

Important Information regarding Crown Principality

In recent discussions across the Northern Shores regarding the options for the future of our region, opinion has been divided. Consistently, one option seems to stand out as the most viable and acceptable course, regardless of where one goes. That is the option of Crown Principality. However, it is also clear that the option is surrounded with confusion, misunderstanding, and misinformation – not surprising, given that the institution has been all but non-existent in the East Kingdom. This will try to clear up some of the questions as to what a Crown Principality is, and how it differs from a Region and a Principality.

The Northern Shores is currently a Region - an administrative division of the kingdom, created by the Kingdom Seneschal's Office to serve as a guideline for the division of labour and responsibility for the administrators of the kingdom. The Region structure has served as a convenient basis for such things as event rotation. The Northern Shores and the groups that make it up have made great strides forward in its time as a Region. However, a Region has a number of weaknesses. First, it is a purely Twenty-First Century construct. It has no basis in Medieval history, nor was it ever intended to, as it is a real-world, modern day business construct, not a part of the medieval recreation side of our Society. It adds nothing to our recreations or events. It has no heraldry, no name (other than a geographical designator), no leader, and adds no opportunity for pageantry or recognition. It has minimal basis in kingdom law, and can be altered or dissolved by a simple act of policy change. It exists only to serve the needs of the administrators, not the populace.

A Crown Principality, by contrast, attempts to rectify some of these shortcomings by adding benefits to the residents while preserving the administrative needs of the kingdom. It is a concept, which has been used elsewhere in the Society to add some of these elements to an area which does not meet the requirements for Principality as set forth in our governing documents. Some have been permanent or long-term creations (such as the Crown Principality of Insulae Draconis in Drachenwald) while some have had very short existence (such as Aethelmearc, which was a Crown Principality for only a matter of months while awaiting Board approval of its full Principality status).

A Crown Principality has the right to choose a name and to have the kingdom register heraldry for its use. It has closer ties to the reigning nobility of the kingdom, by virtue of officially being the fief of the Heir to the Kingdom (much as the Duchy of Edinborough is in theory the demesne of the Heir to the Throne of the United Kingdom). It has a leader, chosen variously by combat or royal appointment, to serve as the "Voice of the Crown", to make recommendations for and give Awards on behalf of the Crown. The presence of this leader affords additional opportunities for courts and similar pageantry, especially for the shires and outlying cantons, which do not have the benefit of a territorial Baron to base these aspects of our game around. Since it has been indicated to us that the kingdom would not create such an entity without creating a structure in kingdom law to support it, it entrenches our right to a distinct identity in the kingdom. It also affords us the opportunity to have the kingdom create (or exempt) laws relevant and specific to our situation as residents of a real-world legal jurisdiction separate from the United States. It also gives us the option of creating a true regional curia, and the opportunity to develop a body of laws for ourselves, a made at home solution to some of our problems which could be developed with the support of our kingdom, and which would have real authority and an existence as part of kingdom policy.

Many of these things we have been trying to do in the Northern Shores already, bending the region structure to suit our needs, without having a real basis in society or kingdom law, and entirely at the kingdom's sufferance. Witness the creation of the Boreal Army, a "game side" construct that we have created within a "real world" institution, or the efforts of Viscountess Esperanza and Mistress Lyanna to collect suggestions for a name and heraldry, with no real expectation on the horizon for officially enacting them. Many of the things a Crown Principality

offers, we have already been working towards, without the support of the kingdom. Such a creation would serve to legitimize these efforts.

What a Crown Principality is not is an “incipient principality”. While it has been used as that in some parts of the Known World in the past, including here in the East, there is nothing inherent in a Crown Principality that makes it such. It does not bind us to any course of action. It is not necessarily a temporary structure. It does not imply that the region will soon, or ever, in whole or in part, develop into anything further. It does afford us the opportunity to strengthen all of our groups, and by doing so to work towards such goals, on either a local or regional level. If such comes to pass, it also should not be viewed as either an endorsement of the concept of a principality by the kingdom, or as a sign that a principality is any closer to fruition, for those who desire such an outcome, than it was without it. While the word “principality” appears in the name, this two are not required to be related.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Can you give some examples of Crown Principalities? Have they any history in the East?

A: The Crown Principality of Insulae Draconis currently exists in Drachenwald. Various other groups have been a Crown Principality at various stages in their existence, including Aethelmearc, Ealdormere, Northshield, Artemesia, and Tir Righ.

Q: I do not see Crown Principality listed as a legitimate type of group in Corpora. What makes this legal?

A: The Governing Documents of the Society make reference to Crown Principalities only once, in the definitions section, where it is defined as an “informal regional organization set up by kingdom“. This is recognition on the part of the Society that they can and do exist, but reflects a conscious decision to allow the kingdoms freedom to develop them and use them as they see fit.

Q: Who is this leader of the Crown Principality? How does this fall in our rank system?

A: Crown Principalities generally have associated with them some senior person, a figurehead leader who represents the Voice and Authority of the Crown. The name associated with this post varies – Viceroy/Vicereigne in some places, Lord Protector or Lord Defender in others. The post is not a rank, but rather an office, much like a Royal Herald, but with a bit more prestige. They are not entitled to wear a Coronet or Crown, but rather would assume a mantle of office of some ceremonial robes or livery, to mark the post.

Q: What are the duties and powers of the Lord Protector or Viceroy?

