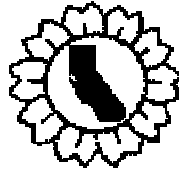




GPCA PLENARY PLANNING HANDBOOK



Prepared by the Green Party of California - GROW Working Group

Last Updated December 1, 2002

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Last Updated November 20, 2002

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Preface

This *GPCA Plenary Planning Handbook* is a one-stop manual to assist local Green chapters in hosting a state GPCA event such as a Plenary or Gathering. It is our intention to provide you with many of the ideas that have been found to be successful elsewhere in the state.

We are always looking to update this handbook with new ideas. If you or your group discovers an innovative approach that works for you, please let us know! Many of the ideas in this handbook can be found at the GPCA GROW website, located at: <http://www.cagreens.org/grow>. You can submit suggestions for this handbook by sending an e-mail to grow@cagreens.org, or by submitting material directly to the GROW website listed above.

-Stuart Bechman
2002-04 Co-Coordinator, GROW

Acknowledgements

This manual is the culmination of efforts of dozens of Green activists and state GROW leaders compiling, writing, standardizing the efforts that have been done across the state. The initial efforts to compile this event manual was done by Beth Moore Haines, member of the Nevada County Greens; her work was built upon

Many thanks also go to Barbara Eniti, former GPCA Treasurer, for writing up the original State Meeting Planning Kit. Her work provided the blueprint, and eased the work for this long-overdue update.

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THE COMMITMENT

OK, you've been approached by the state Coordinating Committee to host the next state plenary. Your county council is interested, but you don't know a thing about how to host such an event.

You're not alone. Because plenaries are held only 3 times per year, and the Green Party of California is fairly young, it's fair to say that most counties have yet to host one of the state plenaries. Even those that have, with some 52 counties, it may have been so long since they hosted the last plenary in their county that no one's still around to tell them how it's done.

You might even wonder if your county is ready to host such an event. Or perhaps it's going to be more trouble than it's worth. Hosting a plenary is, indeed, a big project; but if you have the manpower and willingness to host it, you will find plenty of help from around the state to help you and ensure that your event is successful and maybe even profitable for your county organization.

So, why might counties host a state plenary?

Past counties have listed the following benefits / attractions for hosting a state plenary:

- It brings state and national Green figures to your county;
- It makes the county more visible to the state Coordinating Committee;
- It provides a great way for your local Greens to better understand and learn about the state Green Party;
- It provides a major project for your county to organize behind;
- It provides training for up-and-coming event volunteers;
- It provides a low-risk opportunity in terms of finance and attendance to practice putting on special events; and
- It can make some money for your local.

What do we need to have prior to making a commitment?

You will need to have a Plenary Host committee, or at least the start of one, with at least one, preferably two, people with some event planning experience. Unlike most Green organizations, it's important that the Host committee be set up as a hierarchical structure with two co-facilitators and various subcommittee chairs. These people will be called upon to make 'management decisions' as the planning process proceeds. In event planning, there will always be a myriad of details that just can't be addressed by the entire committee in a timely manner, so you want to have strong, decisive people in charge of the different areas of the event to the extent possible. (Of course, the same person may be responsible for more than one committee.)

You will also need to have the full backing of your county council. They may not be directly involved in the planning of the event, but they need to be prepared to step in in case extra resources are needed, key people drop out, or any other of a myriad of potential problems occur that would otherwise overwhelm the Host committee.

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It is strongly recommended that you have at least a handful of possible venue candidates that you feel reasonably certain will meet the needs for your event. (See 'Venue', below.) Even better if you can actually decide on and reserve a site prior to making the commitment -- The site selection process can be one of the more time-consuming tasks you will have to undergo, and it's one that can be done way ahead of time.

How far ahead should we commit to hosting a plenary?

If you're well-experienced in putting on events, with at least 2-3 'veterans'; and you have a good choice of sites, you could probably pull it all together in 3 months. If you've never done anything like this before, you better give yourself a year.

Also note that many popular venues book up to a year in advance. So even if you're experienced in event planning, this fact may require you to make your commitment further ahead than otherwise required.

What are some signs that maybe we're not really ready to do this?

1. If you don't have the full support of the county council.
2. If you don't have any strong leaders that can lead the host committee.

OK, we're on the hook. How do we do this?

You'll want to organize your committee by tasks. See Appendix D for an example breakdown of tasks and subcommittee assignments.

As soon as you've committed to hosting the plenary, you should begin holding planning meetings. The first few meetings should be devoted to securing the venue site; after that, you might want to make committee assignments and let each committee arrange their own planning schedules. The entire committee should probably meet together at a minimum of once every two weeks; once every week for the final month, with a 'pre-' plenary meeting to resolve any remaining final issues and a 'post-' plenary meeting to resolve any issues that arose during the event, provide closure and praise for the participants, and to provide feedback on the experience for both the local county council and the state Coordinating Committee.

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OTHER RESOURCES

The GPCA (via the GROW Working Group website) keeps wrap-up and feedback reports from past plenaries on file for future planners. You should avail yourself of these reports, they provide valuable experience not found in this cookbook. (<http://www.cagreens.org/grow/plenary>)

THE VENUE

Location, Location, Location!

There are many good reasons for every county council to develop and keep a permanent list of available meeting spaces across their county; so if your county hasn't yet done this, this may be the perfect opportunity to develop such a list. Expect to take several weeks to hunt down all of the potential sites, find the contact people and phone numbers, and get information on rates and availability. Keep all this information in a secure computer file for future use beyond just this plenary! Once you've compiled your venue database, you don't want to have to re-do it for future potential events.

