

A Brief History of The Green Party

Green Parties Worldwide - 44 member parties from Ireland to Georgia, from Malta to Norway, from Canada to Venezuela

The Green movement as an electoral force is young. The first ecological and alternative political groups emerged in the 1960's, but most European Green parties were not created until a decade or more later. The very first ecology party in Europe emerged in Britain in 1973. The European elections of 1989 was a spectacular success for the UK Greens, who scored 15 % of the votes. Due to the first-past-the-post electoral system, however, the 2.5 million votes did not translate into one single seat in the European Parliament.

In Belgium the French speaking Ecolo was formed in 1980 and gained 5% of the votes and five deputies in 1981. Their Flemish speaking sister party AGALEV had their breakthrough in the local elections of 1982, obtaining 50 local council members. In Italy, the first Greens entered Parliament in 1987, when the list of the ecological movement - Lista Verdi - got 13 MP's and two senators. The Georgia Greens have had a substantial following from their start in the same year.

The German Greens are generally regarded as the Mother of all Green parties, although they are not the oldest or the first Green Party to enter national parliament. But their significance comes from being the first Green party to have a strong presence in the legislature of a large nation. The big break came in 1983, when Die Grünen attracted nearly a million votes (5.6 %) and gained 28 seats out of 497 in the federal Parliament.

As Green parties developed in several countries, the interest to co-operate with other Greens increased. Thus the first European organization was born in 1984, when the Green parties of Benelux, UK, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland met in Liège, Belgium and formed the European Coordination of Green Parties.

As membership grew, new issues, ideas and initiatives emerged in rapid succession. Important events in Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s called for Green action on a European scale, among those to democratize the European Union and ensure a peaceful transition to a post-Communist era in Central and Eastern Europe.

The need for a common body, mandated to speak on behalf of the Greens in Europe on such issues was felt and in June 1993 in Helsinki, Finland the Coordination was transformed into the European Federation of Green Parties

In the western hemisphere, the *Federation of Green Parties of the Americas* is the global-level counterpart.

The Green Party of the United States (GP-US)

The Green Party of the United States is a confederation of Green Parties from states around the country. We are also the recognized partner of the European Federation of Green Parties. The Green Party of the United States began as the Association of State Green Parties. The ASGP was formed after the 1996 elections to fill a void in national Green politics and to help existing state parties develop. In 2001, the Federal Elections Commission recognized the Green Party of the United States as the official Green Party National Committee.

Green Party growth has come from a near doubling of state party members since our founding. This growth culminated in the 2000 Presidential Nominating Convention in Denver, CO on the weekend of June 24, 25. At the 2000 convention, the Green Party formally nominated Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke to be our nominees for President and Vice President. In 2004, our Presidential campaign ticket was represented by David Cobb and Pat LaMarche. The 2004 Green National Convention, Forward! 2004, was in Milwaukee, WI.

The mission of the Green Party of the United States is to build the Green Party into a viable political alternative in the United States, and our operating principle has been to keep it simple and focused. Our support comes from thousands of volunteers at the national and local level and from small contributions from individual citizens. Our growth plan includes managing our national office as a focus for national organizing and hiring field organizers to work with local groups and parties to help mobilize greens in voter registration drives, election activity and daily citizen action. Our preference is to leave most decision making and financial resources at the state and local level, minimizing our budgetary needs. This method has met with wide acceptance from Green groups around the country and is what has fueled our growth so strongly.

The Green Party has a broad platform that ranges from protecting the environment to our Blue-Green pro-labor agenda to human rights and social justice. Green groups around the country not only run candidates for office, but work consistently in between elections on issues of concern in their community. This kind of activism is fundamental to our grassroots values and

keeps us grounded on local issues, building the support networks needed to run candidates for local office first, followed by higher offices later. With over 220 officeholders in local offices around the country from Hawai'i to Washington DC, we walk our talk at the grassroots.

The Green Party decision making body is the National Committee (NC), composed of delegates from each accredited state party. State NC representatives and other committee participants are chosen by each state party.

The Campus Greens

The Campus Greens grew out of the enormous growth of the national party during the 2000 election cycle, and is a national student-based, non-profit organization dedicated to building a broad-based movement for radical democracy on America's high school and college campuses. We work in solidarity with the Ten Key Values of the Green Party and have membership from all sectors of the campus community and all levels of education. We provide our members with the support and resources they need to become effective agents of social change, empowering them to overcome our world's gravest problems and build a society based on grassroots democracy, ecology, social justice, and non-violence.

The Green Party of Virginia (GP-VA)

The Green Party of Virginia is the electoral arm of the Green movement in Virginia. Recognized by the Virginia State Board of elections, the GPVA is made up of 10 affiliated locals, aligned roughly according to congressional district, and is the only green party in Virginia accredited by the Green Party of the United States (GPUS).

The GPVA has been in existence for over 10 years, despite numerous setbacks and take-over attempts, which have only served ultimately to increase our strength of purpose and identity. We have successfully helped our locals run campaigns for local governmental positions, including county and city supervisorships and soil & water conservation district coordinatorships.

The GPVA meets quarterly in different parts of the state, as hosted by the local party in each area on a rotating basis. In addition, one meeting a year is held as a weekend-long campout in Pocahontas State Park outside of Richmond, and serves as a fun and informative, but informal way to get to know each other personally.

The GPVA has a diverse selection of standing committees which members are encouraged to join, in the areas of platform development, structural reform and steering, candidate exploration, finance, information technology, and activism.

The Fredericksburg Green Party (FGP)

The Fredericksburg Green Party serves the city of Fredericksburg as well as the entire 1st congressional district, including the counties of Stafford and Spotsylvania, and has been a recognized local of the Green Party of Virginia since 2001. During that time, we have been active in the areas of transportation and energy policy, environmental conservation, public education and social services policy, and collaboration with local social services organizations. We have introduced a number of petitions designed to alleviate local problems, have hosted or aided with a number of fun events toward the goal of community action, and have most recently been involved with the Save Crow's Nest campaign on behalf of that Stafford peninsula's preservation efforts.

The FGP meets on the first and third Sunday of each month in meeting room #2 of the Central Rappahannock Community Library on Caroline Street in downtown Fredericksburg. We welcome your involvement and collaboration!

For more information :

Green Parties Worldwide : <http://www.greens.org>

Green Party of the United States : <http://www.gp.org>

Campus Greens : <http://www.canpusgreens.org>

Green Party of Virginia : <http://www.vagreenparty.org>

Fredericksburg Green Party : <http://www.fredericksburg.vagreenparty.org>