

Hiking & Backpacking Summit Minutes

January 12, 2019

10am - 3pm

Seattle Program Center

Facilitator: Nick Block (Education Manager)

Attendees: Tom Harvey, Cheryl Talbert, Lisa Hayek, Becky Jacobsen, Mark Ayers, Christine, Donna Kreuger, Carla Jonientz, Monty Pratt, Steve Payne

[LINK TO MINIMUM STANDARDS](#)

Coffee & Food (9:30-10am)

Welcome & Introduction (10-10:30am)

- Around the room
 - Why do we do this?
 - Tell the group one of your favorite memories as a volunteer leader

Branch Program Updates (10:30-12:30pm)

- Overview of each branches challenges and priorities
 - Seattle: Rebuilding year for us. Have some burnout on the committee. Trying to get new leaders. 13 on the committee now. Designated a safety and a training officer. Need to find a co-chair. Biggest struggle is lack of communication in hiking leadership.
 - Olympia: Leaders learn through hiking and backpacking and then go on to more technical programs (scrambling, climbing, etc.). Leading CHS makes them better leaders. Succession planning is needed! Oly is working on this. Working hard on leader development. Seminar at no cost for inactive leaders. Need new leaders, new ideas. Family hiking is doing well. Looking to bring in people who want to do less strenuous hikes. Trying to increase the amount of backpacks offered and gain interest.
 - Kitsap: Rebuilding phase. Leadership has burnout. Newer leaders have gone on to climbing and scrambling. Backpacking has no active
 - Tacoma: Trying to grow the committee. Leader list with lots of people who have not led for years. Trying to navigate who is who and how to reach out to leaders. Just held a new hike leader seminar, and holding recurring seminars throughout the year now. Offering backpacking course and staying found. Want to do a lot of other activities but trying to ramp up slowly. badge leaders. Trying to find innovative ways to get new leaders for this. Looking at restructuring the committee. Trying to provide more adaptive trips to include people with different physical ability levels.

- Foothills: New leader seminar is working well to create leaders and prepare them to be a leader at any branch. Have more leaders than we know what to do with! Committee admin - need more resources. New programs aren't being done because wearing too many hats. Recruiting more for committee including Tom! Need to think about succession planning. Supporting and fostering new programs by encouraging leaders to go start stuff. Worried about how to oversee dormant leaders who may not have current skills or trainings. Reaching out to communities of color and how to connect with them. Teaching website skills.
- **Judgement Free/Welcoming Environment in hiking programs**
 - Programs for less fit people
 - People who cannot keep up are told to go hike on their own so they can condition and keep up. There are other options and it turns people away.
 - How do we become less intimidating to people “on the couch”? Are we clearly communicating the expectations of fitness? Where do we go to reach people to let them know there are beginner activities?
 - We identified a need for a new kind of hike
 - Urban walks at a slow pace
 - Hiking for people with babies
 - Easy, front-country or side-country hikes
 - What do we call this activity?
 - Casual Hikes
 - New difficulty rating with up to 4 miles round trip and up to 500 feet gain
 - Nick will update the website activity page with new rating
 - Chairs will recruit 1 or 2 leaders each to post Casual Hikes
 - Creating a Judgement free and welcoming environment
 - Leaders need training to be able to have the tools to better create a welcoming environment
 - One option is a survey to members to get feedback to see what peoples experiences have been
 - Outdoor leadership skills modules - is there a module for creating a welcoming environment? How do we check assumptions and understand what might be offensive?
 - Need materials to be able to deliver trainings in existing leadership training
 - Different Backgrounds
 - Partner with other organizations (Latino Outdoor, Outdoor Afro, etc.) to get involved
 - Promoting and communicating scholarships

Lunch (12:30-1pm)

Minimum Standards (1pm-2pm)

- Standards Review
- Update on Course & Skill Badges
 - Basic and Intermediate or Advanced Backpacking Course Badge
 - How to verify and award these?
 - Basic skills badge is awarded upon completion of Basic Backpacking Course
 - If people complete a number of trips we can manually award the advanced
 - All branches present feel their programs should automatically give the badge
- Clarification of what a hike is
 - No avalanche terrain
 - Snow travel where snowshoes are required should be listed as a snowshoe.
 - Can hike up a route until conditions warrant snowshoes
 - If running is a significant part of a trip, it is a trail run, not a hike
 - Winter camping? Can this be under backpacking?

Staff Updates (2-2:30pm)

- Website
 - [Last Activity Led Feature](#)
 - Contact Amanda Virbitsky (amandav@mountaineers.org) for more questions about rosters
- [Leadership Development Fund](#)
- e-Learning
 - [Leadership course is live](#)
- Pathway to becoming a Hike Leader is clear and transparent
 - Are your leadership requirements and the process to become a leader readily available?
 - Making your leadership process clear for all is important to find new leaders and volunteers
 - All branches should do an inventory of their leadership process and let Nick know where to find it so they can be loaded to the website in one easy to find location

Next Steps (2:30-3pm)

ACTION ITEM Nick to help provide suggestions on how to connect with Diverse communities

ACTION ITEM [Review the draft standards document](#) and make suggestions and comments on the following:

- Casual Hike Rating

- Update to TRIPS (description of what a hike is/what is not)

ACTION ITEM Nick will draft a communication document to help chairs reach out to all existing leaders as well as remind dormant leaders of changes in the works/try to bring them back in.

ACTION ITEM Basic Backpacking Skills Badge: Need to hear from Todd in Seattle & Nic in Everett if they feel that this skills badge should be automatically awarded to graduates of the basic backpack course (in addition to the course badge). The advanced badge shall be awarded on a case by case basis to those who have shown competency in more advanced backpacking skills.

ACTION ITEM Please send directly to Nick any documentation or the location of your leadership requirements and the process to become a leader.

Adjourn (3pm)

Next Meeting

Date & Location:

Saturday January 11th, 2020

Tacoma Program Center

[RSVP Here.](#)

Outstanding Topics:

- Leader recognition
- New Member engagement
- How to add "Provisional Leaders"