Places to check out for meeting spaces: Government buildings; Chambers of Commerce; local colleges, high schools, grade schools; cultural / art centers; libraries; senior centers; parks and recreation districts; restaurants.

For your plenary, finding a free / low cost meeting space is critical! Oftentimes, colleges and universities with green student groups or faculty will make free space available to their clubs for several days, and usually have the adjoining small rooms needed for our break-out groups.

Main meeting space should include a large meeting room to seat about 150 greens, and four or five smaller rooms accommodating about 35 people for working groups, caucuses and committees. Preferably, most meeting spaces will be in close proximity to each other to reduce travel needed. Food service, rest rooms, and hopefully space for childcare are also important considerations. Attractive outdoor meeting space can also be an option, if the weather permits.

The diverse needs and abilities of Greens make access important: Keep stairs, steep climbs, and long walking distances minimal. Consider needs of those in with reduced visual and audio abilities, or using wheelchairs and other aids, when planning lighting, PA system, location changes, evening events, parking, etc. Consider proximity to public transportation, as well.

I heard the State of California offers free meeting spaces for political parties?

Some meeting space is offered by the State of California to political groups. A portion of the California Elections Code specifically provides for the state to offer free meeting space to political groups at state buildings in each county. The Elections Code Sections which spells this out are Sections 7870 and 7871, which read:

7870. The Department of General Services shall permit any committee that desires to do so to hold meetings in a state building within the county, at least one of which meetings each month shall be without charge.

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7871. All meetings of the committee shall be held in quarters which shall be accessible to persons with disabilities.

The California Department of General Services keeps a list of these free meeting sites on its webpage at <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/confrooms.htm>. There aren't a lot of them across the state, and they aren't always available on evenings or weekends, but it's a resource worth checking.

'Committee' is usually considered to mean any political meeting, but some locales interpret it a little more strictly to county councils or other regularly-scheduled meetings. It's also important to note that this code applies only to state offices, not federal, county or city offices. (But it's worth a shot to see if you can convince a building manager for a federal, county or city agency that this code applies to them as well.)

EVENT AGENDA

Who's in charge of the event Agenda?

The state Coordinating Committee designates an Agenda Committee to work with the local Host committee and plan the event agenda. The Agenda Committee typically consists of people who have been active in the latest state event, people who bring particular expertise to this event, and people from the state Coordinating Committee who are simply interested in offering their help. It also consists of one representative from the local Host committee. This person acts as a 'liaison' between the two committees, making sure that both groups are fully informed of the other group's decisions, actions, concerns, etc.

How do we work with the Agenda Committee?

Agenda Committee duties are to collect incoming proposals for the agenda, distribute them to other members of the Agenda Committee a few days prior to the agenda-setting meeting, and then to pull everything together at the meeting and print and mail out the Agenda packet to all counties. The Agenda packet is made up of the Proposed Agenda, Proposed Plenary Schedule, Working Group Proposals, Working Group Reports, Coordinating Committee Minutes, CC Member & WG Coordinator lists, and site information from the local Host committee (including maps, reservation forms, lodging information, etc.)

It's important to keep the Agenda Committee informed of site restraints and conditions that might impact the agenda in any way. If you have limited access to air-conditioning, or electricity, or projectors; or there are access considerations for the participants, the Agenda Committee will need to know these things. The Agenda Committee may also be willing to take suggestions from the Host Committee for particular workshop scheduling, depending on what they decide. Schedule events with breaks and time for interaction and networking. Meetings are more productive with breaks for snacks, etc., since our bodies will function better when feeling less pressured and tense. Avoid scheduling lengthy or controversial items immediately before meals, or late in the day. These items are best placed after breakfast or lunch Saturday, or Sunday morning. Schedule breaks throughout the day; if agenda changes, leave the breaks!

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What does the Host Committee need to provide for the Agenda packet?

The Host Committee typically provides the following information to the Agenda Committee for inclusion in the event Agenda Packet:

- Plenary location/address, map/directions;
- Friday PM meeting location/address, map/directions;
- Saturday evening events info location/address, map/directions;
- Housing, contact for home stays, list of hotels/motels/hostels;
- Transportation, contact for rides, train/bus/airport info;
- Registration info, where to send money, the amount of registration and any Saturday evening event fees (You may also arrange with the GPCA webmeister to have this information available on an on-line preregistration webpage. In fact, this is strongly encouraged);
- Phone/email contact person, that folks can contact Fresno with any questions and/or special needs; and
- Other special events or time slots that the host committee needs that need to be posted in the agenda packet.

What deadlines are there for completing the Agenda packet?

In general, a timeline for Agenda Contact work is based on counting back from the date of the plenary as follows.-

Week	10	9 8	7	6	5	4 3 2	1 0
	Memo to WGs for Proposals and Reports	WGs meet and act	WGs mail their Proposals & Reports to Agenda Contact	Agenda setting Committee meets firms up agenda	Agenda Contact prints and mails packets to locals	Locals review packet and instruct delegates	ACTION

Timeline for action is dictated by the need for each local to review and approve proposals. This has been defined by the CC to mean that packets must be received a full month prior to the meeting to allow locals to consider the packet at their regular meetings. In turn, this requires mailing five weeks prior to meeting, and an Agenda setting meeting of the committee in the sixth week prior to the meeting. To facilitate the receipt of proposals and reports, the Agenda Contact sends a memo to Working Group Coordinators ten weeks prior to the meeting, enclosing an official Proposal form, and requesting a WG report and any proposals be mailed to the AC seven weeks prior to the meeting.

