

**Constitution for the  
Counsel of Imperial Turtles  
of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Turtles**

**Preamble:**

We, the members of the Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT), in order to promote fellowship and fraternity among members of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Turtles, to uphold the traditions and values of our esteemed organization, and to foster the welfare of turtles and their natural habitat, do hereby establish this Constitution.

**Article I: Name**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Council of Imperial Turtles.

**Article II: Purpose & Mission**

Section 1. The Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) is dedicated to supporting and guiding its members towards greater success. As an international organization, the CIT embodies the values of brotherhood, loyalty, and perseverance across borders and cultures. Our mission is to preserve and celebrate the rich history and traditions of our esteemed organization, while fostering a sense of unity and collaboration among our members around the world. By leveraging the collective wisdom and expertise of its members, the CIT aims to help each member achieve greater success than they could on their own. We strive to uphold the principles of charity, benevolence, and service to our communities, while embracing diversity and inclusivity as fundamental pillars of our organization. Together, as a global community of Turtles, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of honor and integrity, and to working towards a common purpose of advancing the cause of Turtledom across the globe. By empowering our members to achieve their full potential and promoting a culture of mutual respect and support, we aim to bring the spirit of the Turtle Creed to all corners of the world, and to leave a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

**Article III: Membership**

Section 1. Membership in this organization is limited to the Grand Ponds recognized by the CIT and those who have held the title of Chancellor Turtle, Master Turtle or the equivalent. However, membership is open to anyone who shares the values and goals of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Turtles, regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. To be eligible to vote, each Grand Pond must be recognized and have at least one of the top three officers present at any meeting where a vote is called. Each Grand Pond is granted only one vote, and a proxy may be sent as long as the proxy has served as Chancellor Turtle or equivalent. Additionally, anyone elected to fill any of the top three positions in the CIT becomes a permanent member and is granted a vote in the session they are present for. If a permanent member is a proxy for their Grand Pond, they are only allowed to cast one vote and are not eligible to cast twice.

Section 2. The prospective member must have at least three subordinate ponds who they have trained or worked with in developing and maintaining ponds for turtles. Alternatively, the prospective member should have a repository of at least 27 turtles, which they have cared for and helped to thrive in a sustainable environment. The CIT can elect to waive or modify, in part or the whole, these requirements with proper reasoning, if approved by 2/3rd majority of the members present at the time of a vote.

Section 3. The prospective member must be willing to participate actively in the Counsel of Imperial Turtles and contribute to the group's goals and activities.

Section 4. All Prospective memberships must be voted on, by two-thirds of the members present at the time of proposal, prior to them being fully recognized by the CIT.

Section 5. The CIT shall have the power to adopt such additional rules and regulations as it deems necessary.

## **Article IV: Officers**

### **Section 1: Elected Officers**

1. High Chancellor: The High Chancellor shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization and have general supervision over its affairs. They shall preside over all meetings, appoint committees, and take necessary actions to ensure the organization's proper functioning. To be eligible a candidate for High chancellor must have served previously as Pro-Chancellor. Past High Chancellors shall hold the honorary rank of Chancellor.
2. Pro-Chancellor: The Pro-Chancellor shall assist the Chancellor in their duties and act as their substitute in their absence or disability. To be eligible a candidate for High chancellor must have served previously as Vice Chancellor.
3. Vice Chancellor: The Vice Chancellor shall support the Chancellor and act as their substitute in the absence or disability of both the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor.
4. Pro-Vice-Chancellor: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be responsible for the organization's programs and overall policies as set by the CIT.
5. Deputy Chancellor: The Deputy Chancellor shall fulfill duties assigned by the High Chancellor or Pro-Chancellor.

6. Vice Chancellor of Finance: The Vice Chancellor of Finance, also serving as the Treasurer, shall oversee the organization's financial affairs, maintaining accurate records of all receipts and disbursements.
7. Vice Chancellor of Records: The Vice Chancellor of Records, also serving as the Recorder, shall keep precise minutes of all meetings and perform additional duties assigned by the Chancellor.

These officers shall be elected by the organization's members for a one-year term and may be re-elected for successive terms. In case of a vacancy, the High Chancellor shall appoint a replacement until the next regular election.

