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Cooperative Extension Service

NMSU Extension Master Gardener Program (EMG) State Bylaws

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Article I – Council Origin, Authority and Program Mission

- A. **Origin and Authority:** The New Mexico State University Extension Master Gardener (EMG) State Advisory Council (State Council) was developed and is operated under the authority of New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service (CES) to support and provide a governance structure for the Extension Master Gardener Programming throughout the state. Both the State Advisory Council and the County EMG Chapters are working to adhere to the policies, rules and procedures of these state level bylaws. Any exceptions to state bylaw requirements are to be identified in the Chapter's bylaws. These State Bylaws may be amended or revised only as stated in this document.
- B. **Non-profit Status:** NMSU's EMG Program, including the State Advisory Council and the County EMG Chapters, is organized as a component unit of NMSU. NMSU is a non-profit public institution of higher education under the New Mexico Constitution, and is recognized as exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the IRC (Internal Revenue Code).
- C. **EMG Program Mission Statement:** Through their trained volunteers, the EMG Program seeks to preserve and beautify the environment while improving the quality of life in the community. Toward that goal, the EMG Program provides current research-based horticultural information to the public through education and outreach. The EMG Program promotes horticultural best management practices, sustainability, and environmental initiatives as developed by NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and the agricultural research programs of NMSU. This State Council and every County EMG Chapter operating under its authority embraces the horticultural education objectives of the Cooperative Extension Service, in cooperation with NMSU and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- D. **EMG Partners:** EMG Program operations depend upon the cooperation of the EMG Partners: Chapter members/volunteers, County Agents working with an EMG Chapter, the State EMG Program Coordinator, and the NMSU Cooperative Extension Service. The work of trained volunteers is the cornerstone of the EMG program. Once certified (following an extensive training program), these volunteers (EMG's) are members of county or regional chapters which operate under the direction and oversight of a CES County Agent.
- E. **EMG Program Integrity:** EMG volunteers may not participate in the EMG Program for personal gain or benefit. Accordingly, volunteers may not provide commercial recommendations or endorsements. EMG volunteers provide research-based horticultural information, and educational program assistance in support of the Extension education program. The EMG is qualified and able to meet and greet the public, provide appropriate information and responses to questions, and is eager to grow his/her own horticultural knowledge and practice.

Article II – State Advisory Council Organizational Structure

- A. **Staffing:** The State EMG Program Coordinator (State Coordinator) serves as the Chair and is responsible for the day to day operations of the State Advisory Council.
1. The State Coordinator is the NMSU employee holding the title Program Manager, who is selected by NMSU under the oversight of the director of the Cooperative Extension Service, and reports to the Extension Plant Sciences Department (EPS) Department Chair in the College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.
 2. The State Coordinator may be assisted and supported by a State EMG Program Assistant and/or Interns who may serve either as volunteer(s) or as NMSU grant funded employee(s).
- B. **State Advisory Council:** The Council includes representation from all EMG Program partners and provides awareness, guidance, procedures and support in the decision-making and operations of the program statewide.
1. **Functions:** The State Advisory Council performs the following functions:
 - a) Promotes the sharing of information from and to all EMG Program Chapters and a close working relationship between all EMG partners to collaboratively resolve issues of statewide concern;
 - b) Serves to ensure that NMSU's CES program understands the Chapter membership's needs and concerns;
 - c) Establishes guidelines for training and volunteer activities; and
 - d) Provides advice for EMG program policy formulation, and guidance to Chapter Management.
 2. **Membership.** The State Advisory Council membership includes:
 - a) One representative member of each EMG Chapter;
 - b) The County Agent from each county with an EMG Chapter;
 - c) The State Program Coordinator; and
 - d) The NMSU Director and Associate Director of the County Extension Service.
- C. **Council Operational Guidelines.** The State Advisory Council operates in accordance with the following guidelines:
1. Advisory Council Meetings with an expectation of in-person attendance are called no more than twice each year. Additional meetings may be scheduled, subject to arrangements to allow remote technology-based participation.
 2. The specific dates, meeting type (in person or remote participation) and location are determined by the State Coordinator. (Dates will vary to avoid holidays or conflicting EMG activities, and to coordinate with other statewide events.)

3. The meeting agenda is established by the State Coordinator, with input from Council members.
4. The Council may recommend changes to these Bylaws from time-to-time, but such changes become effective only upon approval of NMSU's Director of Cooperative Extension Service (CES), after review by the University General Counsel. Any proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be distributed to the Advisory Council members at least 10 days before the meeting at which the proposal will be agreed upon by consensus.
5. The State Coordinator will provide Council members with the meeting agenda and pertinent discussion materials in time to review in advance of the scheduled meeting.
6. The State Coordinator will provide all Council members with a written summary of the meeting, including recommendations and decisions made by the Advisory Council, generally within two weeks following the meeting.

D. **State Council Communications:** The State Coordinator is responsible for the following communication tools.

1. **Newsletter:** A newsletter published every other month will be sent to all EMG participants and will serve to communicate upcoming events, meetings, trainings, reports from council committees, and other announcements about national horticultural initiatives, statewide program efforts and State Council activities.
2. **State to Local Communication Protocol:** Communication with the statewide membership will be channeled through the county extension agent and state council representative.
3. **Chapter to Chapter Communication and Local Chapter Communications Protocol:** To be determined by the chapter management.