Success depends upon everyone honoring deadlines.

FOOD SERVICES

As Host Committee, you will be expected to provide for food during the plenary. (This should be included in your event budget and in your registration price.)

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Look for inexpensive food options. It doesn't have to be fancy. If you have local chapter members who are talented in the kitchen, use them. Perhaps local Greens would be willing to donate produce to reduce the food costs. Where available, FOOD NOT BOMBS (FNB) is an option. Food Not Bombs is a non-profit organization with local chapters that raise donated excess food from restaurants and grocery stores and uses it to prepare meals for the homeless. They have often provided meals for past plenaries in an efficient, inexpensive Green manner for little or no cost. (Beware, every chapter has their own policies and guidelines, you will need to talk to them directly for options.) Some host committees have also found local Green-friendly caterers to provide delicious food service at reasonable cost.

A couple of additional notes: It is a longstanding tradition that no meat be served at state events; all dishes should be at least vegetarian if not vegan. Also, be sensitive to the perception of only women preparing and/or serving the food. One of our Ten Key Values is Diversity, which includes gender balance. It would be wise for many reasons to have an equal number of men and women responsible for food services.

REGISTRATION

Plenaries need to be as affordable as possible without costing the host county any funds. The good thing about state plenaries is that they are pretty constant in their attendance: There are 100 possible delegates, plus a handful of observers, state Coordinating Committee members and other guests, so you can generally plan on about 150 people attending.

Each county has their own registration funding policies: Some counties pay for their delegates, others ask their delegates to pay their own way. Past plenaries have cost from \$20 to \$35, with \$35 being a little higher than most can afford. Try to work out a budget that keeps the cost at \$30 or less. (We find that the biggest factor in your costs are the venue -- if you have to pay any money for your site, it may be difficult to keep your per-person costs at or below \$30.)

The GPCA offers on-line registration for the host county. However, the host county first needs to set up an account with an on-line banking service, such as PayPal (www.paypal.com), that will allow you to take on-line credit card payments. This generally requires that the county have a bank account (which you should have anyway!) and the registration process can take up to a week to set up.

You should also plan on making mail-in registration forms available for your local Greens - even if you're not planning a local mailing to promote your event. Not everyone is computer-literate, and you can appear a bit prejudiced if you presume otherwise. Be sure to have at least 25 extra copies of the delegate packet on-hand at the event for walk-in registrants.

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Finally, you should consider discounts where feasible. Out-of-town participants are generally stuck there for the whole weekend and are depending on you to feed and house them; so your baseline price should be targeted with them in mind. However, it's really nice to have some forewarning as to who's coming, so it's common to provide a \$5 registration discount for those who pre-register before a certain date. You may also want to consider a separate price for attending guests, especially spouses and children (which you'll probably have to feed as well, even if you don't charge them). And if you are hoping to have a lot of locals attend, you may want to set a per-day price. Any evening entertainment is generally charged separately from the rest of the plenary. But don't overdo the discounts where you need a PhD in physics to figure it out -- you want to keep it as fair as possible, but simpler is better. Also, you may want to consider the issue of tracking the various pricing tiers during your event, which may necessitate your providing various-colored badges or stamps to attendees so you know who's paid for what.

A handy worksheet for working out the entire event budget, including general registration price for your plenary, can be found in Appendix B. A sample printed registration form can be found in Appendix C.

Delegate Lists & Voting Cards

For plenaries, counties are required to send their list of delegates and alternates for the purpose of verifying that the right people are signing in as delegates on Saturday morning. This is normally submitted through the plenary web site, which then dumps out a database for the host committee to use at plenary registration. Counties may also e-mail their delegates directly to the event Host Committee.

The CC Secretary or their designate is charged with providing the host committee prior to the plenary with a sign-in sheet that indicates the current delegate allocation for each county. Along with this sign-in sheet is to be provided a set of laminated delegate number cards (1-100). These delegate cards are used for voting on the plenary floor.

BUDGET

Work out the budget early on in your planning process, then stick to it. Please refer to the attached worksheet (Appendix B) for estimating expenses. Many state meetings have made substantial profits, but it takes careful planning and budget scrutiny. Focus on substituting donated labor and goods for things you might normally consider purchasing. The biggest expense is usually the facility rental, along with the site insurance. Past plenaries have found it very difficult to make the event affordable if they had to pay rental fees for the facility space (See 'Venue', earlier). The GPCA may or may not have an insurance plan that covers the plenary event; if they don't, estimate approximately \$400 for liability insurance costs for the entire weekend. (Short-term liability insurance policies may be purchased from most local insurance agents, although it does pay to shop around.)

If you have large deposits and prepayments you need to make for the plenary that are beyond the resources of your local, call on the GPCA treasurer to arrange an advance to be repaid from the delegate registration fees.

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PUBLICITY

Publicity is generally optional for plenaries. Your target audience is the group of delegates that the county sends to the plenary to make state decisions. The state Coordinating Committee takes responsibility for notifying the counties of upcoming plenaries, reminding them to send delegates, and making Agenda packets available.

