

Chapter 2: GMC Section Officer – Which Job is for You?

This chapter provides an overview of the volunteer jobs available in a section. It describes in more detail what's expected from a section president or vice president. Other section offices are discussed in Chapters 6. through 9. of this handbook (Finances, Membership, Trails and Shelters, and Outings) as these are major components of a section's activities.

Sample Job Descriptions are provided in Appendix B of this Handbook including the following positions:

<i>President</i>	<i>Membership Chair</i>
<i>Vice-President</i>	<i>Publicity/Newsletter Chair</i>
<i>Trails and Shelters Chair</i>	<i>GMC Section Director</i>
<i>Outings Chair</i>	<i>GMC Alternate Section Director</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Recreation Chair</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	

Typically the persons holding the positions in the first column above are members of the section Executive Committee and listed in a section's bylaws as section officers. Some section bylaws give brief descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of a section officer or committee chairperson (see Appendix A of this Handbook). Other bylaws only describe how officers are elected, how many terms they may serve, and what functions they have. There are no standard job descriptions for each GMC section office. However there is a general understanding of what tasks each section officer is expected to perform.

The sample job descriptions in Appendix B reflect this common understanding. At the same time, they are not all-inclusive. An officer's or chairperson's duties may vary considerably from section to section. Understand the sample job descriptions as checklists. As always, consider what's best for your section and how to do it in your section's traditional framework, with the volunteers available.

The President: Role and Responsibilities

The president of a section is the point person, the prime mover, the communication conduit. The president is the pusher, assigner, and delegator. The president should inspire others and direct them in their duties without being overbearing. Involve other officers. Invest in them. If they are your likely successors, teach and prepare them to be president. Remember that identifying, nurturing, and preparing new potential leaders is part of your job.

All elected and appointed offices within a section involve some work, but none should be overwhelming. In recruiting prospective future leaders or officers for your section, provide a clear description of the job at hand, and the time frame involved. To quote an anonymous saying: "*Few people will agree to take a job if it has no foreseeable end point.*"

Avoid extreme statements. For example, don't tell people, "Oh, there's nothing to it, it hardly takes any work at all!" Also avoid saying, "I'll do it again, but only because I can't find anybody else to take my place." Bemoaning the lack of interest in a position is a self-fulfilling prophesy — it's much better to market your position as important and interesting.

As president, you are expected to express the mission and goals of the organization. You should be knowledgeable about the whole club and understand your section's role within the Green Mountain Club. As section president, you will receive copies of GMC Board of Directors' packets for quarterly GMC board meetings, the same as your section's GMC Board Director. Other section members may be on the GMC Board as General Directors. These directors are a valuable resource for information on club-wide happenings, as well as bringing section issues before the board.

As president, you should communicate regularly with other officers. Many presidents find that it is beneficial to have an executive committee, consisting of the officers, committee chairs, and possibly other core section volunteers, who meet periodically to plan and monitor section activities and develop agenda for upcoming meetings. Well in advance of your section's annual meeting, you should appoint an independent nominating committee (or person) to select a slate of officers for the coming year. Some section bylaws require that the chair of the nominating committee be elected as part of the slate of officers for the coming business year.

The Vice President: Role and Responsibilities

The vice president performs all duties listed for the president should the president be unavailable.

The vice president may be given special responsibilities by the president, based on the special needs of the section. Together, the vice president and president form a team that sets the tone for the section and assures that newcomers are greeted and welcomed. Their example will be followed by other section members.

The vice presidency can be a good training ground for future presidents, but it should not be assumed or required that a vice president will immediately or automatically step up to the presidency.

A Word about Committees

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a committee as "a group of people officially delegated to perform a function, as investigating, considering, reporting, or acting on a matter."

For a 300 member section with 50 active participants (typical 15-20% ratio), a committee is a good way to handle specific tasks requiring broad input.

Small sections with only 10 to 20 active members may find it difficult to have a committee for every job at hand. Decide which tasks require broad input and committee involvement.

Committees are a great way to involve new volunteers and get them acquainted with the workings of a section, **but**...think twice before establishing a committee: does the charge justify tying up volunteer time in additional committee meetings? Often, already active volunteers end up in still another committee taking time away from their other tasks.

The GMC Section Trails and Shelters Chair

Note: Details on GMC sections trails and shelters maintenance are presented in Chapter 9.