Article III – County EMG Chapter Organizational Structure

A. **Chapter Management and Staff Support:** The management of County EMG Chapters may take several forms. In each case, the County Agent is the final authority regarding operation of the EMG Program. The County Agent is responsible for oversight of the county's EMG program, including ensuring excellent program management and verification that state program standards are met. The agent monitors Chapter activities, program performance and the regular program review/evaluation. The CES office provides the support of the county administrative assistant, to the extent possible within the constraints of other duties. Each Chapter may specify its management structure in its Chapter Rules, subject to the restrictions set forth in these State Council Bylaws.

1. **Forms of Program Management:** Each Chapter will follow one of the following management structures:

- a) Executive Board Management: The County Chapter membership may choose to elect a Chapter Executive Board to provide management services to the Chapter, subject to the guidelines below. The Executive Board does not preclude the use of a Volunteer Coordinator to assist the County Agent, and the Chapter Rules may specify whether the Volunteer Coordinator will be a member of the Executive Board. Additional guidance for the use of Executive Boards is set forth below.
 - b) County Agent Supported by Volunteer Coordinator: Chapters may be managed by a County Agent who is assisted by a Volunteer Coordinator appointed by the County Agent. County Agents may delegate some duties of Chapter management to the Volunteer Coordinator including management of the membership and communication needs of volunteers.
 - c) County Agent as Solo Manager: In those cases where a Chapter has not elected to form an Executive Board and where the County Agent has not identified a Volunteer Coordinator, the Chapter may be managed by the County Agent alone. An extension horticulture/ agriculture agent serves as the overall administrator of each local chapter of the program.
2. Program Management Responsibilities: Regardless of the Chapter's management structure, the Chapter Management will fulfill the following responsibilities:
- a) Ensure adherence to Chapter Rules (if any), State Council Bylaws and NMSU rules and regulations relevant to program operations, including minimum requirements for training and project activities.
 - b) Provide necessary leadership in Chapter governance, particularly with respect to establishing Chapter Rules, and determining circumstances when the Chapter will establish standards beyond these State mandated minimums.
 - c) Ensure chapter representation on the State Advisory Board.
 - d) Assist and protect local initiatives unique to the Chapter.
 - e) Promote understanding and close working relationships between chapter membership, the County Agent, County Extension staff, the State Coordinator, university specialists and other NMSU staff.
 - f) Support member awareness of state and national Extension Master Gardener efforts and opportunities to participate at these additional levels.
3. Management Participant Qualifications: In Chapters utilizing a Volunteer Coordinator or an Executive Board, only EMG Chapter members in good standing are eligible to serve in these roles. The Chapter Rules may specify additional officers and the titles of each office, and may include member representatives who do not hold a specific office. In expanding its Board composition, the Chapter may elect to separate the secretary/treasurer position into two officer positions, may identify a Volunteer Coordinator as an officer and member of the Chapter Board, and may elect to identify the State Advisory Council Representative as a separate position/officer. In addition, candidates for these roles should have the following attributes: an ability to

communicate effectively, excellent organizational skills, the ability to work well with people, a working knowledge of the EMG chapter and its history, and the capacity to participate in the scheduled meetings.

B. **Executive Board Operations:** Those Chapters electing to utilize an Executive Board will select and operate the Board in accordance with the following requirements:

1. **Composition:** At a minimum, the Board will consist of 3 member-officers and the County Agent, with one of the officers serving as the Board Chair.
 - a) Unless the Chapter Rules specify otherwise, each Chapter Board will be comprised of a minimum of three qualified members who will hold the offices
 - b) Unless otherwise specified in the Chapter Rules, the Board Chair will serve as the Chapter's member representative to the State Advisory Council.
2. **Selection of Officers:** Board Officers will be elected. Chapter Bylaws may identify additional Board members ("board liaison" or "board member at large", etc.), how they are selected and the term of service.
 - a) Elections shall be held annually for the upcoming program year.
 - b) Only Chapter members in good standing are eligible to vote in the election.
 - c) Each year, a nominating committee is activated. The nominating committee will in all cases include the County Agent and two of the chapter members. Unless the Chapter Rules provide otherwise, one committee member is appointed by the County Agent and the other is appointed by the Board Chair.
 - d) The committee will issue a call for nominations to the membership.
 - e) At least one month prior to the election, the nominating committee will announce to the chapter membership a slate of qualified nominees for each vacancy on the board for the upcoming year.
 - f) Elections will be held by secret written ballot with each member casting their own ballot (no proxy votes). The nominee receiving the most votes wins the election. In the event of a tie vote, the selection will be made by random selection (coin toss, dice roll, etc.)
 - g) Members may vote for write-in candidates on the official ballot, however should a write-in candidate receive the most votes, only a candidate who meets the qualifications specified above and is willing to serve on the board will be seated.
 - h) In the event that an officer fails to complete a term of office due to death, removal, resignation or otherwise, the Chapter Management will appoint a member in good standing to fill the office for the remainder of the term.
 - i) Chapter Rules may specify additional rules for elections, and may specify rules different than those established by subparts c) through h) above. All chapters must follow the rules established subparts a) and b).
3. **Terms of Office:** The Board Officers shall serve terms of one year, but may be re-elected for multiple terms, subject to any term limits specified in the Chapter Rules.