If you're ambitious and are trying to modify the event as an outreach tool (for instance, evening entertainment events are often planned on Friday or Saturday evenings that are open to the general public), then you'll want to pursue publicity options. Here's a list of typical publicity actions that you can do for your event:

- List your event in all of the free 'local announcements' sections of the local newspapers and radio stations (note: you generally have to do this 2-4 weeks prior to your event!);
- Put event information that's specifically of interest to your local audience on your county website;
- Send out e-mail notices of your event to all of the local e-mail groups you know about;
- Organize 'flyer brigades' to walk targeted neighborhoods and leave flyers about the event on residential doorsteps;
- Print up some larger posters and solicit local businesses to put the posters in their windows;
- Arrange 'tabling weekends' with local volunteers to promote your event;
- Arrange to make a presentations at other Green locals in your area;
- Contact groups that should be interested in your event and make flyers or other information available for them to distribute to their membership.

Publicity can be much more effective if you can figure out a marketing 'hook' for your event that gives local people a reason to be interested. The 'hook' can be something national, regional, or local (best local). When the California energy crisis was in full bloom, one local group was able to parlay their evening's event into an 'Alternative Energy Fest' that caught the attention of local media. An effective 'hook' provides these additional publicity options:

- Entice local reporters to write an article on your event;
- Invite a local celebrity to your event that champions the issue you're marketing; and use that celebrity's name to help promote your event;
- Arrange for sponsorships from affiliated groups (or media) who are sympathetic to your 'hook'. ('Sponsorship' can include anything from promising to promote your event to their members in exchange for some mention on a poster, running an ad in their publication, to providing information or staffing a booth at your event, to providing money to help cover the costs of your event.)

If you have some money, you might also:

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- Arrange for a direct mailing of your event to your local Greens registrants (plus, perhaps, Independents);
- The state and national Green parties periodically arrange for fund-raising mailings to various state regions. You might be able to 'piggyback' on one of these mailings with a flyer publicizing your event for little or no cost.
- If you're REALLY rich (ha!), there are professional event planners available for hire. But they generally expect a sizable retainer up-front, and they don't guarantee that you'll make it back with event proceeds. It's recommended that you avoid using an event planner except for very special situations, such as access to a high-powered celebrity that you don't otherwise have access to.

Publicity is a highly specialized art. If you don't have any group experience with publicity, don't expect significant results until you've tried it a few times and figured out what works and what doesn't for you area. But it's well-worth developing the expertise, so the plenary may be an excellent opportunity to being building those skills within your organization.

GUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

Green Party plenaries generally offer three overnight options for out-of-town guests:

- 1) Homestays;
- 2) Local hotels; and
- 3) Camping.

An opportunity for serious organizing! Homestays are arranged with local Greens for out-of-town guests to stay at their residence during the plenary. Out-of-towners bring a sleeping bag, a change of clothes, and their toiletries, and they can 'camp out' at a local Greens' home for the weekend. It's a fun party tradition that allows Greens to meet and fraternize with others around the state. The hosting Green generally isn't required to provide any food, entertainment, or even a bed, although a little time in the bathroom in the morning is usually appreciated.

A strong team of several Greens should phone your Green database EARLY to find volunteers for homestay hosts. Keep a file of host names with their addresses and directions. Address postcard reminders to hosts, and drop them in the mail a week before the meeting. Remind reluctant hosts that it's a nice way to meet new people with similar interests who will be glad to host them in return.

Homestay requests are usually included in the registration form, either on-line or printed. (Don't forget to include that question on your form!) One Host committee member is generally assigned to track the homestay requests and solicit local homestay hosts for their guests. They should take note of any special lodging requests, for instance, smoking/not; pet allergies; any medical needs, so homestay guests aren't assigned to inappropriate hosts (and vice versa).

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Many Greens prefer to seek hotel/motel/camp lodging. For hotels, compile a list of 10-20 of the hotels closest to the plenary site, with distances and prices. You can usually get this list from your local phone book or the local Chamber of Commerce. Also note which of the hotels, if any, are unionized. This information is included in the Agenda packet; it wouldn't be a bad idea to post it on your county website as well. Plenary participants are expected to make their own hotel arrangements, should they so choose.

Camping is generally optional, depending on the site. Plenaries in urban areas aren't conducive to camping; other areas may lack affordable hotels and interest in local camping sites may be high. You should try to offer camping information if any in the area is available.

Don't forget to also research the transportation options and provide those in the Agenda packet and on your website as well. The Chamber of Commerce may be able to provide lists of local train, plane and bus locations and reference numbers/websites.

CHILD CARE / YOUTH TRACK

Child Care is a generally overlooked facet of plenaries, even though many would-be attendees are parents with young families. Not having a child care arrangement will likely keep many people from otherwise attending the plenary.

Child care is generally a thankless task, and nobody wants to do it because it requires full-time attention and will keep them from attending other plenary events. Also, many parents, no matter how liberal-minded they may be, can be 'picky' about who cares for their children. The children may also have special dietary or other needs, which is often beyond the skill of many volunteers.

So what to do? If you can work it into the budget, the ideal scenario is to hire a licensed day-care professional who is trained to take care of young children. If you can't find or afford a professional, it's recommended that you find two adult volunteers who are good with children to work together in managing the day care. (Please note: Like Food Services, be gender-conscious when soliciting volunteers, to avoid any impression of gender discrimination!)

If you're feeling ambitious and feel that you're going to have children anywhere from 5-12 years old, you might plan an actual 'Youth Track' where you provide one-hour sessions on storytelling / story reading, finger painting / crafts, singing, or games (board games are good for confirmed spaces). You'll generally want to plan on having breaks that match those of the plenary so the children can 'check in' with their parents at least a few times during the day. (You can repeat your Saturday 'Youth Track' sessions on Sunday.)

