

ABS Board Meeting: 28 June 2026

Called to Order @ 11:00am Pacific

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

Directors present (7): Edwards, Connor, Banks, Meckes, Boeraeve, Sanders, King

Directors absent (6): Pierce, Barrett, Rogers, Sansome, Kohler, Ramsay

Others Present: none

Quick recap

The American Bamboo Society (ABS) board meeting focused primarily on membership recruitment strategies, particularly for commercial members. Mark raised concerns about large bamboo nurseries like Palm Co in Florida not being ABS members, prompting discussion about how to recruit and engage commercial businesses. The board agreed to encourage potential commercial members to first join as individual members before pursuing commercial membership, with Ian noting that this approach had worked successfully in the past with companies like Bamboo Giant. The group also discussed the need to establish clear guidelines for commercial membership eligibility and standards. Additionally, the board addressed the retirement of Mike Bartholomew's long-standing role in handling magazine printing and mailing, deciding to seek new printing and mailing services while ensuring quality control through internal editing. Other topics included consideration of holding the 2027 ABS conference in Hawaii, updates on international bamboo society exchanges in Europe, and the upcoming World Bamboo Congress in Rotterdam. The next board meeting was scheduled for July 26th.

Next steps

Carole

- Send Landy a list of current Hawaii members to support outreach for potential conference planning and contacts.

David

- Invite Mike Bartholomew to the next board meeting (or request his input via email) regarding requirements and advice for selecting a new printer/distribution service for the magazine.

Landy

- Begin outreach to Hawaii members and investigate local contacts for possible 2027 conference planning and support.

Luc

- Prepare and send an email to all BAMBOO societies about the opportunity to participate in a joint session at the World Bamboo Conference in Rotterdam, and coordinate with interested societies and potential ABS representatives for this session.

Mark

- Include more information about the upcoming conference in the next issue of the Bamboo Magazine, using materials and photos provided by Carole.

Collaboration

- Mark, Carole, David, and other interested members: Research and obtain quotes from print and mail companies (locally and nationally), with a focus on those near Mark's location, to compare costs and services for magazine printing and mailing.
- Luc and Ian: Appoint a nomination committee for the two expiring at-large board terms; brainstorm and reach out to chapter members and the general membership (including via email, magazine, website, and social media) to solicit nominations for upcoming at-large board seats.
- Autumn (when available) and Bill (when recovered): Continue work on the species source list, with encouragement from board members.
- All board members: Consider and suggest potential new at-large Director candidates, especially from underrepresented regions to the nomination committee.
- David and Luc: Attend to the international exchange of publications (e.g., German Bamboo Society magazine), ensuring proper sharing and copyright compliance, and consider sharing relevant articles for translation and publication in partner society magazines.
- All interested members: Begin outreach to non-member nurseries/companies (especially in Florida and other regions), encouraging individual memberships as a first step toward broader engagement and eventual commercial membership, and coordinate with local chapters for outreach.
- Ian and David: Set the next board meeting for Sunday, July 26, and notify all members.

Summary

Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Unanimous approval on a motion by King, seconded by Meckes.

Membership Recruitment and Board Planning

The board discussed membership recruitment strategies, particularly focusing on how to attract larger commercial members. Mark, after visiting Florida nurseries, raised concerns about commercial bamboo businesses that weren't members, while the group agreed to first encourage commercial companies to join as individual members before pursuing commercial membership. New commercial membership approvals are being held pending the resolution of acceptance criteria scheduled for the October Board meeting in Texas, and this has been communicated to the commercial membership applicant discussed at the May 31 Board meeting. The discussion also covered the need for a nomination committee to find candidates for two at-large board positions, with at-large Directors David and Mark (#3 and #4, respectively) confirming their willingness to serve another term if selected, though both expressed openness to stepping aside if better candidates emerge. The group decided to reach out to the general membership for additional nominations and agreed to promote the opportunity through social media and the magazine.

Mike Bartholomew Retirement Transition Planning

The group discussed the retirement of Michael Bartholomew, who has handled magazine printing and mailing for 25-30 years. They agreed that finding a commercial printing and mailing service would be necessary rather than hiring an individual to replace him, though they acknowledged this would require sending materials in printer-ready format and might not include the quality control Mike provided. The group decided to invite Mike to the next board meeting to provide guidance on finding a suitable replacement service, and David offered to help with editorial quality control to address concerns about losing that aspect of the process.

Conference Planning for 2026 (Hockley, TX)

Carole Meckes has received only four registrations so far. She encouraged people to register before Sept 1 when the fee will go up by \$25. The hotel rooms at the special rate will be held until 20 September. All conference information is up on bamboo.org.

Print Vendor

The board discussed finding a print and mail company, with Mark offering to research options in Louisiana and reach out to contacts from his publishing background.

Conference Planning for 2027

The group discussed a potential ABS conference in Hawaii in 2027. Carole and Ian have contacted the owner of the Quindembo Bamboo Nursery on the Big Island which is for sale for an unknown asking price. The board discussed the promotional opportunity for wider exposure to potential buyers if the nursery were to be visited during the conference. Carole offered to provide a list of Hawaii members to help with outreach efforts for 2027. Landy reported on recent activities of the Southern California Chapter including a field trip to the Los Angeles Arboretum, and reported increased chapter member engagement through email and social media. She mentioned her retirement which provides more time for society activities. Southern California is a possibility for a future ABS conference if that chapter gains momentum.

Bamboo Society International Updates

Luc updated on the German Bamboo Society's digital membership status and their request to share content from the American Bamboo Society magazine, while noting challenges with the former's content creation and printing delays. The discussion also covered the French Bamboo Society's general meeting, which was affected by heatwave conditions, and their interest in international content sharing as well.

World Bamboo Conference Planning

Luc discussed plans for the World Bamboo Conference in Rotterdam next June, where he is organizing a session with bamboo societies from around the world, including a potential joint presentation by the American Bamboo Society. Ian expressed concerns about the commercial focus of the European Bamboo Foundation compared to ABS's gardening orientation, though Luc clarified they serve different purposes. The Board agreed to schedule their next board meeting for July 26th, 2026 at 11am Pacific, 2pm Eastern.

Deferred Until Next Meeting

(1) Education Committee progress report (Sanders, Kohler, Sansome, Ramsay, Connor). Deferred since most of the committee members were absent.

By consensus, the next scheduled ABS Board meeting will be July 26th 2026 at 11am Pacific, 2pm Eastern.

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