## Section 2: Appointed Officers

1. Supreme Prelate: They shall be appointed by the High Chancellor, and serve as the Chaplain to the Council of Imperial Turtles, entrusted with the sacred duty of fostering spiritual growth, offering blessings, conducting rituals, and ensuring the spiritual well-being of the members within the esteemed Order, embodying the essence of wisdom, compassion, and divine connection. They shall also be able to appoint fellow Prelates, with the approval of the High Chancellor, to serve as needed.
2. The High Chancellor, with the approval of the permanent members of the CIT, may appoint other necessary officers as deemed appropriate.

## Section 3: Regional Vice Chancellor Appointments

The High Chancellor or CIT may appoint a Regional Vice Chancellor for areas or groups that do not meet the criteria for forming a Grand Pond currently. Regional Vice Chancellors shall be appointed members and shall not possess voting rights during sessions. Such appointments may be made in response to identified needs within specific regions.

## Section 4: Proctor

The Proctor, appointed by the CIT, shall serve as legal counsel, providing expert guidance on legal matters within the organization. They ensure compliance with laws and regulations, protect the organization's interests, and offer advice on contracts, agreements, and legal documents. The Proctor also advises on governance, policy development, and dispute resolution, safeguarding the organization's legal standing and reputation.

## Section 5: Titles

The High Chancellor and Chancellors shall be addressed as "Most Esteemed," while all other elected officers shall be addressed as "Right Esteemed," and appointed officers shall be addressed as "Very Esteemed."

## **Article V: Meetings**

Section 1. Meetings of the Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) shall be held at least once a year, at a time and place determined by the Chancellor.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor or by five or more of the members of the organization.

Section 3. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall be a majority of the members present.

Section 4. Meetings may be in person, virtually or a combination of the two when decided appropriate by the CIT.

Section 5. Voting virtually shall be set up by the CIT and instructions on how to vote virtually will be sent with the Call letter to the meeting.

## **Article VI: Committees**

Section 1. Jurisprudence Committee: The Jurisprudence Committee shall be responsible for interpreting and analyzing legal principles and precedents relevant to the organization's activities. It shall review and provide guidance on legal matters, including contracts, policies, and procedures. The committee members shall possess expertise in law and contribute their knowledge to ensure the organization operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Jurisprudence Committee shall collaborate with other committees and officers to ensure legal clarity and adherence to legal standards in decision-making processes. Additionally, the committee may recommend revisions to the organization's governing documents to align with legal requirements and best practices.

Section 2. Finance Committee: The Finance Committee oversees CIT's financial matters. It develops and reviews financial policies and procedures. Collaborates with the Vice Chancellor of Finance on planning and budgeting. Conducts audits and ensures compliance with regulations. Provides financial reports and recommendations to CIT members. Monitors financial performance and proposes strategies for stability. Supports other committees and officers on financial matters. Proposes bylaw amendments for improved financial governance.

Section 3. Records Committee: The Records Committee of the CIT is responsible for the management and preservation of CIT's records. The committee ensures accurate and organized documentation of CIT's activities, meetings, and decisions. It maintains minutes of CIT meetings and makes them accessible to members. The Records Committee may develop record-keeping guidelines and procedures to facilitate efficient retrieval and utilization of CIT's records. It collaborates with other committees to collect and maintain relevant documents, such as membership records, historical archives, and official correspondence. The committee may propose measures to enhance the security and confidentiality of CIT's records, ensuring

compliance with applicable data protection regulations. In addition, the Records Committee may assist CIT members in accessing specific information or records as needed, promoting transparency and accountability within the organization.

Section 4. Charters Committee: Oversees the chartering process for new CIT Grand Ponds and Ponds. Reviews and evaluates charter applications. Develops guidelines and criteria for chartering. Provides guidance and support to interested parties. Conducts site visits and interviews as needed. Supports and guides new Grand Ponds and Ponds after approval. Periodically reviews existing Grand Ponds and Ponds for compliance.

Section 5. Correspondence and Relations: Manages external communication and relationships for CIT. Handles official correspondence with external entities. Ensures timely and professional responses. Cultivates partnerships and collaborations. Represents CIT at external events. Coordinates outreach and public relations efforts.