4. **Compensation:** Board members serve without compensation.
5. **Removal of Board Members:** The Board cannot function effectively unless all Board members are committed to fulfilling their individual responsibilities, which include, at a minimum, attending the Board meetings. In the event that a Board member has circumstances which prevent active participation, the Board member may choose to resign, or the Board may vote to remove the individual from office.
 - a) The number of acceptable absences, consecutive or otherwise, by a board member is determined by the Chapter Rules, or if the Rules do not address this issue, by the Executive Board.
 - b) In cases where the number of absences exceeds the number provided in the Chapter Rules or as allowable by the Board, a review of the circumstances will be made by the Executive Board, and appropriate action taken. (The action may be to excuse the absences or, if circumstances warrant, the board member may be removed and a replacement appointed as provided above.
6. **Chapter Executive Board Meetings:** Each Chapter may specify the process for calling Board meetings in its Rules. Unless otherwise specified in the Chapter Rules, or otherwise determined by the Executive Board members, meetings will be held at least monthly and may be called by the County Agent or the Chair.
 - a) The Board members may choose the platform for meeting that works best. (e.g., in person, by e-mail, conference call, etc.).
 - b) The Board members may choose the number of Board and Membership meetings per year required to adequately and appropriately manage chapter activities.
- C. **Chapter Membership Meetings:** Each Chapter will hold a full membership meeting no less than once per year for the purpose of conducting elections. Additional full membership meetings may be called as determined appropriate by Chapter Management. Some or all Executive Board meetings may be open to the membership as determined by the Chapter Rules or, if none, by Chapter Management.
- D. **Standing Rules of Order or Chapter Bylaws:** While the County EMG Chapters are established and operate subject to NMSU policies, rules and procedures, and pursuant to these State Advisory Council Bylaws, County EMG Chapters may operate solely under these State Council Bylaws, or may elect to adopt additional chapter bylaws or standing rules of order (Chapter Rules) provided such rules do not conflict with either NMSU policies, rules and procedures, or these State Council Bylaws, and are consistent with the goals and mission of the NMSU Master Gardener Program. Proposed Chapter Rules and amendments are effective only upon approval of Chapter Management and are subject to veto by the NMSU Director of the Cooperative Extension Service upon a determination that such Chapter Rules contravene higher level authority (state or federal law, or NMSU policy, rules and procedures, or these State EMG Program Bylaws).

- E. **Chapter Communications:** Achievement of the NMSU Master Gardener Program mission is highly dependent upon efficient communication by and between Program stakeholders. Chapter Management adhere to the following communication guidelines:
1. Using consistent and appropriate tools for communicating with members is critical to the success of the organization. A variety of communication options can be used including email, list-servs, email blasts, IT meeting formats, conference calls, new technologies, etc.
 2. Chapter Management is responsible for determining the most appropriate methods for communicating with chapter members.
 3. Both the County Agent and the Chapter Representative to the State Advisory Board are responsible for communicating the activities and information discussed at the State Advisory Council meetings with their Chapter membership.
 4. Regardless of the Chapter Management structure, the County Agent has the authority to communicate directly with the Chapter membership, and the responsibility to do so when chapter issues of exceptional concern arise.

Article IV - Membership Categories and Requirements

- A. **Extension Master Gardener Participation Process.** The EMG Program cannot achieve its mission without the dedicated work of highly trained volunteers. Accordingly, the pathway to EMG certification and full membership privileges involves several steps described in more detail below. Interested individuals start as EMG Applicants and, if accepted, are admitted to an internship cohort. Upon completion of all specified internship requirements, an EMG Intern is certified as an Extension Master Gardener and graduates to become an EMG Veteran. EMG Veterans must continue to fulfill annual requirements to maintain their Chapter membership in good standing. After a substantial period of time with outstanding contributions to an EMG Chapter, a Veteran may be recognized as an EMG Emeritus member. Each Chapter will require its participants to fulfill the minimum requirements as set forth in this document, but through Chapter Rules may impose more extensive requirements.
- B. **EMG Applicants:** Every Chapter maintains a process and criteria for selecting new interns, and will enforce the minimum requirements for acceptance into an internship cohort as established in these State Council Bylaws. Qualified EMG Applicants will typically be residents of the county where the Chapter is located, however, applicants from outside the county may be considered at the Chapter Management's discretion. Chapters may limit each cohort to a specific number and may have additional stated selection criteria. Each Chapter will require selected Applicants to fulfill the following minimum requirements:
1. complete a written application;
 2. possess an interest in horticulture;
 3. understand and support the educational objectives of this extension program; and