Make sure you include a box in your registration form indicating whether day care is likely to be needed, and what ages of children might come. Also very important is to make facility arrangements for child care. You need to have them in a room or area that is soundproof enough to keep from disturbing the plenary and workshop proceedings.

THE ACTUAL EVENT

There are a few tasks which must be done during the event, especially if it is a business meeting like a plenary.

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Event Facilitators / Hosts

Someone at your event is going to need to be "in charge", even if the role is ceremonial. At a Gathering, this would be the Host; at a Plenary, this would be a Facilitator. And ideally, there would be co-hosts / co-facilitators.

Gathering Hosts

The hosts at a Gathering are responsible for the orderly progression of the overall Gathering: To introduce speakers, announce when workshops are beginning, and to provide other information of value to the attendees. This role is usually adopted by the local Host planning committee.

Plenary Facilitators

The facilitators at a Plenary are responsible for the orderly progression of the session that they are facilitating. This responsibility includes ensuring the notetaker, time keeper, and vibes watcher are performing their tasks, and providing support to these persons when needed. This role is usually arranged by the CC and Agenda committee.

Registration Desk

The Registration Desk will need to be staffed most of the first day by host committee members who are organized and responsible with money. A LOT of money will change hands in a very short period, so it's vital that it's well-controlled.

Pre-registration and delegate lists should be printed beforehand and made available to the Registration Desk before the start of the event. If there are delegates, the delegate sign-in sheet should be filled out the night before and made available to the Registration Desk ask well. Along with any delegate sign-in sheet will be a set of laminated delegate number cards (1-100) provided by the GPCA (See "Delegate List & Voting Cards", earlier). These delegate cards are used for voting on the plenary floor. The sign-in sheet will have a number next to each row; this number corresponds to the delegate card number to be assigned to that delegate.

NOTE: These cards need to be carefully controlled! You should collect these delegate cards at the end of the first day, then redistribute them the next morning at check-in. In no case should delegates be allowed to leave the premises with their delegate card.

Although it would be very nice to have pre-printed name tags for delegates, experience has shown that there's usually a high incidence of alternates filling in for the primary delegates on the day of the event. Better to let them fill out their own name tags by hand when they arrive.

Plenary delegates typically arrive at the registration desk all at once, at the last moment before the plenary starts. So it's important to plan for this in order to process them as fast as possible. We recommend having at least four check-in lines running in parallel, sorted by region or alphabetically or some other logical division.

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Notetakers

If the event is a business meeting like a plenary, then minutes of the meeting will be required. In that case, it is generally the responsibility of the local host committee to arrange for the meeting notetakers and to provide a line in their event budget for the costs of these notetakers. Traditionally, notetakers get paid for their service. The fees have ranged from \$100 to \$250 depending on the amount of work and the number of notetakers.

Obtaining an accurate record of decisions made, and the process of deciding, is an important function for both legal and practical reasons. It is always a challenge to entice someone to volunteer for this vital job. These guidelines are meant to clarify what is needed, and specifically how to do it, in hopes that people will feel less intimidated about helping with this task.

Basically, there are three main qualities a good notetaker should possess:

1. Be a good listener. Can you listen to someone objectively and hear what they are saying without personal interpretation? Can you summarize the main points of a rambling speaker?
2. Be competent on a computer or with a writing pad. Can you keypunch or write at a reasonably fast speed to keep up with a conversation?
3. Familiarity with the Green Party meeting process. Anyone who has attended a few meetings—at the local or state level—should be familiar with how we run meetings.

Many people have these skills and could do this job.

Typically, the weekend-long plenary is divided into morning and afternoon sessions. It would be ideal to have a new notetaker for each session so one person does not get overloaded. The notetakers must decide among themselves how the workload is to be divided.

In general, the notetaker will record the proceedings during the plenary sessions of the meeting. (A "plenary session" is when all delegates are together in one meeting.) However, not every item on the agenda is an official decision by the plenary body that needs recording, sometimes they are only presentations and discussions. This is discussed below.

After the plenary, the notetaker will transcribe all the notes into a coherent set of meeting minutes—including a summary of decisions. Ask the agenda committee for a reference to previous minutes that serve as good examples. The completed minutes should be given to the Agenda Committee contact or the host Local's CC Regional Rep.

What To Record

Preliminary Information

- A. Date and Time – Typically, the state meeting occurs on Saturday and Sunday with each day divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The notetaker should record which session they are working.

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- B. Session Officials – Each plenary session is officiated by facilitators, vibes watcher, time keeper, notetaker, and (occasionally) scribe. The names of these volunteers should be recorded. Normally, a new officiating team is selected for each session.
- C. Agenda – The actual agenda frequently changes from the proposed agenda in the agenda packet. The changes are to be recorded. It is also common to revise the agenda, or extend agenda times, as the meeting progresses. These changes should also be recorded.

Decisions made by the plenary body.

This includes formal proposals that have been distributed in the agenda packet, and unplanned issues that sometimes arise.