Section 6. Programs Committee: Plans and implements CIT's programs and initiatives. Organizes educational and social events. Manages the awards and recognition process. Collaborates with other committees and officers. Proposes updates to program-related policies

Section 7: Nominations Committee: Oversees leadership nominations and selection process. Identifies and evaluates potential candidates. Reviews nominations and assesses qualifications. Presents qualified candidates for member approval. Provides guidance and support to nominees.

Section 8. Executive Board: is the governing body of the Council of Imperial Turtles (CIT), consisting of elected and permanent members. They make decisions, set policies, and advance the organization's goals. Chaired by the High Chancellor, the board convenes regular meetings and promotes open communication, collaboration, and transparency. Each member, including the High Chancellor, has one vote, with the High Chancellor having the casting vote in case of a tie. The board operates within the CIT's bylaws, constitution, and policies, being accountable to CIT members and reporting on activities and decisions.

## **Article VII: Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction refers to the scope of authority and control that a Grand Pond holds over its subordinate ponds and individuals seeking to join the organization. The jurisdiction of a Grand Pond extends to all subordinate ponds and applicants, regardless of their geographical location.

For subordinate ponds, the Grand Pond maintains authority over matters that affect the overall organization, including decision-making processes, policies, and the interpretation of the Constitution subordinate to the CIT. Subordinate ponds have the autonomy to manage their internal affairs, operations, and events within the guidelines and principles set by the Grand Pond and in accordance with the Constitutions of the CIT.

Regarding applicants seeking to join the Grand Pond, jurisdiction applies regardless of their location. All applicants must comply with the membership requirements and procedures outlined by the Grand Pond and in accordance with the Constitutions of the CIT, ensuring alignment with the organization's values and objectives.

### **Article VIII: Chartering of Grand Ponds**

Section 1. The Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) may grant charters for grand ponds subject to the provisions of this section.

Section 2. A grand pond may be established by a minimum of three (3) subordinate ponds or a pond with at least 27 members. The grand pond shall be organized and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 3. A grand pond may establish and supervise subordinate ponds within its jurisdiction. The grand pond shall ensure that each subordinate pond is organized and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 4. The CIT shall have the power to adopt such additional rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the chartering and supervision of grand ponds and subordinate ponds.

### **Article IX: Chartering of Subordinate Ponds**

Section 1. The Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) may grant charters for Subordinate Ponds, subject to the provisions of this section.

Section 2. The Subordinate pond shall be organized and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 3. Any group of nine (9) or more persons may form a subordinate pond, subject to the approval of the CIT. The application for a subordinate pond charter shall be submitted to the CIT in writing, and shall include the proposed name of the subordinate pond, the location of the proposed pond, the names and addresses of the proposed officers, and the signatures of the proposed members.

Section 4. The CIT shall review the application for a subordinate pond charter and may grant the charter if it determines that the proposed subordinate pond will be organized and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 5. The CIT shall have the power to adopt such additional rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the chartering and supervision of grand ponds and subordinate ponds.

### **Section X: Dissolving or Suspending a Charter**

The Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) may dissolve or suspend a charter granted under this Constitution, subject to the provisions of this section.

Section 1. A charter may be dissolved or suspended for any of the following reasons:

- a. Failure of the grand pond or subordinate pond to comply with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.
- b. Conduct by the grand pond or subordinate pond that is detrimental to the reputation or best interests of the CIT.
- c. Failure of the grand pond or subordinate pond to maintain a minimum membership level as required by the CIT.

Section 2. The CIT shall provide the grand pond or subordinate pond with written notice of the proposed dissolution or suspension of its charter, including the reasons for the proposed action. The notice shall be sent by certified mail to the last known address of the grand pond or subordinate pond.

Section 3. The grand pond or subordinate pond shall have the right to a hearing before the CIT, at which it may present evidence and argument in its defense. The hearing shall be held within sixty (60) days of the date of the notice of the proposed dissolution or suspension.

Section 4. The CIT may dissolve or suspend the charter after the hearing, if it finds that the grounds for dissolution or suspension exist and are sufficient.

Section 5. If a charter is dissolved or suspended, the grand pond or subordinate pond shall immediately cease all activities in the name of the CIT and shall return all property of the CIT in its possession.

Section 6. The CIT may adopt such additional rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the dissolution or suspension of a charter.

### **Section XI: Chartering and Fees**

Section 1. The Council of Imperial Turtles (CIT) shall determine the amount of chartering and other fees to be paid by subordinate and grand ponds.

