join the chapter and the national organization simultaneously paying each organization's dues together with one check. TCS can collect the dues, enter new members into the database, and then send the chapter dues back to the chapter. TCS also provides renewal invoicing to chapters and periodic membership reports, sends out a new member packet which can include chapter materials if provided, and provides other membership assistance as requested by the chapter at no charge.

Submit a formal request for affiliation.

When you are ready, send the following items to the TCS Office:

- Cover letter requesting affiliation with TCS, outlining what it hopes to achieve by affiliation with TCS, a national organization, and stating what has been done so far
- Name and contact information for chapter officers
- Name and contact information for chapter advisor (student chapters)
- Statement of support from your university (student chapters)
- Constitution or bylaws
- Mission statement
- Goals and objectives
- Budget
- Proposed arrangement for processing national and chapter membership and dues
- Calendar of events (events held and to be held)

Establish a web site. *Having a chapter web site helps to facilitate the exchange of resources, information, and schedule of events to a campus-wide and national audience. The chapter's web site can be linked to the national TCS web site through the TCS Executive Director and their current webmaster.*

The TCS Board will review your request. If approved, you will receive a Letter of Understanding to sign and return to the TCS Office.