4. selection to participate in the Chapter as an intern (selection is by the Chapter Management unless stated otherwise in Chapter Rules); and
 5. payment of an intern training fee (to be paid by either the individual, the Chapter, or a combination of both as determined by each Chapter).
- C. **EMG Interns:** EMG Interns are those individuals selected through the application process to participate in the extensive training process required to become a certified Extension Master Gardener. Interns are not considered “members in good standing” and do not have voting privileges. EMG Interns are sometimes referred to as holding provisional membership or status. This provisional status continues during their internship year and until issued a graduation certificate recognizing the participant’s status as a certified EMG. Except as otherwise provided below, interns who do not graduate within the one-year internship period do not continue as participants in the EMG program.
1. **EMG Intern Graduation Requirements:** Interns will graduate to EMG Veteran status at the conclusion of the internship period (approximately one year), and will become members in good standing, contingent upon completion of the following requirements:
 - a) Successful completion of internship core training modules (no less than 36 training hours) as established by the State Advisory Council or such more extensive requirements as may be adopted in Chapter Rules; and
 - b) Completion of required internship volunteer hours in service activities pre-approved by Chapter Management; and
 - c) The combined total of core training hours and volunteer hours must be no less than 50 hours, or such more extension hours as may be established by Chapter Rules.
 2. **Extenuating Circumstances:** Interns who are unable to complete required volunteer hours or core training within the one-year period may petition the Chapter Management in writing before the end of their internship year citing the circumstances which kept them from meeting the requirements. At its discretion, Chapter Management may allow an Intern to continue as an EMG Intern in provisional status for a second year.
- D. **EMG Veterans:** Those Interns who are certified as EMGs will then become EMG Veteran members in good standing upon payment of Chapter dues following their graduation. Each year, Veterans are required to pay dues and to fulfill continuing education and volunteer requirements to maintain their certification as EMGs and their status as members in good standing entitled to vote in Chapter elections.
1. **Maintaining EMG Veteran Status:** Those Veterans who, within the calendar year, fulfill the following criteria, as well as any more extensive criteria imposed by their Chapter Rules, will continue in good standing for the subsequent year:
 - a) Completion of advanced training (continuing education) as defined by the Chapter Management and not less than 10 hours per year.

- b) Completion of a minimum number of hours of volunteer service in activities pre-approved by the Chapter Management or the State Advisory Council.
 - c) A total of not less than 25 hours combined time in advanced training and volunteer activity hours.
 - d) Proper reporting of training hours and volunteer hours to Chapter Management.
 - e) Payment of yearly membership dues of no less than \$25 to the Chapter.
2. **Extenuating Circumstance Waivers:** Veterans who are unable to complete required volunteer hours or advanced training due to extenuating circumstances beyond the member's control may obtain a waiver allowing the individual to maintain their privileges as a Veteran. Veterans who continue to participate under an extenuating circumstances waiver must pay their annual dues and will retain voting privileges while under the waiver. Extenuating circumstances are defined as reasons of personal health, employment, family matters, or others that may be deemed appropriate by the Chapter Management. The following procedures will apply in instances of Veterans seeking an extenuating circumstances waiver:
- a) Veteran must petition the Chapter Management for the waiver in writing before the end of the current calendar year, citing the circumstances which kept them from meeting the requirements.
 - b) Chapter Management will review requests for waivers and will respond in writing with either an approval or denial of a one-year waiver.
 - c) An "extenuating circumstance" waiver is only valid for one year. However, if needed, an EMG Veteran can apply for another waiver before the end of the current calendar year in which the extenuating circumstances continued.
 - d) Chapter Management may consult with the State Advisory Council regarding extenuating circumstances waiver petitions.
- E. **Contingent Membership:** Contingent members are former EMG Veterans who are in the process of re-establishing their Certification and "Member in Good Standing" credentials. During a period of contingent membership, the individual is not a member in good standing and may not hold office and does not retain voting privileges. Contingent members include these individuals in these situations:
1. **Incomplete Annual Requirements.** EMG Veterans who did not complete their annual approved activities in the previous year, and did not request or receive an extenuating circumstances waiver for the current year are placed on Contingent Membership Status upon payment of Chapter dues for the year. Absent a subsequent exigent circumstances waiver, the failure to complete the requirements for member in good standing status during a Contingent Membership year will result in lapse of Chapter membership. If the contingent member fulfills all the requirements to maintain Veteran status during the Contingent Member year, the individual is then restored to eligibility for a Veteran membership in the following year.

2. **Reinstatement Petition.** An EMG Veteran whose membership has lapsed may petition for reinstatement by submitting a letter to the Chapter Management. The State Advisory Board may be consulted regarding reinstatement petitions. Chapter Management, at its discretion, may grant the petition and, upon payment of the annual dues, reinstate the individual only as a Contingent Member. Upon completion of the requirements to maintain Veteran status during the Contingent Membership year, the individual is then eligible for a Veteran membership in the following year. Absent an exigent circumstances waiver, the failure to complete the requirements within the year will result in another lapse of Chapter membership.
3. **Membership Transfer:** An EMG Veteran who relocates or who for other reasons wishes to do so may petition another Chapter for a transfer of membership. EMG Veterans who are approved for transfer to a new Chapter will participate during their first year in the new Chapter under Contingent Membership status. Upon completion of the requirements described below, a transferring member will be eligible for Veteran membership in the receiving Chapter. To attain Veteran status, a member seeking to transfer membership from another county or state must fulfill these requirements:
 - a) Provide written (email acceptable) evidence of having been a “member in good standing” under the former Chapter’s Rules.
 - b) Receive written approval of the receiving Chapter Management for transfer into Contingent Member status in the new chapter, specifying conditions of transfer including training requirements.
 - c) Pay the receiving Chapter’s annual dues.
 - d) During the Contingent Membership year, fulfill training requirements as determined by Chapter Management, which may include all or specified NMSU EMG program core training modules and.
 - e) During the Contingent Membership year, complete the Chapter’s minimum number of hours of volunteer service in pre-approved activities as is required to maintain Veteran Status.

