

Hiking & Backpacking Summit Minutes

January 9, 2021

9am - 1pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Facilitator: Nick Block (Education Manager)

Attendees: (22 TOTAL) Becky Nielsen (Olympia), David Bradley (Seattle), Cheryl Talbert (Foothills), Dee Ann Kline (Olympia), Nancy Temkin (Foothills), Peter Hendrickson (Seattle), Becca (Staff), Becky Jacobsen (Tacoma), Bob Keranen (Olympia), Calanna Livingstone (Tacoma), Christine Grenier (Kitsap), Stacey Lisset (Seattle), Jeff McKay (Kitsap), Dixie Havlak (Olympia), Lara Linde (Tacoma), Michael A (Seattle), Michelle Garcia (Olympia), Lisa Hayek (Tacoma), Lara Linde (Tacoma), Monty Pratt (Olympia), Steve Payne (Seattle), Jaq Morrill (Olympia), Sonu Aggarwal (Seattle)

[LINK TO MINIMUM STANDARDS](#)

Welcome & Introduction (9-9:15am)

- Around the room

Branch Program Updates (9:15-10:15pm)

- Overview of each branch's challenges and priorities
- **Olympia:**
 - Successes: 83 backpacking and hiking activities. Completed the hike leader seminar (via zoom). Backpacking course was successful - 10 graduates and another course will start this spring. Family interest grew with Covid and ran youth programs all year - summer camp, after school club, and year clubs. Multiple youth leader workshops that were successful, but put on pause through Covid.
 - Challenges: The CHS was cancelled (planning to open this spring). Working through criteria for Youth Hike Leaders. More family interest since the pandemic = high need to grow the family hike leaders roster in order to offer the hikes.
- **Tacoma:**
 - Successes: Were able to run CHS successfully (1st year). Ran 175 activities and had great leaders stick through it all. Virtually ran Geology Rocks, New lears seminar, and a Backpack overview seminar, and an author presentation.
 - Challenges: Focus on growing the committee and Training hike leaders.
- **Kitsap:**
 - Successes: We are growing! Completed 60 hikes this year and have 3 new hike leaders. Hoping to start youth programs back up when they find a new committee chair.
 - Challenges: Youth outreach committee chair has moved to a new position, which leaves the youth programs in hibernation at this time. Parents have pulled back from volunteering with the youth programs.
- **Seattle:**
 - Successes: New Hike Leader seminar were held via zoom and have 12 new leaders. Cleaned up leadership roster. Creating a virtual Hiking 101 course. The Walking in Wild event went well and brought in \$1200 in donations. Backpacking had 3 active leaders at the end of last season, but has 7 leader candidates ready

to do mentored trips as soon as COVID allows.. Creating incentive badges to get more backpacking leaders involved. There is interest in family hiking.

- Challenges: CHS was cancelled this year, but offered a rollover and are hopeful for this years course. Continually reaching out to recruit new hike leaders. Backpacking is small and new and there's a concern of biting off more than they can chew. Backpacking worked through over 70 unanswered request forms and are inviting exceptionally strong equivalency graduates to become backpack leaders.

Foothills:

- Successes: 195 hikes in the last year with 15 new leaders and 12 mentors. 30 backpacks, 13 leaders, 7 new leaders, and 7 mentors. Backpack course was split into virtual classes and summer outings in small groups. (20 participants with 9 mentor groups) Created a virtual Leader seminar series help monthly. 15+ participants in each seminar. Virtual Backpack PJ party series (Apr-June) - 200 participants with \$1600 in donations.
- Challenges: Go Hike was cancelled but rolled over participants into this year. Family backpacking course was cancelled.

Running Courses in 2021(9:45-10:45):

- Something you're excited about with running courses this pandemic year
 - Gov transition into the new phasing - this will not affect the Mtrs programs - outdoor programs are 12 people with 8 households.
 - Tacoma - smaller groups sizes works well - 8 people including 2 leaders (6 students).
 - Cheryl - Many parks have specific restrictions (ex: groups of 5) so check your parks.
 - Zoom will continue as a great way to offer lectures - great feedback and work for more people.
 - Stacey - With higher rates of hikes each month, encourage alumni to help and offer incentives.
 - Dixie - Barrier to getting hike leaders is the first aid component that is attached to the requirements. A less vigorous first aid class should be offered for family hike leaders.
 - Tacoma and Foothill have an outline for simple first aid course - no badge and informational only.
 - Possibility to create a first aid course that works for low risk hike leaders who are not interested in taking the full course.
 - *Continue these conversations on basecamp and see if we can create something this next year.*
 - David - Have a backpack trip leader seminar (those that sat out for 2020) 60 min virtual : lessons learned in 2020, updates with COVID, permits, 30 min of discussion for leaders that did run trips in 2020.
 - COVID GUIDELINES: Covid guidelines on the website are difficult to find and understand on the website. *Please Make the website updates a priority and more simple to understand.*
 - Stacey - *too much info is in FAQ, but not up front.*
 - *Too many links to click on to find pertaining information*