The GMC section Trails and Shelters chairperson is responsible for maintaining the section's part of the Long Trail and shelters as assigned by the main club. He or she will schedule respective section work outings and coordinate additional work needs with the GMC field programs staff.

The GMC Section Outings Chair

Note: Details on GMC sections outings are presented in Chapter 8.

The GMC section outings chairperson organizes and oversees section outings activities. Offering diverse outdoor activities in various section locations is a major tool to attract new members to the Green Mountain Club. The outings chairperson works in close cooperation with the section newsletter editor and publicity coordinator, as well with the GMC Waterbury office, to publish the section outings schedule.

The Secretary: Role and Responsibilities

The secretary takes minutes of all meetings, including meetings of the section's executive committee, and is responsible for retaining and passing on the official copies of the minutes. The secretary may also be in charge of keeping and maintaining all past section records and archives.

Some sections have a corresponding secretary who is responsible for writing letters, as well as a recording secretary who is responsible for taking meeting minutes. This can be the same person. In any case, the section should be clear about who is expected to write what.

The Basics of Taking Minutes of a Meeting

Minutes are a formal way to record the proceedings of a meeting. Not every meeting requires minutes to be taken, but ***minutes are required at any meeting where a vote takes place.*** For example, the written schedule of events generated in a planning meeting is a document by itself and no further recording is needed. At the start of a meeting there should be a clear understanding whether minutes need to be taken or not. Typical meetings that require minutes be taken are executive committee meetings or section annual meetings. Minutes do not have to be long or fancy. To be complete, minutes should contain the following:

Date and location of meeting.

Time meeting started.

Who attended (may also be covered by an attached sign-up sheet).

Actions taken, e.g. approval of minutes, acceptance of treasurer's report, motions acted upon.

For motions acted upon, include text of motions, names of who made the motion and who seconded it, and the vote result.

Record important recommendations, points of agreement, and "to-dos" (e.g. who said they would write a letter of thanks).

Time meeting adjourned.

The Treasurer: Role and Responsibilities

Note: Details on GMC section finances are presented in Chapter 6.

The treasurer is the custodian of a section's funds. Treasurers track income and expenses, pay bills, develop a budget, and in some sections manage investments. It is usually the treasurer who reports on income, expenditures, and cash balance at a section's annual meeting.

Note: As they share information from the GMC membership data base, some sections may find it advantageous to combine the functions of treasurer and membership chair.

The Membership Chair: Role and Responsibilities

Note: Details on GMC section membership are presented in Chapter 7.

The membership chairperson is responsible for maintaining a section's membership records and keeping section leaders aware of new members, renewals, and correct addresses. Close cooperation with the main club membership office is very important and helpful. Services from GMC headquarters include monthly membership reports, collecting dues, and help with mailings.

The membership chairperson's work may include recruiting and welcoming new members, or working with other section leaders on this vital topic.

The membership chairperson should be a good delegator. There are small jobs which can have a positive impact on the future health of the section if done consistently and with a personal touch, such as sending a copy of the section's newsletter and membership form to new folks who attend a section event.

Other Section Leader Positions

Publicity/Newsletter Chair

Note: Details on GMC section communications are presented in Chapter 4.

The section publicity/newsletter chairperson generates the section newsletter and oversees the section's publicity communications. He or she may establish contacts with local newspapers, radio, and TV station, and GMC headquarters for publication of section news.

GMC Section Director or Alternate Section Director

As defined by GMC Bylaws each section is represented at the GMC Board by a section Director.

He or she is elected at a section's annual meeting. A director on the GMC board may not serve for more than two consecutive three-year terms, as specified in the GMC Bylaws. (See Appendix A.)

The director is the section's voice and ears at the GMC board meetings, and participates in the board's decision making process. He or she reports to the section president, to the executive committee, or (at the annual meeting) to the membership important developments and business transactions at the main club.

A section may elect an alternate director to perform all of the duties of the director if he or she becomes unavailable.

GMC Section Recreation Chair

Note: Having a section recreation chair is an option likely to be decided by the section's president in cooperation with the executive committee.

The section recreation chair person may be charged with making arrangements for the section's meetings and social functions, including reservations for meeting place, coordinating food among members, equipment needed for speaker, room set-up. A small committee may assist chairperson with these tasks. Obviously, the meetings listed above may be arranged by other section officers or volunteers.