F. **EMG Emeritus Members:** Emeritus (or similar title designated in Chapter Rules) is a special category of EMG chapter membership which can be requested by an EMG Veteran in good standing, or may be awarded at the discretion of the Chapter Management to any Veteran in good standing who meets the Emeritus eligibility criteria. An EMG Emeritus who has satisfied the requirements to remain in good standing will remain on the current membership roster, and will have all the rights and privileges of a member in good standing, but the Emeritus member will not be expected to meet any annual volunteer hour requirements.

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** To be eligible for Emeritus Membership, an EMG Veteran must have the following service history:
 - a) Completion of no less than 5 years of Veteran member in good standing, or such longer period of service as may be established in the Chapter Rules; AND the addition of EITHER one of the following:

- b) Completion of no less than 100 volunteer hours during at least one of the years served as a Veteran in good standing; or
 - c) Service to the Chapter in a leadership position for no less than 5 years.
2. **Good Standing Status Requirements:** In order to retain Emeritus member in good standing status in a Chapter, the Emeritus Member must:
- a) Meet the same annual training/continuing education requirements as Veteran members;
 - b) Report any volunteer participation hours annually on the same schedule as active members; and
 - c) Pay the annual Chapter membership dues.
 - d) The chapter management may determine if exceptions are to be made regarding a specific Emeritus member and may seek advice from the State Council.
- G. **Lapsed Membership.** The membership of those EMG's who did not fulfill the requirements to maintain a Chapter Membership in Good Standing status, pursuant to the guidelines set forth above and any relevant Chapter Rules, will lapse. The names of those individuals whose memberships have lapsed are removed from the Chapter roll, subject to possible reinstatement in accordance with the provisions above.

Article V – Training and Volunteer Requirements

A. **Core Training.** Upon acceptance into the EMG Program, new Provisional members (interns) are required to successfully complete all core training coursework modules. At a minimum, the following criteria will apply to core training modules:

1. Topics of study are established on a statewide basis and are designed to cover all the major areas of horticulture.
2. Instructors are drawn from New Mexico State University specialists, local extension agents and other horticulture professionals.
3. Each horticulture topic is covered in a minimum three-hour morning, afternoon or evening session and may require a hands-on lab.
4. Intern preparation includes a pre-quiz to be completed within a specified time period, and relevant readings and may also include topical research and a self-directed lab.
5. Upon completion of each basic training module, a post quiz is required and must be completed within a specified time period. An optional lab and supplemental reading may also be provided.

B. **Advanced Training.** Additional advanced training (also known as Continuing Education) is provided for all EMG members who have graduated from Provisional Membership status. At a minimum, the following criteria will apply to advance training:

1. Advanced training topics are determined by the Chapter Management, based upon a community needs assessment.

2. Advanced training sessions are delivered by the State Coordinator, university specialists, or qualified local experts.
3. Garden tours, hands-on labs, or special guest lectures may also serve as advanced training.
4. Other educational classes offered by Extension, affiliates of NMSU, or other educational institutions may be eligible for advanced training credit at the discretion of the Chapter Management.
5. Educational time spent at the statewide EMG conference (workshop, breakout sessions and tours) qualifies for advanced training credit hours.

C. **Volunteer Service Hours.** Volunteer service activities are preapproved by the Chapter Management with recommendations and minimum hourly requirements identified by the State Advisory Council. Every member is responsible for time keeping and reporting their volunteer time in 30-minute increments to the Chapter Management. Travel time over 30 minutes one way to and from EMG activities (accumulated in 30-minute increments) may be included in the report and will count toward the total number of volunteer hours achieved in a year, but does not qualify as continuing education or outreach hours.

Article VI – Committee/Project Organization

- A. **EMG Committees and Projects.** EMG committees and projects are established and maintained for the purpose of furthering the mission of the organization.
 1. A list of sanctioned EMG committees and projects is provided below.
 2. Proposed new committees and projects designed to meet the needs for horticultural education in the community must first be accepted by the Chapter Management and are subject to review and approval by the State Advisory Council. Examples include children’s events, staffing “information booths” at appropriate one-time public events and open houses, creating garden art and craft projects, etc.
 3. A letter of application that details the scope, purpose, impact and programmatic support for the proposed new committee/project must be submitted to the Chapter Management. The Chapter Management may request the State Advisory Council review the application.
 4. Application and approval of the proposed committee/project may be determined by email. (See EMG Handbook for more detailed information.)
- B. **Programmatic Review and Evaluation.** All EMG committees and projects are to be evaluated on a regular basis.
 1. The State EMG Program provides evaluation tools and establishes the timing for evaluation and reporting.
 2. The evaluation process is designed to ensure that the EMG Chapter is meeting its mission, addressing the current needs of the community, and generating sufficient volunteer time and interest to accomplish that mission.

3. Chapter Management is responsible for overseeing the evaluation process and the reporting of its findings to completion.

