

The Constitution of the Russian River Convivium of Slow Food

Last Amended January 26, 2008

Preamble

We recognize and accept that the modern techno-industrial age is upon us and that this mode of life has severe consequences that threaten the souls of individual humans, the fabric of traditional cultures, and the future of life on the planet. We declare that as an eco-gastronomical movement Slow Food is an antidote to the negative consequences of the modern age because it empowers us to protect and maintain those traditions and species that will enhance our lives, while also embracing those aspects of the modern age that support the continued healthy evolution of biological, spiritual, and cultural life.

Purpose

The Russian River Convivium of Slow Food brings people together to enjoy the pleasures of life while fostering and protecting the artisanal producers of food and wine within the greater region of the Russian River watershed. Essential to this purpose is the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, the foundation upon which our artisans practice their craft. The Russian River Convivium also works with a network of organizations and other Slow Food convivia from our region, the nation and planet to support projects worldwide.

Our Principles of Organization

Recognizing that mutual trust and a common purpose are the basis for reaching consensus, the Russian River Convivium of Slow Food has set forth the following principles to guide behavior of the organization's leadership team as it works to set goals and define activities.

1. We use open, honest and robust dialogue to achieve consensus in making decisions. Consensus is defined as a mutually accepted group position or an agreement good enough for all members to move ahead. "Good enough" means that there is no strong objection by any one or more team members and those who are not in full accord give their consent to the consensus position established by the balance of the team.

2. We foster a sense of discovery and learning among the leadership team and Convivium members, recognizing that the diversity and complexity of life requires we remain open in order to perceive and understand.
3. We are committed to building a sense of community among the Convivium members by organizing activities that foster friendship, common purpose, and appreciation for the communities in which we live.
4. As a team we recognize that success requires clear intentions, hard work, certain forms of sacrifice, and commitment. Therefore, we seek to share the responsibility of achieving our goals.

Principles of Practice

Recognizing that we will need to periodically examine our core beliefs, that the actions of the Russian River Convivium must be consistently implemented over the long-term, that the membership's consent is needed to achieve our purpose, we have set forth the following principles to guide implementation of our activities.

1. We work in concert with the Slow Food USA movement and accept and abide by the Slow Food USA National Statute, the Financial Protocol and the Leader's Guide because we believe these documents clearly and correctly articulate why and how Slow Food is an appropriate response to the challenges of our time.
2. We seek to slow the pace of our lives in order to enhance the level of meaning, joy, and sustenance we derive from our relationships, our food, and the world around us.
3. We support and promote the concept of sustainable society based on a foundation of sustainable agriculture because we believe that all people, across generations, are inextricably linked to and interdependent on each other through our social, ecological, and economic systems; further, we are accountable for the effects of our decisions on future generations.
4. We seek to defend the existence and enhance the lives of artisanal producers of food, wine, and cultural experience within our Russian River Food Community and the around the world because they guard the diversity that is essential to our long-term survival.

5. We honor and value those who tend the land and steward the animals that provide us food. Therefore, we commit to pay generously for the good, clean and fair products offered by artisan producers.
6. We work using outreach and educational activity to spread the vision of Slow Food in our region and create changes that over time will lead to a good, clean and fair food system.
7. We will maximize accessibility to the Slow Food movement by offering events at a variety of scales and costs to enable members and the public to participate and enjoy Slow Food regardless of income level.

Organizational Structure & Leadership Selection Process & Powers of Membership and Leadership Team

We are organized in two simple bodies: the membership and the leadership team.

1. The membership is comprised of all those individuals, couples, and families that have signed up or been assigned to the Russian River Convivium and have remained current with their annual dues payment. The membership has the right to confirm or reject the leadership team and to convey its desires for the conduct and actions of the Convivium.
2. The leadership team is comprised of up to twelve people who act as trusted servants (they do not govern by decree) for the organization of activities undertaken by the Convivium. The leadership team shall be confirmed by the membership at the annual meeting, to be held by March 15th of each year.
3. The Convivium Constitution shall be read aloud at least once per year by the leadership team at its annual retreat.
4. Prior to the annual meeting, the confirmed leadership team itself shall nominate a slate of up to twelve candidates to provide leadership for the coming year. Prior to the annual meeting, Convivium members shall be provided biographies of all nominees and shall be given an opportunity to query nominees.

5. The leadership team shall derive its slate of nominees from the current leaders who have demonstrated commitment and ability to perform well. If in extraordinary circumstances where conflict, tragedy, apathy, or the membership's rejection of the nominated slate leave no leaders available for confirmation, Slow Food USA staff shall establish a new leadership team of at least three members.
6. Confirmation is signified by the absence of objection or by a vote of voices, a show of hands, or secret written ballot. The slate must receive a majority of votes cast (hands or ballots).
7. Prior to the annual meeting the leadership team shall also create a list of proposed provisional leaders¹. Provisional leaders are any current Convivium members who agree to join the effort to lead the Convivium for a one-year orientation and training period in order to become clear about the mission, values, and governance of Slow Food USA and the responsibilities of Convivium leadership. Provisional leaders agree to four tasks:
 - Attend leadership team meetings
 - Participate in decision making dialogues
 - Help plan and work on events and projects
 - Co-lead at least one event or project.
8. At the annual meeting, members shall review the list of proposed provisional leaders. At that time, any current Convivium member may ask to be considered as a provisional leader and shall be placed on a candidate list. The leadership team shall select up to three provisional leaders from this list within one month of the annual meeting.
9. If Convivium members become dissatisfied with the leadership team and cannot resolve issues within the Convivium structure, they may contact the Slow Food USA office to seek assistance from staff or a disinterested Regional Governor.
10. The leadership team shall annually designate one of its members to represent the Convivium at the Slow Food USA and Slow Food International congresses,

¹ Although votes are rarely taken by the leadership team to make decisions, if one is taken, provisional leaders do not have a vote.

held every four years, and as the primary contact person for the Slow Food USA office.

11. The leadership team shall select delegations from the Russian River Food Community to attend Terra Madre or Slow Food USA events.
12. The leadership team shall decide how charitable money earned through Russian River Convivium events and projects will be used to help build a good, clean and fair food system locally, regionally or nationally.