



ForeverGreen Trails (FGT) Membership Structure FAQ

What is this document?

This is a supplemental resource to help explain how our membership structure works. It is not a comprehensive description of the bylaws or policies of FGT. Rather, it is intended to help flatten the learning curve for newer members and board members. The bylaws take precedence over anything in this document because bylaws may be amended over time. For information about what FGT is and does, please see: <https://www.forevergreentrails.org/resource>.

When did FGT become a membership organization?

The Board amended the bylaws in 2021, changing the structure to that of a membership organization.

Why did FGT do this?

For several reasons. The two largest ones are interrelated — to provide a more stable source of backbone funding for the organization from local jurisdictions, and to provide those (and other members) a say on what the organization does and how it does it. Essentially, it keeps the organization accountable to the membership that funds it. No member has any more power than another member (see Rights below).

What is FGT's membership structure?

The bylaws established four initial membership types: Jurisdictional, Nonprofit, Business/Corporate, and Individual. Within those types, the Board may set various levels of membership with different costs and benefits (more information below). Additional membership types may be created by the Board if needed.

What Rights does membership in FGT confer?

Membership provides two Rights: the right to one vote and the right to serve on the Board if elected or appointed. Rights expire when the membership expires.

How long to memberships last?

Memberships last one year from the date of purchase/payment received. Memberships may be purchased at any time of year.

Are there additional Benefits to FGT membership?

Membership may also have additional Benefits as defined by the Board to incentivize higher membership levels (Individuals), in recognition of an entity's ability to contribute financially to FGT (Nonprofit and Business/Corporate), or in recognition of required higher membership fees based on population (Jurisdictions). Please [see our website](#) to view the current non-Jurisdiction membership costs and benefits. Please [inquire with staff for Jurisdictional Membership costs/benefits](#). Membership Benefits may change from year to year as determined by Board action.

Can someone buy multiple memberships to get more votes?

No. No person may have or represent more than one membership.

Who sits on the Board?

The Board is comprised of nine people with four seats reserved for Jurisdictions, three for Nonprofits, and two for Individual or Business/Corporate members.

Who represents a Jurisdiction, Nonprofit, or Business/Corporate membership to FGT?

These entities are required to notify FGT who their official representative to the organization is. This representative is the person who can vote on behalf of the entity at membership meetings. These entities are also requested to designate an alternate to act on behalf of the representative if they are unavailable. The representative and alternate are also the people from the entity who can serve on the Board should they be elected or appointed.

How long are Board terms?

Board terms are usually three years long however at the first Annual Meeting (in 2022), four of the nine Board candidates will stand for two-year terms.

When is the Annual Meeting?

The date of the Annual Meeting is set by the President with at least ten days' notice. It is likely that Annual Meetings will occur in the late fall or early winter. FGT will have its first Annual Meeting in 2022.

What happens at the Annual Meeting?

An Election to fill vacant Board seats happens at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting may also include any other content the Board indicates (e.g., presentations, advisory votes, etc.).

How does the Board Election occur?

Normally, the Board recruits/nominates a slate of candidates to fill three-year terms for any vacancies on the Board. These are presented to the membership for consideration and election at the Annual Meeting.

Is the 2022 Annual Meeting different since it is the first one?

Yes. The entire board must stand for election at the first Annual Meeting. Additionally, four of the nine candidates must stand for special two-year terms to help establish staggering of Board terms.

Which four Board candidates stand for two-year terms?

The current "Transitional Board" will nominate a slate of Board candidates and must clearly indicate to the membership which four Board candidates are standing for the special two-year term to help establish staggering of terms. The bylaws leave the process for determining who will stand for abbreviated terms up to the Board.

Is election at the Annual Meeting the only way to add Board Members?

No. During the year, the Board may *appoint* eligible members to the Board to fill vacancies, but seat quotas by membership type must be maintained. Appointed Board members only serve until the next Annual Meeting, at which they must stand for election to a full three-year term.

Are there term limits for Board Members?

Yes. Board members are limited to two consecutive three-year terms. Service on the Transitional Board, service on the Board for the special initial two-year terms (mentioned above) or service as an appointed (rather than elected) Board member do not count towards this limit. A full year must elapse before an individual is again eligible to serve full terms on the Board. However, they may be *appointed* to the Board prior to that with the usual limitation of serving only until the next Annual Meeting.

How are the Board's Officers Chosen?

At the last Board meeting of the year, the Board elects its Officers — the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Of these, the President and Vice President shall first be open exclusively to Jurisdiction representatives. If Jurisdiction representatives do not fill either of both of those Officer positions, then other Board Members may fill those roles.

Why are the President and Vice-President treated differently?

Jurisdiction members supply most of the backbone funding for FGT and they are given this one special opportunity to help ensure that the organization serves their interests well. This "first right of refusal" approach helps FGT avoid an "operational crisis" by failing to have a President or Vice-President (should there be no willing/able Jurisdiction Board representatives to serve in those roles).

How are the Officers different than other Board members?

The Officers have specific duties and powers as defined by the bylaws (not covered here). The Officers comprise the Executive Committee (EC), which may conduct business on behalf of the Board between Board meetings (however the Board must receive notification of all actions taken by the EC at its next meeting). The exact powers of the EC are reviewed annually by the Board. On the EC, all Officers have equal power (i.e., one vote). In Board meetings, all Board members have equal power (i.e., one vote).

How are Board meetings notifications handled?

We use a Google Group to send out Board meeting agenda packets (and a very few other messages throughout the year). All Board members are automatically to the group. Also, Representatives and Alternates from Jurisdiction, Nonprofit, and Business/Corporate members will be added upon their entity identifying them to FGT.

Is the Google Group Open to others?

Yes. Traditionally, anyone who is interested in ForeverGreen Trails has been welcomed to join the Google Group. We recommend that all FGT members consider joining the FGT Google Group in order to stay informed about the organization's operations ([please email our staff](#) to be added).

Are Board and committee meetings open to others?

Yes. Any FGT member may attend a Board or committee meeting. We will try to make time for introductions at the start of the meeting and will also try to accommodate comments from FGT members. It is helpful to [notify staff of your intent to attend, particularly if you wish to speak](#). FGT has had a policy of all meetings being open to anyone, though the Board may determine that an Executive Session limited to Board Members and staff is needed to conduct special business such as legal agreements or personnel matters. For clarity, only Board members may vote at Board meetings. Members who have not been elected or appointed to the Board may not vote at Board meetings.