C. **Approved Projects.** The following projects have been sanctioned by the EMG Program's history the State Council and require no further approvals:

1. **Statewide EMG Conference.** In even numbered years, a statewide conference is hosted by a county chapter with collaborative support from other EMG program partners and is open to all EMG members.
 - a) Registration, travel and lodging for the bi-annual conference are the responsibility of the participant(s).
 - b) Scholarships and other financial support may be available through both the local chapter and the state program.
 - c) Attendance at the educational components of the conference will qualify as advance training hours. Travel time to and from the conference is reported in total volunteer time identified during the year. However, travel time does not qualify as training time required to maintain EMG Certified Status.
2. **Outreach** (often still referred to as the "Hotline"). Outreach Programs are designed to deliver general horticultural information to members of the public in the Chapter's regional community. Outreach programs may be operated under several different models which may include a designated phone line, extension staff referrals, email exchanges, mailed materials website chats, walk-in service, or any *regularly held* public question/answer interface. The requirements for all Outreach Programs are:
 - a) All information and advice given to the public must be research-based and presented in a professional manner.
 - b) Requests for information received by the Chapter are documented on an *Information Request* form. The request form must include the response given the requester and outline specific information shared by the member.
 - c) Questions that raise concerns (e.g., repeated question indicating a possible outbreak in the area, indication of a specific pest, general lack of community awareness, etc.) are reported immediately to the project chair and county agent.
 - d) A monthly/quarterly/yearly (as appropriate for the activity) report collating specific information provided and the primary means of communication used by the public and members providing program outreach is prepared by the chair/coordinator.
 - e) An annual report (using the monthly reports) collating the past year's requests is sent to the State Program Coordinator on or by June 1st.
 - f) Upon request of a member, a summary documenting the member's outreach participation is provided by the Chapter management.
 - g) All interns are required to volunteer with the Outreach Committee during their first year of membership. Interns must be paired with a Veteran when serving. The Veteran member will serve as a mentor providing guidance and support as they learn the outreach procedures and how to best respond to questions, where to find answers, and how to document their efforts.

3. **Demonstration Gardens:** EMG Chapters maintain demonstration gardens in various locations throughout the county area. The purpose of these gardens is to demonstrate NMSU's recommended horticultural practices, public education and to provide opportunity for public awareness of the EMG Program. The requirements for all Demonstration Gardens are:
 - a) The gardens are to be located in places that are open and accessible to the public.
 - b) Gardens managed in partnership with other organizations should have a Memo of Understanding (MOU) that has been prepared by the organization and the Chapter Management stating the responsibilities of each party. This MOU must be reviewed by New Mexico State University legal counsel.
 - c) Each garden shall be under the supervision of one or more EMG committee chairperson(s) who shall be responsible for organization and maintenance of the garden under the guidance of Chapter Management.
4. **Speaker's Bureau.** The Chapter maintains a list of EMG volunteers willing to speak to groups such as garden clubs, civic organizations, home owners' associations, etc. The requirements for all Speaker's Bureau programs are:
 - a) The Chapter may establish a Speakers' Bureau Chair to serve as the point of contact between interested groups and the EMG speakers. This person will be responsible for receiving requests and assigning an appropriate speaker, providing written confirmation and materials to both the requestor and the speaker who has accepted the assignment. Any donation or honorarium received as a result of a speaking engagement is to be directed to the EMG Chapter and deposited in the EMG Chapter's account. The Chair should maintain statistics of the number of talks, participants, and donations, and submit an annual report to Chapter Management.
 - b) The Chapter will not establish a set fee for EMG speakers, but may accept donations or honorariums to support the program.
5. **Plant Sales.** A plant sale held in conjunction with seasonal garden related activity may provide the chapter with numerous opportunities to educate the public, give a presence to the EMG Program, as well as add additional financial resources to support other EMG Chapter projects.
6. **Junior Extension Master Gardeners (Optional).** JEMG programs may be established in any school in a county that hosts an EMG chapter. To begin a new JEMG program, the school must demonstrate support from the school administration, a school teacher or staff member designated to serve as the school liaison, no fewer than 5 student participants, as well as the interest and participation of at least one certified EMG Member and any necessary financial support. A protocol form listing steps to be completed has been created to guide the school through the process and is available from the State Program Coordinator. JEMG support materials, including curriculum manuals and workbooks, are available through the State Program Office.

7. **Graduation Event and Certification.** An annual graduation event is held to acknowledge the completion of the requirements of certification by the current class of interns, and their earned eligibility for Certified Status. The achievement of each intern is acknowledged with a certificate, name badge and other means of recognition as appropriate for the occasion. The Chapter Management may coordinate the event or designate a team of members to facilitate. (See EMG Handbook for detailed information.)
8. **Appreciation Event.** An annual appreciation event is organized and held to acknowledge the accomplishments of the members over the previous year. Chapter Management may coordinate the event or designate a team of members to facilitate. All EMG members, regardless of membership status are invited to attend. Chapter Management will determine the details of the appreciation event, determine awards to be given, and the program agenda.

Article VII – Regulatory and Policy Compliance

- A. **General Requirements.** Every EMG Chapter is a component of the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service which in turn is a component of New Mexico State University, a public institution of higher education. As such the Chapter and state level EMG activities are subject to the legal and regulatory requirements imposed on public entities and recipients of Federal funding. Every EMG Chapter and event is subject to the policies, rules and procedures of New Mexico State University.
- B. **Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity.** New Mexico State University (NMSU) is dedicated to providing equal opportunities in our employment and learning environments. NMSU does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, spousal affiliation or protected veteran status in its programs and activities such as EMG programs, as required by equal opportunity/affirmative action regulations and laws and university policy and rules. Any incident or allegation of prohibited discrimination must be reported to NMSU's Office of Institutional Equity at 575-646-3735 or equity@nmsu.edu.
- C. **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.** NMSU has unequivocally committed itself to assure a work and learning environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected. NMSU strives to provide an environment for employees, students, and campus visitors that is free from any form of sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Any form of sexual harassment or discrimination is a violation of University Policy and Rules. Any incident or allegation of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct must be reported to NMSU's Office of Institutional Equity at 575-646-3735 or equity@nmsu.edu.

