

Dear Thoreau Society members,

We are pleased to propose for your consideration a merger with Thoreau Farm. Over the past year and a half of exploration, it has become more clear than ever that the strengths of both organizations lie in the powerful community of people committed to keeping Thoreau's legacy alive and vital in our world.

This proposal builds on nearly two decades of collaboration between our two organizations. It reflects the guidance of our boards, insights of local partners, and counsel of expert advisors. Most importantly, it reflects our many conversations with our members. Our task has been to engage openly, listen carefully, learn from your feedback, and develop a thoughtful, well-considered proposal to bring to our members for a vote. We are pleased to share that proposal with you now.

The proposal is rooted in the priorities that our members and wider community have told us matter most. Together, we have affirmed the importance of:

- Championing Thoreau's life and work as touchstones for today's pressing issues.
- Sharing Thoreau's ideas widely, fostering broad engagement and deep exploration.
- Maintaining Thoreau Farm as a vibrant, place-based education center.
- Preserving the Thoreau Society's identity as a leading scholarly community.
- Continuing publications, programs, and projects that inspire dialogue and curiosity.

Throughout this process, you have repeated the belief that Thoreau's legacy thrives when people engage with it deeply. In this proposal, stewardship—of the birth house, collections, scholarship, and membership—remains central to our mission. Our shared assets are invaluable, and sharing them widely is both our privilege and duty, echoing Walter Harding's call "to stimulate a wider interest in Thoreau's writings and philosophy of life."

Whether this merger is the best strategy to carry forward the Thoreau Society's mission is for you to decide. We ask you to consider this proposal carefully and to engage in discussion before voting. Beyond that, we hope you continue to stay engaged with this community.

Regardless of the vote's outcome, the activities of the Thoreau Society will continue and will rely on your support as members and volunteers. Please send questions to info@thoreausociety.org, and we will connect you with the right person to help. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

The Thoreau Society Board of Directors

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This proposal outlines how a merged organization would work. The only legally binding element is the new by-laws—these are what members will officially vote on. The rest of the proposal documents describe how those by-laws would be put into practice within the merged organization. The transition would take place over the first two years and, like all nonprofits, the new organization would continue to evolve under the guidance of its Board.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Rationale for the Merger. A brief, two-page overview of how merging could be an effective strategy for the Thoreau Society to deepen its commitment to its mission.

Overview of Proposed Bylaws. A summary of the differences between the proposed bylaws and the existing Thoreau Society bylaws.

Proposed Bylaws. **This is the legal document to be officially voted on.** It establishes governance of the merged organization, structuring the board and membership.

Proposed Naming Overview. Explains how names would work for the merged organization and its parts.

Proposed Budget - Overview. Shows the departments of the two existing organizations would be structured around merged operations.

Merger Proposal FAQs. Explicitly addresses broad overarching questions related to the whole proposal and/or process as well as important specific questions that are not presented at length in the enclosed documentation.

Voting Guide & Call for Responses. Explains how to vote and when, as well as what a “Yes” or “No” would mean. Invites you to Open Forums for questions & comments, and to submit your support or opposition to this proposal as a public comment.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS (available on the website)

Proposed Merged Board List.

Proposed Organizational Chart.

Proposed Committee List.

Proposed Membership Information Sheet.

Detailed Budget

Detailed Financial History

Guide to Understanding the Thoreau Society Budget