A. Formal Proposals

1. Since the proposal is in the agenda packet, the notetaker need only record the title of the proposal, the page number from the agenda packet, the proposal presenter(s), and the starting time.
2. The process for presenting a proposal includes dealing with clarifying questions, friendly amendments, points of information, and concerns. All of these affect the definition of the proposal and decision process. All of these elements must be recorded. This is probably the most difficult part for the notetaker since it can involve lengthy discussion that can diverge and digress in many directions.
3. The final outcome of the decision process should be recorded. Frequently, the presenter will restate the proposal—as modified by amendments and clarifications—just prior to calling the question. This final version should be recorded. If the proposal is approved by consensus, that should be recorded. If there are outstanding concerns / stand-asides, they should be recorded. If a vote is required, the final "yes/no/stand aside" count should be recorded.

B. Unplanned Items

1. These items have not been circulated to the counties prior to the plenary, so the exact proposal should be recorded.
2. The decision process is the same as for a formal proposal, so the information stated in the preceding section 'A' also applies here.

- C. Points of Process – Sometimes a presentation is halted due to an objection over the process. The nature of these interrupts, and their resolution, should be recorded.

Announcements

At every plenary, time is allotted for people to make announcements of events, causes, services, etc. The presenter and a brief summary of the announcement is all that needs to be recorded so people know who to contact for future reference.

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What Not to Record

Ideally, it would be nice to have a direct transcript of every word uttered at a meeting, but, in practicality, this is not possible. Notetakers are encouraged to record as much as possible, but not all items are essential for the meeting minutes:

- I. **Decisions made by the plenary body** – While it is important to have an accurate recording of decisions, this does not mean every word of the presenter has to be captured. It is best to record a discussion as a series of summary statements—this is where good listening skills come in. Readily understood abbreviations and shortcuts also make the job easier.
- II. **Presentations** – It is common to have guest speakers address the plenary on subjects of interest to the Green Party. These are informational presentations only, not issues requiring a decision. The presentation does not have to be recorded. However, the presenter's name and subject should be recorded. The notetaker is encouraged to record the main points of the presentation.

If a presenter wants their full presentation included in the minutes, they should provide a written copy to the Notetaker.

- III. **Housekeeping and Logistics** – Announcements regarding housekeeping, site logistics, events, etc. do not have to be recorded.

Notetaker's Bill of Rights

The notetaker has the right, even an obligation, to pause the facilitators (as in a point of process) if the discussion gets ahead of him/her, a statement needs clarification, or any other question regarding how the proceedings should be recorded.

The notetaker has the right to perform the job free of side conversations or other distractions. No one should be allowed to have a conversation in the vicinity of the notetaker; no one should talk directly to the notetaker during the floor discussion. The facilitators should be alerted if these situations occur.

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Try to have a Saturday evening event. This is an important opportunity for Greens to get to know one another and build networking ties. During campaign season, this event can be a great time for local/state candidates to present themselves to Greens. Consider the inexpensive local resources your particular area may offer: drum groups, performance poets, political theater, dance bands and musicians. Build Green coalitions by inviting a local tribe, farm workers' group, labor union or other organization to present their issues to us. Entertainment costs can be expensive. Some groups will perform for the experience, or for hat-passing. You can also encourage delegates to go out and enjoy the community's local entertainment.

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SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Every county is unique, as are the active individuals in each county. It's quite likely that your group will want to do something 'different' or 'out of the ordinary' that they think would really improve the event: For instance, maybe you'd like to invite a local Native American group to provide an opening ceremony, or a local historian to provide a presentation on the history of the venue site. Or maybe you have a new idea on how we can be less wasteful with paper and foodware that you feel is in line with Green principles and that you'd like to see implemented at all plenaries. Plenaries are not meant to be sacred productions set in stone; such creative impulses are welcomed, not only by the participants who appreciate new and unique experiences, but by the Green Party leadership who are constantly striving to develop new ways of improving the outreach of our message and our values.

You should feel empowered to take the initiative to make suggestions for the event outside what is outlined in this document. Be sure to run such ideas by the Agenda Committee, which will have invaluable insight and experience that can help ensure that your ideas will be successful.

POST-EVENT WRAPUP

Every major event should include some final 'wrapup' meeting and discussion to provide closure for all involved. Talk about the good things; talk about the bad things, talk about what you would've done differently if you had a chance to do it all again.

This conversation is not only valuable for the participants, it is valuable for others down the road to learn from your experiences. In this light, your committee should take some time to fill out the 'Post-Event Report', found in Appendix A, and submit it to the GPCA Coordinating Committee within a few weeks of the close of your event. This report will be kept on record for future event planners, and they will be quite grateful that you took the time to provide this reflection!

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APPENDIX A - POST-EVENT REPORT

POST-EVENT REPORT ON GPCA PLENARY

THE COMMITMENT

1. How did your county come to offer to host the state event?
2. How far ahead did you make your commitment?
3. How prepared did your county feel you were at the time you volunteered to host the event? Was there any dissension or disagreement within your local in regards to this responsibility?
4. What resources and tools did you find to help you plan the event? How helpful were they?
5. How many people did you bring together to work on the event? What experience did they have?
6. How did your planning committee organize and delegate the responsibilities of planning the event?
7. How well did your people follow through on their commitments?
8. Any hindsight comments on how you volunteered and organized for the event -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn from working with this group, what would you have done differently?

THE VENUE

9. What criteria did you use for choosing your venue?
10. How much effort did it take to find your venue?
11. Were there any unexpected difficulties in securing it?
12. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented in regards to the venue during the event?
13. Any hindsight comments on your choice of venue -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? Would you consider using that venue again?

EVENT AGENDA

14. How was your relationship with the state Agenda committee?

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15. How involved did your committee get in Agenda matters? Do you feel that the Agenda committee did its job?
16. Did you have any difficulty in providing the expected event planning items for the Agenda packet? Any hindsight comments on this?