- D. **Disability Accommodation.** NMSU recognizes that individuals with disabilities are entitled to access, support and, when appropriate, reasonable accommodation. Any request or even a mention of a possible need for accommodation due to a health condition or disability must be reported to NMSU's Office of Institutional Equity at 575-646-3735 or equity@nmsu.edu . Neither Chapter Management nor County Agents are authorized to evaluate or make any decision regarding any such request except under the advisement of the Office of Institutional Equity.
- E. **Insurance and Liability.** NMSU maintains liability coverage through the State Risk Management Division that protects EMG volunteers from third party liability claims arising out of approved volunteer activities. Every EMG volunteer is responsible for their own health and medical coverage. Neither NMSU nor the CES provide EMG volunteers with health or medical insurance. EMG Volunteers are not authorized to operate any motorized vehicle without first fulfilling mandatory training and receiving an NMSU driver's permit.
- F. **Volunteer Agreements.** NMSU requires all volunteers in all its programs to sign a Volunteer Agreement. These agreements are used to establish liability coverage for the protection of the volunteer and to provide important information regarding the limitations on NMSU liability to volunteers. These agreements also establish NMSU's authority to obtain criminal background reports for any volunteer who is engaged in a sensitive activity such as handling money or engaging in activities involving minors. The Chapter Management will assist the County Agent in obtaining a signed volunteer agreement from each Chapter intern and active member.
- G. **Code of Conduct.** Every Chapter will require all EMG volunteers to sign and abide by the EMG Program Code of Conduct which establishes rules for conduct during EMG Program activities and events designed to enhance the experience for all EMG volunteers by promoting mutual respect, personal responsibility, safety, and a collaborative approach. The Chapter Management will assist the County Agent in obtaining a signed Code of Conduct from each Chapter intern and active members.

Article VIII – Financial Management

- A. **Public Entity Obligations.** Every EMG Chapter is a component of the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service (CES) which in turn is a component of New Mexico State University, a public institution of higher education recognized as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States. As such, the financial management of the Chapter must be in accordance with the rules and regulations of New Mexico State University and the relevant laws governing public entities.
- B. **Record-Keeping and Reporting.** All revenues received and expenses incurred and paid by the Chapter must be properly accounted for and appropriate documentation maintained.

While the County Agent may delegate the tasks associated with this responsibility to a Chapter Treasurer or other officer, or to an accountant hired by the Chapter, the ultimate oversight responsibility remains with the County Agent. Chapter Management performs an annual review of the EMG chapter's financial records, and reports the result to the University on or before July 31st of each year. The University takes responsibility for accounting for all EMG financial activity and for filing the yearly IRS-990. A Chapter's financial affairs may be audited by the University's external or internal auditors at any time.

- C. **Prohibited Activities.** To protect and maintain the group tax-exempt status held by all EMG Chapters statewide, certain activities are prohibited.
1. **No Private Benefit.** All earnings will be used to promote the mission of the EMG Program. No part of the net earnings of the Chapter shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the Chapter shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments and distributions as authorized in these State Council Bylaws.
 2. **No Political Activity.** No substantial part of the activities of a Chapter shall be the carrying on of lobbying, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Chapter shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
 3. **Other Prohibited Activities.** Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws or the individual Chapter Rules, the Chapter shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an entity exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).
- D. **Project Budgeting.** Each Project will develop a proposed annual budget. The proposed budget must be presented to the Chapter Management for approval.
1. **Annual Budget Request.** To enable this budgeting process, the chair of each chapter committee and the director of any Chapter's programs are responsible for submitting an annual budget request for the upcoming calendar year.
 2. **Monthly Financial Reports.** In order to identify the need for periodic adjustment of the budget, Chapter Management will prepare (or cause to be prepared), and review monthly financial reports. Copies of the report will be made available to committee/project chairs upon request.
- E. **Chapter Revenue.** Each Chapter is expected to generate revenue to support its programs. Chapter revenues will be obtained through the collection of membership dues, donations

and honorariums paid to speakers, registration fees for community programs and receipts from plant sales, as well as any other approved programs/projects. Chapter Revenues are to be managed in accordance with the requirements set forth in these State Bylaws.

