

ABS Board Meeting: 31 May 2026

Called to Order @ 11:00am Pacific

Quorum (>= 7 voting Directors minimum, out of 13 total):

Directors present (11): Pierce, Edwards, Fox, Connor, Banks, Rogers, Meckes, Boeraeve, Kohler, King, Ramsay

Directors absent (2): Sansome, Sanders

Others Present: Hollenback

Quick recap

The American Bamboo Society board meeting focused primarily on commercial membership procedures and the upcoming conference planning. The board discussed a new commercial membership application, which sparked debate about whether the applicant's primary business of bamboo removal should disqualify them from commercial membership. After extensive discussion, the board agreed to implement a temporary moratorium on new commercial memberships until it can develop proper vetting procedures, with Carole, David, and Ian tasked to draft a communication to this applicant offering a refund. The meeting also covered updates on the mid-states chapter leadership transition, with Ronald Barrett taking over from Dan Fox as chapter director, and Carole presented progress on the upcoming conference in Hockley, including confirmed speakers and registration details. Additionally, Luc provided an update on the World Bamboo Congress being organized in Rotterdam, The Netherlands for 11-17 June 2027. The board scheduled their next meeting for June 28th at 11 AM Pacific, 1PM Central, 2PM Eastern.

Next steps

Autumn

- Add discussion of including chapter membership in commercial membership requirements to the agenda for the next meeting.
- Contact lapsing advertisers.

Carole

- Send Ronald Barrett the membership list for the Mid-States chapter.
- Update the minutes of the previous meeting with Carole's correction and reload them to the website.

- Contact Ocean View Bamboo regarding mailed check for commercial membership renewal.
- Contact Robert Small (highlighted in yellow on Carole's list) regarding lapsed commercial membership.
- Contact the 54 "pending" members to encourage them to complete their membership.
- Disable or update the commercial membership application process on the website to reflect that new applications are on hold until after the October meeting.
- Send a refund to the controversial Commercial membership applicant if requested after communication with the business.
- Update the website to remove the word "designee" and clarify that commercial membership approval is by the full board.

Dan

- Provide Ronald Barrett with access and information regarding the Groups.io and Facebook pages for the Mid-States chapter.

David

- Run and upload a new site index for bamboo.org after Carole uploads new content.

Ian

- Send Mark a text with a link to Ronald's information for introduction in the magazine.
- Schedule the next board meeting for June 28th at 11am Pacific.

Collaboration

- David, Ian, Carole: Draft and agree on a letter to the controversial Commercial membership applicant regarding the status of their commercial membership application, including offer of refund, and circulate to the board for comment before sending.
- Autumn, David: Research and prepare information on IRS 501(c)(3) rules regarding legislative caucuses and lobbying for the next meeting.
- All board members: Begin discussion (by email or before the next meeting) on establishing a clear procedure/policy for vetting and approving new commercial members, to be finalized at the October in-person meeting.

Summary

The meeting began with informal conversation about attendance before transitioning to business items. The group approved the minutes of the previous meeting with one correction from Carole regarding a description of rhizomes, which David agreed to update. The meeting then moved to discussing the Mid-States Chapter and having a new representative.

Mid-States Bamboo Chapter Revitalization

The group discussed the Mid-States Chapter of the American Bamboo Society, where Ronald Barrett was appointed as the representative to help revitalize the chapter despite limited board participation and engagement. Carole offered to provide the membership list to Ronald to help him communicate with chapter members, while Dan Fox mentioned setting up digital platforms including Groups.io and Facebook that haven't seen much active use and stated that the MSC bank account has sufficient funds. The Chapter does need more board members. Ronald shared his background as a research and development engineer interested in exploring bamboo's potential for CO2 sequestration and industrial applications, particularly through collaboration with local universities and BAMBOO Magazine. Autumn highlighted bamboo's carbon sequestration benefits, noting its rapid growth and potential for creating high-quality biochar.

Bamboo Research and Leadership Transition

Autumn expressed interest in pursuing bamboo research for carbon sequestration and offered to share a paper on the topic. Ronald shared his background in anthropology and molecular chemistry research, offering to contribute expertise in bamboo's industrial applications and sequestration capabilities. The group discussed leadership transitions, with Dan agreeing to resign as chapter director in favor of Ronald, while Dan would remain as treasurer to handle financial matters.

Membership and Conference Updates

The team discussed membership updates, with Carole reporting 389 current members and 54 "pending" members who accessed aMember without actually joining and need follow-up. Autumn noted a decrease in commercial memberships and suggested reaching out to local chapters to promote commercial memberships. Carole provided an update on the conference planning, sharing details about confirmed speakers and the registration process, which is now live but has not yet generated registrations in the few days since it was available. The team also discussed the need for liability insurance for the conference venue, with David offering to handle the purchase and be reimbursed for the expense.

Conference Planning and Membership Review

The meeting focused on conference planning logistics and the controversial commercial membership application. Carole discussed t-shirt ordering issues and announced she could increase registration prices by \$25 after September 1st. The team addressed the need to rent AV equipment for the conference and discussed receiving books for a silent auction. Regarding the above controversial commercial membership application, John Kohler raised concerns that the application was motivated by spite after a previous conversation with the business owner, while

Autumn and others argued the company offers legitimate bamboo removal and maintenance services. The group ultimately decided to put the application on hold to develop a clear commercial membership policy before making a decision.

Commercial Membership Policy Review

The board discussed implementing a better policy for commercial membership applications, with consensus reached to temporarily hold new commercial memberships until a formal procedure is established. They decided to communicate with the applicant discussed above about delaying their commercial membership decision until an approval policy can be finalized at the annual meeting in Houston in October, with an option to offer a refund.

Species Source List

Communication between Bill and Autumn will assist in production of the SSL.

Other Items

The board reviewed plans for the upcoming 13th World Bamboo Congress in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Autumn raised the idea of creating a bamboo caucus for legislative advocacy, which the board agreed to discuss further at the next meeting after reviewing 501(c)(3) political activity restrictions.

Deferred to next meeting:

(1) Mark Sanders' presentation on membership recruitment and the Florida Bamboo Growers Assn and its potential relationship with the ABS.

(2) Decision on whether the Commercial Membership should include a chapter membership. Note that full development of an overall approval policy for commercial memberships is deferred until the in-person Board meeting in October at the ABS Annual Meeting.

(3) Education Committee progress report (Sanders, Kohler, Sansome, Ramsay, Connor).

By consensus, the next scheduled ABS Board meeting will be June 28th at 11 AM Pacific.

Abstracted by Zoom's AI, edited by David King, Secretary, ABS