

2024 Winter Naturalist Summit Agenda

February 4, 2024 9 am - noon

Meeting Location: Boardroom at the Tacoma Program Center

[RSVP Here](#)

[Meeting Agenda](#)

Attendees:

- Lynn Graf (Seattle)
- Becky Andrade (Olympia)
- Stewart Hougen (Seattle)
- Carla Jonientz (Olympia)
- Bob Keranen (Olympia)
- Zua Stivers (Olympia)
- Dawn Corl (Seattle)
- Tailor Dolgin (Staff)

Meeting Minutes:

- **9:03 am - Meeting Commences**
 - Introductions
 - Lynn Graff - Seattle Co-chair
 - Stewart Hougen - Seattle Co-chair
 - Becky Andrade - Olympia Co-chair
 - Carla Jonientz - Olympia Co-chair
 - Zua Stivers - Olympia Naturalist Leader
 - Bob Keranen - Olympia Naturalist Leader
 - Dawn Corl - Seattle Branch Secretary
- **9:18 am - Branch Updates**
 - Seattle
 - February is a busy time of year!!!
 - Currently preparing for INW course kickoff
 - Current enrollment: 42 (anticipating a second wave of enrollment)
 - Next *Meet The Mountaineers* may trigger this - Feb 13
 - Getting instructors involved right now
 - A section on insects and pollinators being introduced this year
 - Getting ready for a second moss workshop
 - current capacity: 49 due to interest
 - Goal is a 3:1 student to instructor ratio

- Different Committee Member (Christina Delano) oversees all leader training and support
- Would be interested in getting a lecture series together in the future (maybe collaborate with Oly)
- Native Plant Garden update/maintenance - collaborating with Green Seattle, Native Plant Society, Seattle Parks n Rec to keep that stewarded
- Olympia
 - Current committee is really getting started - goal is to put together trips to a variety of environments and with specific themes (i.e. evergreens, twigs)
 - Winter Twig ID trip(s) have been a huge success thus far
 - Feb 12 - Elk and Bighorn feeding and wildflower walk
 - Getting ready for INW course kickoff
 - Carla attending a presentation on seaweeds in Sequim
 - Trying to offer resources - internal and external - for Oly naturalist enthusiasts (roughly 15-20 people who have shown interested)
 - Sending out monthly newsletter to designated distribution list (roughly 25-35 people right now)
 - Hoping this will help grow Naturalist Leader pool by making information more accessible
 - Hoping to send out information more frequently in the summertime
 - Partnering with Christina on watershed birding resources
 - [*A Birder's Guide to Washington*](#) - (recommended guidebook Amazon link)
 - Talk n Walks
 - specific subject (i.e. mushrooms) lecture with follow up field trip
 - May try to charge for these in the future
 - New leader with moth and butterfly background
 - Currently a lot of cross-branch collaboration has been really beneficial for Oly so far, and we're really excited to see that continue and welcome in other branches if and where possible and relevant
- **9:54 am - Discussion Topics**
 - *Advantages and/or disadvantages of Naturalists being independent from the Hiking/Backpacking Committee - what does that look like and how is it playing out? (BA, CJ)*
 - Naturalists have been independent in Seattle (budget and otherwise) for more than 10 years, so it's hard to say for sure what drove that decision (LG)
 - In Olympia, it's been that way for 3 years - what are the pros and cons? (CJ)
 - History - having the committee as a subcommittee makes it very difficult for participants to distinguish what exactly is a naturalist program and why that might differentiate from other hikes or backpacks (SH)