A: Essentially, they serve as the “Voice of the Crown”, delivering to the populace some Awards and Proclamations that have been decided by the Crown. They do not have the power to decide on these Awards themselves – that remains the province of the Crown – but, after the decision is made, they can deliver the Awards into the hands of the people. This would likely be limited to the power to deliver Awards of Arms and non-precedence bearing awards only. They may also be accorded the chance to give recognition to worthy accomplishments within the region other than awards. They could, for example, hand out favours bearing their monogram or a Crown Principality badge, to signify those they felt worthy of public recognition for their deeds. In the event that a Crown Principality curia is convened, they would also hold a seat on such a body. However, as such a post should bring with it some recognition in our system, it has been suggested that the post be accompanied with a Grant of Arms and/or a Court Barony. (This is the tradition in Ostgardr, where the Viceroy and Vicereigne fill the role of Baron and Baroness, without the post officially being a position of territorial nobility).

Q: How are they chosen?

A: There are several options for this: selection by combat, as we do with our Crowns (or as would occur in a full-status Principality); election by the populace through the same polling procedure now in place for selection of Territorial Barons and Baronesses; or appointment by the Crown.

This decision would be a subject for discussion and would be determined by the Crown when they enacted law to create the Crown Principality.

Q: What would their terms of office be?

A: Likely one year. Any less would mean running more frequent selection tournaments or pollings, and would add expense and/or add to the burden of groups in the region. Any more would potentially be a strain on the resources of the holder of the office, and might lead to less travel, negating their value.

Q: Would we need to have a name and/or heraldry chosen before taking this step?

A: No. A Crown Principality could be created just as the "Crown Principality of the Northern Shores", and the process of looking at alternative options begun after the proclamation. This is exactly what has occurred in the past in An Tir – the Crown Principality of Tir Righ was originally created as simply the "Crown Principality of the North", and then the process of looking for something else begun.

Q: If we have a Viceroy or Lord Protector, does this mean royalty will stop visiting?

A: Not at all. The presence of such an officer is designed to supplement the presence of Royalty, not replace it. A Crown who is inclined to visit, or is invited to come, will be just as likely whether we are a Crown Principality or Region. If anything, this should afford us more opportunities, as we will have a leader who in theory "has the ear" of the Crown, and can thusly promote us to Their Majesties. It also gives us a basis for inviting Their Highnesses, to "visit Their holdings", potentially adding visits by Their Highnesses to the schedule. However, we must be prepared for the very real possibility that travel by Americans to Canada may be adversely impacted by the coming need for Passports due in a year or so, and this will help to mitigate that.

Q: Will the presence of a Viceroy or Lord Protector take away from the power and privileges of our Landed Barons and Baronesses?

A: No. The Barons and Baronesses are still the landed nobility of Their groups, and will still host Their own events, and run Their own courts. This will supplement that, and will afford more opportunity for pageantry and schtick, for those so inclined, as the Landed Nobility welcome the Representative of the Crown to Their Courts. While a Viceroy or Lord Protector could theoretically convene a Court in the name of Their Majesties in the absence of the Landed Nobility, theirs is not a noble rank. In the presence of a noble, such as a territorial Baron and Baroness, I would suggest that they defer to the nobles present, who would convene a court, and would subsequently invite the Crown's Representative into Their court, to conduct the business of the Crown, giving the territorial nobles the opportunity to be full participants in the process. It is important to note that, in the South and Central portions of our kingdom, RP events are much more common and frequent, and I have yet to hear from a Territorial noble that feels this presence, and the increased number of royal courts it entails, takes away from Their authority.

Q: Will this mean that fewer people will receive their awards from the Crown?

A: It need not. What it does mean is that Awards will be delivered more quickly to those worthy of recognition. In theory, the suggestions of the Lord Protector or Viceroy concerning potential worthy recipients of Awards should bear some added weight. It should mean that such recommendations have an additional conduit to Their Majesties. Once decided, it means that awards do not have to be put off for the better part of a year for the next RP, or that people need not travel as far to be awarded. (Witness how many of our citizens get awards at events like Birka and Great North Eastern War, where those of their friends who do not have the ability to travel miss out on the opportunity to see the ceremony). Already many of the awards given to our residents are read in courts outside our region and passed to the hands of their Baron, Baroness, or Seneschal for delivery. This affords those people a little more opportunity to receive their awards with some fanfare. It has also been suggested that those people thus rewarded be called forth at the next RP, perhaps as a group, to receive some recognition at the hands of the Crown.

Q: Will this add to the event burden of local groups, or impact their traditional events?

A: Not necessarily. We already hold regional tournaments and competitions, usually tied to pre-existing events. In the event that selection by tournament is chosen as the means for selecting a Lord Protector, that tournament would likely replace the existing Champion at Arms event. Similarly, the presence of a Viceroy or Lord Protector might mean adding a short court to an event schedule, if business existed to warrant it, but this could be determined by discussions with local groups and would be entirely voluntary (though strongly encouraged).

Q: Would this mean the region is on the way to being a Principality?

A: Not necessarily. The region might or might not eventually become a principality. This might help, creating a structure to work around, and fostering more identity, but these are all things we have worked on already. It is a step in the process, and a recognition and legitimization of what we have already been doing. It may help the process, or perhaps not. What it won't do is hinder the process, force us into any particular course of action, or negate any contrary or variant opinions on the subject.

Q: What needs to be done to move forward on this?

A: Creating a Crown Principality would be done at the will of the Crown, in consultation with various kingdom officers. If the Crown were open to the idea, a polling of the populace to gain some idea of public acceptance of the idea would likely be done, and, if sufficient interest existed, a basic set of enabling legislation would be passed, presented to kingdom curia, and potentially enacted into kingdom law, at which time the process of selecting the first leader would begin.