FOOD SERVICES

17. Whom did you decide to have handle the food services for your event? How did you choose them?
18. What issues, if any, did you have in deciding what food would be served at the event? How were they resolved?
19. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented with the food or food services during the event?
20. Any hindsight comments on how you handled the food -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

REGISTRATION

21. How did you arrange to accept event registrations?
22. How well did that process work?
23. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented with registration during the event?
24. Any hindsight comments on how you handled registration -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

BUDGET

25. How large was your budget, and how many people did you plan for?
26. How did the actual number of participants compare with your expectations?
27. Was there a surplus or shortfall from your event? What did you do about it?
28. Any hindsight comments on how you budgeted your event? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

PUBLICITY

29. If you decided to publicize your event, how did you come to this decision? How did you decide what kind of publicity to do?

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30. What publicity did you do?
31. How successful were you in attracting the groups you intended to attract to your event?
What went well, what went wrong?
32. Any hindsight comments on how successful your publicity was -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

GUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

33. What lodging accommodations did you arrange for out-of-town guests at your event? How were these arrangements made?
34. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented with guest accommodations during the event?
35. Any hindsight comments on how you handled guest accommodations -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

36. If you decided to provide evening entertainment, how did you come to this decision? How did you decide what kind of entertainment to have?
37. If you arranged for evening entertainment at your event, whom did you decide to provide the entertainment? How did you choose them?
38. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented with the evening entertainment during the event?
39. Any hindsight comments on how you handled the evening entertainment -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

40. Did you decide to make any 'Special Arrangements' at your event? How did you come to this decision? What 'Special Arrangements' did you plan for?
41. If you planned for 'Special Arrangements' at your event, whom did you choose to handle these arrangements? How did you choose them?
42. Were there any unexpected difficulties presented with the 'Special Arrangements' during the event?

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43. Any hindsight comments on how you handled the 'Special Arrangements' -- what was good, what was bad about the experience? What lessons did you learn, and what would you have done differently?

POST-EVENT WRAPUP

44. How successful did your planning committee felt they were with this event?

45. Did your planning committee have a post-event wrapup? Why/why not?

46. What do you think were the long-term consequences for your committee, your local, and/or your community in hosting this event?

47. Any final comments / thoughts / suggestions you'd like to offer from your experience for future events?

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APPENDIX B - BUDGET WORKSHEET

Plenary Budget Worksheet			
	@Cost	Planned	
EXPENSES			
Facility Rental:			
Friday Evening (CC Meeting)			
Saturday Day			
Saturday Evening			
Sunday Day			
TOTAL FACILITY RENTAL			
Insurance			
Food Service:			
Friday Night CC Dinner			
Saturday			
Breakfast			
Lunch			
Dinner			
Evening Event			
Sunday			
Breakfast			
Lunch			
TOTAL FOOD SERVICE			
Other Expenses:			
Promotional Material			
Meeting Supplies			
Notetaker Fees			
Security Fees			
PA Equipment Fees			
Youth Care Supplies			
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES			
TOTAL PLENARY EXPENSES			
10% Contingency			
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENSES	(A)		
Minimum Expected Attendees	(B)		
Minimum Delegate Fee (A) / (B):			

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			Number	
	Revenue Source	Price	Attending	Dollars
REVENUES				
	Out-of-Town Attendees			
	Less: Early Reg. Discount			
	Local Attendees			
	Less: Local Discount			
	Saturday Night Event			
	Misc. Other Contributions			
TOTAL REVENUES				
EVENT NET PROCEEDS				

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APPENDIX C - SAMPLE PRINTED REGISTRATION FORM



GREEN PARTY OF CALIFORNIA 200x STATE PLENARY

<Site Location>, <City>, <Date>

REGISTRATION

The <Date> GPCA Plenary will be held at the <Place>, located at <Address> in <City>, California, on <Date>, from <Time> with a Saturday evening musical event from <Time>.

The event will offer of 30 different workshops during the day, geared towards Greens and political progressives who are interested in learning more about progressive issues and what they can do to affect local change. Food will be provided as part of the event, as well as a 'children's program' that will allow parents to fully participate in the event while their children can participate in songs, crafts, and story-telling throughout the day. Special Green Party speakers <Speaker1>, <Speaker2>, <Speaker3>, and <Speaker4> will be prominent at the event, speaking on Greens issues as well as leading and participating in workshops and meeting with individual people to answer questions.

Participants may come for one or both days. The cost is \$35 for the entire weekend, or \$20 for Saturday only. Children under 14 may attend for free; those that come only for the Saturday evening event may be admitted (after 5pm) for only \$12. There is a \$5 discount for pre-registration.

PROOF OF REGISTRATION

NAME: _____

I have received registration and payment for _____ adults and _____ children to attend the August 2002 GPCA Plenary / Eco-Justice Festival.

Signature, Green Party Registrar Date

.....**Tear Here - Top half for Registrant; Lower Half for Green Party Registration Committee**.....

GPCA AUGUST 2002 GREEN PLENARY / ECO-JUSTICE FESTIVAL -- REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

	<u>Per Person</u>	<u>Total</u>
YES!! I want to participate the entire 2-day weekend.	\$35	
I will be attending only on Saturday.	\$20	
I will be attending only the Saturday evening event.	\$12	
I will be bringing my children along. (Under 14)	\$8	
\$5 Preregistration discount	(\$5)	<u>(\$5)</u>
TOTAL FEES		_____

I am paying by check.