- In Oly, if anyone wants to be a Naturalist Leader they need to also be a Hike Leader as a prerequisite. Do we need them to continue to maintain other leader badges once they're in? (CJ)
 - If they're an active Naturalist Leader they should be getting double credit/staying up to par (BK)
 - Because activities can't be double-listed we don't see folks getting double credit for leading on the website, so what does that mean for staying current in their badge? Do we ask that folks lead at least two a year to remain up to date as a leader? (CJ)
 - We do it with other groups (ZS)
 - Does it matter if they're a primary leader or a co-leader? (SH)
 - The tasks are not the same - not listing on the website or anything else like that, but the website tracks them the same way (BK)
 - Existing separately as a committee allows us to set our own standards and expectations around trip length and execution (BK)
- According to the standards, we're holding folks to a specific standard. How do we have folks show proficiency? (BA)
 - We help facilitate navigation badges and first aid training for our current folks (DC)
- Standards are meant to be the bare minimum for leading and then you as the branch can make decisions around what more you need to see from Leaders (BK)
- Advantages of being independent outweigh the drawbacks from my perspective (LG)
- Stewardship committee is going through something similar and it has been a successful way to bring leaders together (BK)
- Have there been budget demands? (LG)
 - This will be our first budget cycle, so we're trying to figure out what we need to know (BA)
 - If you're going to spend money, you should try to bring it in somehow as well! (BK)
 - Example: teaching crosscut saws in conservation work that we do
 - So, maybe we should try to figure out where we can generate revenue (BA)
 - (Seattle reps support adding a \$20 price to Walk n Talks this year)
- We should remain standalone as much as we can in order to preserve the foundations and differences of our committee type (BK)
- Is there a mechanism for fundsharing across branches? (LG)
 - Talk to finance and they can help allocate money (BK)

- If we were to offer Winter Twigs between Sea and Oly, would we be able to split potential revenue from that course across branches? (CA, LG)
 - Yes, the finance team (Leigh Noble) can help with that (BK)
- *Accommodating interest in dual discipline trips (i.e. Naturalist & Scrambling or Naturalist & Snowshoeing) in Activity Standards (LG)*
 - Currently what I'm doing in scrambling/snowshoeing whatever else is not really allowed according to the Standards (BK)
 - So we need to figure out how to change the wording (BK)
 - There is no way to cross-list programs on the website
 - We want to stay general instead of getting too specific in the standards so that we are able to be more flexible with this (BK)
 - We can pivot language from stewardship activity standards to the naturalist standards
 - Sample language shared from Stewardship updates by Sara Ramsay: *Mountaineers leader on-site who has been approved to lead the full stewardship activity, including both the stewardship component and activities in all relevant terrain.*
- **10:40 - BREAK**
- **10:47 - [Activity Standards Editing](#)**
 - Do we need to be tracking the leader evaluation process? (BA)
 - Seattle has some sort of process for this and a shared google drive for the process (DC, LG)
 - We should talk about this with Christina and get everything in the Drive (DC)
 - We might need to look into establishing something for ourselves, perhaps we'll look at the Seattle one and see if we can use a similar process (BA, CJ)
 - Updates approved by Council at 11:25 am
 - **TO DO:** Tailor will bring to BLC for further approval of updated standards
- **11:23 am - Council Charter not in need of edits or updates at this time**
- **11:26 am - the remaining discussion topics**
 - *How to make INW Course branch-wide, not just Seattle-centric (LG)*
 - If your branch is not posting Naturalist Activities, how do people find them? (LG)
 - With the change of Exploring Nature on the website people don't necessarily see Naturalist activities as much (BK)
 - Could we write a blog or get something posted to the homepage when we're accepting sign-ups? (BA)

- When we promote, we should include Zoom as a plus! (BA)
- Be sure you're listing things as field trips on the website so that they get accurately listed with the class! (LG)
- Can we reach out to Foothills and Tacoma about inviting folks in? (SH)
 - Yes, I would reach out to the Branch Chairs (BK)
- Conjoin trips with other local Naturalist organizations like WNPS, Audubon, PSMS: Logistics, is it worth the bureaucratic problems? (LG)
 - If partnering, we should be keeping contracts with the folks we partner with (BK)
 - When might this be relevant for us? (BA)
 - If it is facilitated by someone else, we can share it, but it may not be an activity for us to post (BK)
 - If it is our trip, we could have them join us as a guest attendee for the program, and then we would be liable (BK)
- **11:57 - Meeting Adjourned**
 - *& a note for future planning: This time of year is extremely busy with prep for INW kicking off. Having future Summit Meetings in the Fall/Winter may be better overall for committee members' schedules.*