1. **Membership Dues.** Each Chapter will charge membership dues in an amount no less than as established by these State Bylaws. All membership dues will be retained by the Chapter to support its programs and activities.
 2. **Internship Training Fee.** Each Chapter will pay to New Mexico State University an Internship Training Fee of \$100 for each Provisional Member, to be paid within 30 days after initiating a new membership class. These fees will be maintained by the University in an account (index) maintained by the extension plant science department for the exclusive purpose of EMG program development and support. The fee may be paid by the participant, the Chapter, or a combination of both as determined by the Chapter Management.
 3. **Other Fees and Revenue.** Educational program fees and revenue from other Chapter programs and activities will be maintained in the Chapter account for the use of the Chapter in supporting its programs.
 4. **Cash Handling and Credit Card Procedures.** At any EMG event in which money changes hands for ticket purchases, item sales, or any other financial transactions, the Extension staff and EMG members will maintain the minimum state standards for Money Handling Procedures found in the Extension Master Gardener Handbook. University cash handling procedures and regulations relating to credit card acceptance may also apply.
- F. **Banking and Deposits.** All funds received by the EMG chapter may be either maintained in an NMSU account (index) established for the Chapter or, more conveniently, in a bank account at a local bank. The following requirements apply to all Chapter bank accounts:
1. **Account Name and Address.** The local bank account should be established under the name: "New Mexico State University [county name] EMG Chapter" using NMSU's tax exempt identification number and the address of the County Extension Office (unless approved otherwise by the Director of the County Extension Service).
 2. **Signatories.** The County Agent must be designated as a signatory on the account. Two additional signatories are recommended (3 total) and are designated by Chapter Management. Two signatures are recommended on all checks over the amount designated in the Chapter bylaws.
 3. **Deposits.** All funds received from all activities should be deposited in the EMG Chapter's account and deposit receipts should be provided to Chapter Management along with any other documentation of the source of funds.

4. **Expenditures of Cash Receipts.** If a Chapter activity requires expenditure of receipts in support of the activity before the receipts can be documented, such activities (both receipts and expenditures) must be properly documented.

G. **Expenditures.** All Chapter expenditures must be pre-approved, reasonably related to the accomplishment of the EMG mission and properly receipted. The following requirements apply to Chapter expenditures:

1. **Pre-Approval.** Chapter expenditures are typically pre-approved through the budgeting process for an activity or event. Any non-budgeted expenditure must be approved in advance by Chapter Management.
2. **Required Documentation.** All expenditures must be supported by receipts.
3. **Reimbursements.** The Chapter will maintain a process for reimbursing Chapter members who incur pre-approved out-of-pocket documented expenses on behalf of the Chapter.
4. **Cash Expenditures from Receipts.** When it is necessary or convenient to use cash receipts from an event to pay pre-approved expenses associated with an event, both the revenue and the expense should be recorded and reported.

H. **Chapter Dissolution.** If at any time, dissolution of an EMG Chapter is required, the dissolution and financial wind-up process will be accomplished in compliance with NMSU rules and procedures and any applicable federal and New Mexico law. Subject to those requirements, funds remaining in the Chapter's financial accounts after payment of all

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outstanding expenses will be forwarded to New Mexico State University to be deposited in the account (index) maintained by the extension plant science department for the operation of the state EMG program, and will be utilized to support EMG program needs.

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The foregoing New Mexico State University Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Council Bylaws were approved and adopted on the dates indicated below:

2018 Members of the EMG Advisory Council: Jeff Anderson and Dorothy Wyckoff (Dona Ana County), Sid Gordon and Judy Allen (Otero County), Wayne Cox and Kathleen Pryer (Lea County), Sandra Barraza (Chaves County), Newt McCarty and Zena Kinne (Valencia County), Sara Mora Duran and Margo Murdoch (Bernalillo County), Lynda Garvin and Tom Neiman (Sandoval County), Tom Dominguez and Deborah Farson (Santa Fe County), Carlos Valdez and Carolyn Mangeng (Los Alamos County), Tony Valdez (Taos County), Boe Lopez and Thelma Coker (Colfax County), Samantha Ortiz and Yvonne Tallent (San Miguel County), Bonnie Hopkins, Susan Palko-Schraa

APPENDIX A – Optional Chapter Rules / Bylaws Template

The following is a list of suggested items that may be included in Chapter Rules.

- 1) The name of this organization shall be _____, also known as the _____ County Extension Master Gardeners, hereinafter referred to as the “Chapter”.
- 2) The Chapter’s office is located at _____.
- 3) This Chapter is managed by [the County Agent] [the County Agent and a Volunteer Coordinator] or [a Chapter Executive Board].
 - a) The membership of the Chapter Executive Board is as follows: [insert list of no fewer than 3 officers and at large members if any]
 - b) The Chapter follows these additional rules relating to the election of the Executive Board members:
- 4) Board members are limited to serving no more than X consecutive terms in a single office and/or may not hold any office for a period of more than X consecutive years.
- 5) Board members may be removed from office if during their term they accrue more than X number of unexcused absences (or absences, excused or unexcused).
- 6) The Executive Board meets [insert frequency, timing, place etc.] The process for calling a meeting of the Executive Board is [insert]. A general membership meeting may be called by [insert by whom and process].
- 7) For graduation to certified status, the Chapter requires interns to satisfy criteria more extensive than those specified in the State Advisory Council Bylaws. The criteria for graduation are as follows: [insert specific hours, dues etc.]
- 8) To maintain their membership in good standing, this Chapter requires Veterans to satisfy criteria more extensive than those specified in the State Advisory Council Bylaws. The criteria for maintaining membership in good standing in this Chapter are as follows: [insert specific hours, dues etc.]
- 9) To achieve Emeritus membership, this Chapter requires Veterans to satisfy criteria more extensive than those specified in the State Advisory Council Bylaws. The eligibility criteria for Emeritus membership in this Chapter are as follows: [insert specific hours, dues etc.]