I am paying by credit card: Mastercard Visa

Credit Card number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

(Mail to: Green Party of Ventura, PO Box 940096, Simi Valley, CA 93094-0096; or fax to (805) 527-3470)

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APPENDIX D - EXAMPLE COMMITTEE/TASK BREAKDOWN

Task	Assigned To	Must be Done By
Investigate Possible Venues		3-4 months prior to event
Select / Secure Venue		at least 2 months prior
Develop Budget		6 weeks prior
Food Committee:		
Investigate Caterers		1 month prior
Plan Meals		1 month prior
Select / Secure Caterer		1 month prior
Arrange for Breakfast/Lunches		1 month prior
Sat. Evening Food		2 weeks prior
Accommodations Committee:		
Local Hotels		1 month prior
Line Up Homestay Hosts		2 weeks prior
Sat. Entertainment Committee:		
Develop Saturday Event		1 month prior
Investigate Entertainment possibilities		1 month prior
Secure Entertainment		2 weeks prior
Assemble Logistics Packet		
Research travel and transportation capabilities		1 month prior
Create Venue Directions / Map		1 month prior
Set up / Update Gathering Website		1 month prior
Youth Program Committee		
		Event
Public Relations committee:		
Outreach to regional locals		1 month prior
Outreach to state contacts		
Outreach to progressive groups		
Local Ads		Per publication deadlines
Day-of-Event Committee:		
Recruit Volunteers for Tabling		1 week prior
Coordinate tabling at event		1 week prior
Information table		2 days prior
Registration table		2 days prior
Refreshments/Food Logistics		1 day prior
Signage (name tags, direction signs)		1 day prior
Gathering Event		
Event Evaluation		Within one week after

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APPENDIX E - STATE MEETING / HOST COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

BUDGET: Budget between \$2000.00 to \$4000.00.

HOSTING COMMITTEE COORDINATOR(S): _____

HOUSING COORDINATOR(S): _____

CHILD CARE COORDINATOR(S): _____

FOOD

COORDINATOR(S): _____

Price for each meal should be between \$2.50 and \$5.00, included in delegate fees

Sat:	breakfast	Sun:	breakfast
	lunch		lunch
	dinner (optional)		

MEETING LOCATION FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES:

Coordinating Committee: Friday- 6-7pm (dinner); 7-9:30pm (meeting)

Main meeting location:

- wheelchair accessible
- one large meeting room (150 to 250 people)
- 3-4+ breakout rooms
- hours available:
 - Sat- 7:30am to 12:30pm
 - Sun- 7:30am to 6:30pm
- kitchen facilities (preferable, but not absolutely necessary)
- insurance required?
- PA system
- Podium
- audio recording
- 2 large easels for large room/or whiteboard and markers
- 5 easels for working group meetings
- 10 thick black markers (that do not bleed through paper)
- 4 to 5 tables for literature (fee can be charged)
- Sign- in table
- Power strips
- Computer projector
- Projector screen
- Phone jacks/internet access*
- Computers to use*

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DELEGATE SIGN-IN:

1. Delegate badges (a master of badges will be given to the host committee coordinator)
2. Observer badges
3. Staff badges
4. Press badges
5. Delegate sign- in sheets for Sat/Sun
6. Observer sign-in sheets for Sat/Sun
7. 10 black ball point pens
8. cash box with change
9. 3 rolls masking tape (1 roll kept at podium)
10. scissors / stapler / staple remover
11. list of closest copy/computer store (post near sign-in table)
12. last minute delegate handouts
13. 25 plenary packets for sale at cost
14. ?

REGISTRATION FEES:

Should cover the cost of: location, food, host committee expenses, food, notetaker, and misc.

PRIORITY FOR PROVIDING HOUSING:

1. Delegates
2. Coordinating Committee / Working Group Coordinators
3. Observers

VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED FOR:

- Food set up and clean up
- Delegate sign – in: sat
- Delegate sign – in: sun
- 2 volunteers on hand each to assist hosting coordinator
- Child care volunteers
- Site set up and break down
- Clean up

A Saturday party is always optional. It is also optional to have it at the meeting site or another location and to charge or not charge.

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APPENDIX F - DAY-OF-EVENT CHECKLIST

Site Preparation:

TASK	MATERIALS NEEDED	PERSONS
Assure facilities are opened		
Contact / Verify Security / Maintenance		
Post Signs	Event Signage Tape Staple Gun	
Set up Registration Table	Registration Table Cash Box w/Money Preregistration Sheet Delegate Sign-In Sheet Delegate Cards Name Tags (different colors for delegates and observers) Markers Pens & Paper Maps Transportation & Housing Information / Contact	4-5 people initially. After meeting begins, one person should stay at table. Can be done in shifts.
Set up Literature Tables	Literature Table Literature Other promotional items for sale	If items for sale, 1 person throughout day. Best if rotated among several people.
Set up Assembly Hall	Stage mikes chairs desk / table for notetaker extension cord w/power extra floppy disks Large paper Easel Markers Tape	
Set up breakfast	breakfast food juice / beverages coffee / tea cups, plates, utensils Napkins Recycle/Refuse containers	
Arrange chairs in meeting rooms	tables chairs Large paper Easel Markers Tape	
Set up Child Care	Arts & Crafts Toys Books	

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End of Each Day:

Secure loose / valuable items		
Collect forgotten attendee valuables		
Pick Up Trash		