

2021 Fall Naturalist Summit Agenda

November 13, 2021 9am-3pm

[Website Event - see official roster here](#)

Attendees:

- Thomas Bancroft (Seattle)
- Bob Keranen (Olympia)
- Dee Ann Kline (Olympia)
- Phil Chebuhar (Kitsap)
- Stewart Hougen (Seattle)
- Tailor Dolgin (Staff)

Meeting Minutes:

9:00 - Intros and Hellos

9:15 - Discussing Conversation Topics (from [agenda](#))

- Developing Activity Standards
 - Whole group agrees this is a priority across branches to provide clarity to naturalist activities and to avoid “exploring nature” being co-opted into other activity types on the website
 - What does it mean when something says “Exploring Nature” on the website?
 - Currently, it means anything from ‘we will be outside on this program’ to ‘this is a wildflower hike’ and can mislead participants when they are signing up for programs (feedback received in Seattle in the past)
 - Something that works well in Olympia to address this: defining the theme of a hike clearly on the website and adding slow pace as an expectation on the course listing (DAK)
 - Our goal is to define what Exploring Nature means and change it on the website if deemed necessary by the group.
 - Exploring nature is not the same as being out in nature and therefore should be defined clearly and differently
 - Questions and Discussion
 - Is it possible to create an activity standard that exists similarly to how photography standards do? Example given: specific courses and activities that are run for photography opportunities instead of bringing a camera on a hike (SH)
 - If we did this, what would it mean for the intersection of different activities with naturalist goals? Example given: if I, as a canyoning leader, wanted to lead a canyoning trip with an exploring nature focus would that be a canyoning trip or a naturalist trip? (BK)

- Similarly, would a snowshoe trip with an exploring nature focus be a snowshoe trip or a naturalist trip?
 - Okay with the potential for overlap as long as activity standards make it clear what folks are getting into and what requirements are for leaders (TB)
 - Group overall agrees on Thomas's thought above
- Suggestion: We could start by looking at backpacking and hiking standards & definitions and expand upon them to build our naturalist standards (DAK)
 - Concern: would doing this create a semantics issue for us in trying to define a hike versus a naturalist hike? (PC)
- What does all of this mean for leader requirements & badges?
 - Suggestion: minimum leadership requirement for naturalist leaders should be a hike leader badge (BK)
 - Agreement across the council on this, primarily because the hike leader process involves some safety requirements and all agree that this is important
 - Current Naturalist Leader Courses in Seattle include some safety overlap with hike leader training so we could require a hike leader badge or build the important pieces of hike leader training into our trainings (TB)
 - Would the Introduction to the Natural World Course be a requirement for leaders? (BK)
 - Not necessarily, but if we offer it virtually it could be an easy resource to offer up to interested leaders across branches (TB)
 - Our goal is to give leaders tools to lead naturalist hikes, not to require them to be experts (TB)
 - Suggestion: leader equivalency process down the road? (BK)
 - Are leaders currently required to know MOFA? (PC)
 - Answer: not currently (BK)
 - As a leader, if my badge status is lagging, would I then need to be a hike leader to lead a naturalist hike? (PC)
 - Answer: in the current discussion/model, yes (BK)
- Thomas leads the group through his drafted Exploring Nature Activity Standards
 - Updated version of this document can be found in the Naturalist Summit Group Basecamp
- **Action Item for Everyone: look through other activity standards (such as the backpacking and hiking standards) and compare with Tom's Naturalist Standards document to suggest changes or updates to this as our starting place.**
- Naming Conventions - Exploring Nature versus Naturalist Activity
 - Suggestion: Exploring Nature stands alone as an activity type on the website that can only be executed by Naturalist Leaders but other activity types could require

leaders to be naturalist leaders and tailor their activities that way if interested (TB)