Section 2. The chartering and other fees shall be established annually by the CIT, and shall be due and payable on or before the date established by the CIT.

Section 3. The chartering and other fees shall be used by the CIT to defray the expenses of the organization, including the costs of administration, communication, and promotion.

Section 4. The CIT may establish different levels of chartering and other fees for different categories of subordinate and grand ponds, based on such factors as membership size, geographic location, and level of activity.

Section 5. Each subordinate and grand pond shall pay its chartering and other fees in accordance with the schedule established by the CIT. Failure to pay chartering or filing fees may result in suspension or revocation of the subordinate or grand pond's charter.

Section 6. The CIT shall have the power to adopt such additional rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the assessment, collection, and use of chartering and other fees.

## **Section XII: Of Grand Ponds**

Section 1. All chartered Grand Ponds of the Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) shall be governed and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 2. The chartered Grand Pond shall have a set of by-laws that shall be consistent with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The by-laws shall provide for the organization, governance, and operation of the Grand Pond, including the powers and duties of the officers and committees, the conduct of meetings, and the procedures for the amendment of the by-laws.

Section 3. The officers of the chartered Grand Pond shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The officers shall include at least a Chancellor Turtle, a Secretary, and a Treasurer of the CIT.

Section 4. The officers of the chartered Grand Pond shall have the powers and duties necessary to conduct the affairs of the Grand Pond, subject to the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The officers shall report on the affairs of the Grand Pond to the members at regular meetings and shall make an annual report to the CIT.

Section 5. The chartered Grand Pond may charter subordinate ponds in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. Each subordinate pond shall be governed and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT, and shall have a set of by-laws consistent with those of the chartered Grand Pond.



Section 6. The chartered Grand Pond shall hold regular meetings at least once a year, and shall conduct its business in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. Special meetings may be called by the Chancellor Turtle or by a specified number of members in accordance with the by-laws.

Section 7. The chartered Grand Pond shall maintain a current and accurate list of its members. Membership in the Grand Pond shall be open to all members in good standing of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Turtles.

Section 8. The CIT may establish guidelines and criteria for membership in the chartered Grand Pond, and may require the chartered Grand Pond to report on its membership activities and statistics.

Section 9. The chartered Grand Pond shall have the power to suspend or revoke the charter of a subordinate pond under their jurisdiction for cause, subject to the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 10. The chartered Grand Pond may establish committees as necessary to conduct its affairs, subject to the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The committees shall have the powers and duties necessary to carry out their respective functions, and shall report to the Grand Pond on their activities as requested by the Chancellor Turtle or the CIT.

### **Section XIII: Of Subordinate Ponds**

Section 1. Subordinate ponds of the Counsel of Imperial Turtles (CIT) shall be governed and operated in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT.

Section 2. Each subordinate pond shall have a set of by-laws that shall be consistent with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The by-laws shall provide for the organization, governance, and operation of the subordinate pond, including the powers and duties of the officers and committees, the conduct of meetings, and the procedures for the amendment of the by-laws.

Section 3. The officers of each subordinate pond shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The officers shall include at least a Master Turtle, Senior Turtle, Junior Turtle, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer may be combined.

Section 4. The officers of each subordinate pond shall have the powers and duties necessary to conduct the affairs of the subordinate pond, subject to the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. The officers shall report on the affairs of the subordinate pond to the members at regular meetings and shall make an annual report to the CIT.

Section 5. Each subordinate pond shall hold regular meetings at least once a year, and shall conduct its business in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and rules and regulations of the CIT. Special meetings may be called by the Master Turtle or by a specified number of members in accordance with the by-laws.

Section 6. Each subordinate pond shall maintain a current and accurate list of its members. Membership in a subordinate pond shall be open to all persons who meet the membership criteria established by the CIT and who have been duly initiated into the Order.

Section 7. The CIT may establish guidelines and criteria for membership in subordinate ponds, and may require subordinate ponds to report on their membership activities and statistics.

Section 8. The CIT may establish additional rules and regulations for the governance and operation of subordinate ponds, as it deems necessary.

#### **Article XIV: Amendments**

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any meeting of the organization, provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been given to all members at least 30 days in advance.

These constitutions have been adopted on the Seventh day of June in the year of 2023.