- *Condense the covid rules into something simple and precise. "As things change, we just need to know what we are doing right now."*
- Cheryl - please offer more first aid and navigation courses multiple times throughout the year so leaders have multiple chances to certify.
- Olympia offers a Wilderness Skills Course - 2 Saturdays on Zoom with plenty of homework. Other branches might enjoy this.
 - *Bob will share the course syllabus and powerpoint. (There is a google classroom with all information)*
- What feedback would you like to get from the group?
 - First Aid badge for low risk hike leaders (Family hike leaders)
 - COVID Guidelines that are simple to find and follow - many offered ways of reformatting the information to make it more clear and relevant.
 - How to make navigation work with COVID - small groups that go on hikes
 - Carpooling restrictions from 2020 - (the footprint that we are leaving and lack of parking)
 - Monty would like Staying Found for Olympia - talk with Foothills - Cheryl

Break (10:45-11:00)

Standards Review (11:00-1:00pm)

- **Youth Hike and Backpack Leader Qualifications (Led by Becca) 45 min**
 - QYL questionnaire revamp
 - Create a separate training for each youth/family options
 - Youth in Adult programs (+14 years of age is allowed)
 - Adult programs must have a QYL there and in the same group as the youth if a youth attends the adult program.
 - It's preferred to have the leader as a QYL. This is not required, but encouraged. But someone on the trip must be a QYL.
 - Youth and Family hikes
 - Managing families has a very different dynamic than leading adults. (Parent vs Leader dynamics and management)
 - Youth Clubs
 - Most controlled environment because they have formed a community with recurring outings throughout the year.
 - Parents can lead a mentored hike through the clubs, rather than the family hiking.
 - Family and youth leaders are being proposed:
 - Hike leader orientation
 - QYL for clubs
 - Mentored club hike (for Club), family hike (for Family), and adult hike (for Adult)
 - To lead family hikes in the future, you would need to lead a family hike in the future.

- Dixie: Add a Family backpack Leader badge as well
 - Becca - it's not structured differently enough to make it a new training, and make sure the training covers both overnight, climbing outings, etc.
- *Will create an informational session for those interested*
- *Create a working group to implement these standards*
- *The group agreed to vote on Basecamp to Approve*
- **Integrating Urban Adventures into the Standard (Peter) - 20 min**
 - Proposal to have a place where urban outings sit within the hiking/backpacking standards.
 - The group agreed to implement this into the standard
 - Dixie suggests adding a template such as "Nature adventures" or another distinct template that would include outings such as clamming, family camping, nature crafting, museums, etc.
 - Stacey disagrees with some of the edits; does not want watered down standards from the current standards, but rather make it equally important. (10 essentials wilderness skills awareness)
 - *The group agree to implement this proposal into the standard, after some edits*
 - *Needs work on the proposed language*
 - *Cheryl will put out another draft with edits with hope for resolution in basecamp.*
- **Leader Reciprocity (Led by Stacey) - 20 min**
 - Current wording: "Once approved by one branch committee to lead hikes or backpacks, the leader is qualified to lead in any branch, but must request the committee chair to be added to another committee leader list."
 - *The group agreed on rewording the language to: "The committee chair has the discretion to choose to add or not require the leader to complete any additional Branch-specific requirements not met before being added to the roster."*
 - *Needs more conversation on aligning leader requirements as a separate topic.*
 - Michael expressed concerns with legal liability with current separate requirements
 - *Move this to a working group that includes chairs + volunteers.*
- **Remove Ambiguities in Hiking and Backpacking Difficulty Ratings (David) - 5 min**
 - *The group approved David's proposed changes to the Hike difficulty ratings*
 - *Backpacking was not presented but the group agreed to review and approve via Basecamp*
- **Basic Backpack Trip Type: (David) - 10 min**
 - Create a variety of Backpack Trip types (open vs basic) to help clarification
 - *A lot of disagreement on the proposal*
 - *Table for another time where the conversation can be focused on this topic*
- **Advanced Backpacking Skills (Cheryl) - 10 min**
 - Would like to get multiple advanced backpack leaders to come together to work out details for requirements.
 - *Combine this future discussion with Davids Basic Backpack Trip Type discussion.*
 - *Discuss whether to combine Basic and Advanced Backpack badges - compare language difference.*

Next Steps:

- **Nick:** Work with volunteers to input the below standards language proposals in Basecamp in the next few weeks
- **Nick:** Coordinate with Becca and other interested parties for an informational meeting for those interested in learning more about the youth and family leadership badges
- **Nick:** Create a working group for youth and family leadership standards as well
- **David:** Input language changes for proposed standard for difficulty ratings
- **Cheryl:** will put out another draft for the Urban Adventure standards with edits and hope for a resolution. Collaborate with those who are interested.
- **Stacey:** Input revised language around leader reciprocity to standards and share with the group

Next summit? [Saturday January 8th, 2022.](#)

Adjourn (1pm)