- Concern: current leaders do not all yet have the Naturalist Leader badge--so we would want to intentionally ID people who people currently/should qualify has having equivalent skills
 - Be sure to clearly communicate changes
 - Establish an equivalency process if needed (DAK)
- Group movement to change naming conventions from “Exploring Nature” activities to “Naturalist Activity” on the website and in documentation moving forward -- agreed on by all branches
- **Action Item for Tailor: follow up with Jeff Bowman about how we would go about changing this on the website and support making that change happen**
- Movement to adopt Thomas’s Naturalist Activity Standards in the short term in order to review and edit in the future--agreed on by all branches.
 - **Action Item for Thomas: update language in Activity Standards draft to say “Naturalist Activities” instead of “Exploring Nature” and upload to Basecamp**
 - **Action Item for Everyone: Review updated Activity Standards before December meeting and bring thoughts, questions to our meeting.**
- Developing and Supporting Naturalist Leaders
 - How do we grow and support our leader pool? In-person resources? Hybrid and virtual resource? What is the best use of our time here? (TB)
 - Finding and developing leaders to meet demands for all activities is a clubwide struggle (BK)
 - Could we modularize some of our resources in order to provide them across branches? Making videos & online resources is fun but hard. (TB)
 - How do we diversify our naturalist leadership pool? (TB)
 - Suggestion: work with new leaders to part and partial workloads on programs in order to increase buy in (SH)
 - Suggestion: running trips with smaller group sizes (6-7 participants) can help group management feel easier (DAK)
 - Suggestion: using ask leader permission to vet participants on the website also helps set leaders up with groups who are bought into the program they are leading (BK & PC)
 - Group generally agrees that conversations around growing and supporting leader pools are worth continuing at future meetings!
- **Action Item for Dee Ann and Tailor: Figure out the process of elevating Olympia Naturalist Committee from subcommittee of Backpacking and Hiking Committee to standalone committee**
- **Action Item for Tailor: reach out to Tacoma Naturalist Committee folks to bring them into the council and have Tacoma represented at summit meetings.**

10:30-10:40 - Break

10:40 - Wrap Up Discussion Topics

- Request to return to leadership development and to brainstorm recruitment ideas (PC)
 - Reminder: recruiting and onboarding leaders is a big process! We've got to remain open and offer programming as we can. The more trips we lead the more overall interest we will continue to generate (BK)
 - Suggestion: a systematic approach is not always the most helpful approach to recruiting leaders and we may need to approach things on an individual basis and/or think outside the box (SH)
 - Reminder: changing requirements and badges down the line will affect this process but we can still bring folks in as subject matter experts to help lead
 - While we are still receiving oversight from the backpack and hiking committee we should be approaching these changes from a dual lens (DAK)
 - Reminder: the moss and lichen course is very popular and may be a great course to bring people (SH)

10:48 - Discuss [Naturalist Council Charter](#)

- All suggested changes in charter sections 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 preliminarily approved by Kitsap, Olympia, and Seattle at activity summit on 11/13/21.
- Language in section 6: Decision-Making to be readdressed on 12/20/21 so that the Naturalist Council may approve this charter document and send it off to BLC.
- Consideration: compared to other activities, building standards for Naturalist Activities may feel a bit more 'squishy' so we should be very clear about what it mean to us to build and set clear standards (PC)
- **Action Item for Tailor: Provide example language from Scrambling Charter Draft as an example of Decision Making section for the council to review.**
- **Action Item for Everyone: Review changes in charter and example language from scrambling charter before December meeting.**

11:38 - Meeting Wrap Up

- Review of Action Items
 - All Action Items in the minutes are in **bold** text. All Action Items will be listed in Basecamp when Tailor shares these minutes.
- Establishing next meetings
 - Meeting again on December 20th at 6 pm via Zoom to finalize the charter, review activity standards, and work together on course development for the upcoming year
 - **Action Item for Tailor: Put together event, zoom link, etc. on the website and share on Basecamp**
 - **Action Item for Everyone: Reach out to other folks in the naturalist community to see if we can get more voices at the December meeting.**
 - Suggestion: another potential meeting in early spring (late Feb or early March)

