

## GSMDCA Recognized Regional Club Guidelines

The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America (GSMDCA) recognizes and works with regional clubs to host specialty shows, supported entries and GSMDCA-sanctioned working events. Cooperation between the national and regional clubs is encouraged and provides mutual benefits.

### **So You Want to Form a Club?**

Congratulations! The following checklist may help you organize in a way which makes it easy to seek recognition by the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America (GSMDCA) and/or AKC.

NOTE: As in AKC's Basic Club Policies (<https://www.akc.org/clubs-delegates/clubs/forming-a-club/>), dissatisfaction with an existing club should not be the reason to form a similar club.

- Hold an organizational meeting to which as many interested fanciers of the breed have been invited as possible. Determine a plan of action to accomplish goals for the club.
- Accomplish the following goals:
  - ✓ Select interim officers to serve until that time when formal procedures for operating the club are created.
  - ✓ Decide on a schedule of meetings with locations convenient to the membership.
  - ✓ Keep records of the club's development through agendas, minutes, newsletters, etc.
  - ✓ Determine membership fees and collection process, membership application.
  - ✓ Plan a program of activities.
  - ✓ Choose a name that identifies the geographic center of the club and is recognizable to someone in another part of the country.
- ✓ Decide the club's geographic area. Keep the area as small as practicable. The GSMDCA encourages the establishment of clubs with limited geography over clubs encompassing large geographic areas. The GSMDCA discourages overlapping regional club territories; priority will be given to existing established regional GSMDCA clubs. AKC accreditation does not automatically grant GSMDCA regional club status.
- ✓ Prepare and adopt a constitution and bylaws for the club's operation. Please see "How to Form an AKC-Accredited Dog Club" at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org). It contains a Sample Constitution and Bylaws and other helpful ideas/documents applicable for any newly-forming club. Include the process for dissolving the club and its treasury.
- ✓ Establish a website, and a newsletter, discussion list and/or , social media account , etc., for communication.
- ✓ Establish a treasury and EIN (visit: <https://sa1.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>)

✓Begin the incorporation process. Please see Rationale for Incorporation page 3.

- Notify the GSMDCA Board of the club's formation, giving details about area and purpose. Application to become a RRC can take place one year after the first official meeting.

### **Application for Seeking GSMDCA Recognition (newly forming clubs)**

Please file the following documents with the GSMDCA Recognized Regional Clubs Coordinator:

- Minutes and agenda of first recorded club meeting—GSMDCA reviews applications at least minimum one year from that date (GSMDCA review will include consultation with regional clubs with adjoining territories).
- Contact information for the person filing the application
- Copy of the club's constitution and bylaws
- Specify whether you are seeking recognition as a GSMDCA regional club or AKC accreditation
- List of elected officers and board members
- Membership roster, fees, application
- Name of club and geographic area
- Briefly outline the club's history— list of all activities, meetings, etc.
- Club website
- Obtain insurance and provide carrier and policy number
- Incorporation status
- Establish treasury--banking institution
- Obtain EIN number (visit: <https://sa1.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>)

### **Maintaining GSMDCA Recognized Regional Club Status (current recognized clubs)**

By March 1<sup>st</sup> each year, existing RRC clubs file the following documents with the RRC Coordinator:

- Updated list of board officers and directors with contact information per election process
- Updated Constitution and Bylaws, if applicable
- Financial paragraph stating the club's finances are in order and tax form filed (as needed), signed by two club officers who are not the treasurer or related to the treasurer. Example: "The entire Board received and reviewed copies of the beginning and ending bank statements for the prior year (April 2010 - March 2011) and all was in order. Applicable tax forms have been filed, as well."
- EIN on file with GSMDCA
- Updated insurance information, including company and policy number
- Annual filing with the Secretary of State for the State in which the club is incorporated
- State two local activities you have held in the past year—working, conformation or social events—such as parties, supported entries, pack hikes, draft clinics/trials, etc
- If RRC engages in rescue activity/liaison, please provide proof of insurance covering such activity.
- Club website

### **Benefits of GSMDCA Recognition**

- Listing of club and club officers and contact information on the GSMDCA webpage.
- Representation on the GSMDCA Recognized Clubs Committee. Each recognized club recommends a liaison to represent the club on the Recognized Clubs Committee. Recognized Club Committee members must be GSMDCA members.
- The GSMDCA Corresponding Secretary will provide referrals to the recognized club in response to inquiries from individuals within the recognized club's geographic area.
- Calendar coordination. Clubs are encouraged to work together to coordinate events and submit scheduled events to the Recognized Clubs Coordinator. The calendar of events will be published on the GSMDCA Webpage.
- The GSMDCA will provide to recognized clubs, on request, mailing labels or e-mails of GSMDCA members for use in marketing recognized club events. In turn, recognized clubs will encourage members to join the GSMDCA.
- Inclusion in the regional club news section of the GSMDCA triennial publication, The SENNtinel.
- One free full-page advertisement in one issue of the SENNtinel and e-SENN to announce specialty shows. Clubs may purchase up to two additional pages annually for specialty shows or GSMDCA approved working events at one-half the regular rate.
- GSMDCA sanctioning for GSMD specialty shows, supported entries, pack hikes, weight pulls and similar events.

### **Rationale for Incorporation**

There are two reasons for incorporation. One is for income tax purposes and the other is liability. Incorporation protects the officers and members of the regional club in the event of a lawsuit. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* states, "A principal advantage in incorporating a society is that officers and members are protected from personal liability under obligations that may be incurred by the organization." In the event of a lawsuit, the assets of the club are at risk, not the personal assets of the officers and members. Incorporation processes vary from state-to-state and can be found using a simple Google search, such as, "Virginia Incorporation." It is usually an inexpensive and uncomplicated process.

### **Rationale for Financial Information**

The US Government has rules as to how clubs are recognized and granted tax exempt status along with reporting requirements for clubs taking in revenues of less than \$25,000 annually. All clubs have reporting requirements whether a full form 990, 990EZ or 990 "Postcard". Having oversight by the officers of the RRC helps insure that these requirements are met and all fiduciary responsibilities are covered. Although the GSMDCA is separate from Recognized Regional Clubs, an annual financial statement to the GSMDCA board along with the other documents listed in "Maintaining GSMDCA Recognized Regional Club Status" as a part of the ongoing recognized process helps to insure to our national membership that RRCs are operating with full transparency and in the best interest of their membership.

### **Rescue Activity**

The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America, Inc. no longer engages in rescue activity and does not have insurance coverage for such activity. The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Rescue Foundation (GSMDRF) is the official rescue organization of the GSMDCA, Inc. RRCs are encouraged to use the GSMDRF for rescue purposes. If a RRC chooses to engage in rescue activities, proof of insurance coverage for this specific activity is required.