**Mountaineers Sea Kayak 2015 Summit Minutes  
February 7, 2015, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm  
Tacoma Mountaineers Clubhouse  
2302 North 30th Street Tacoma, WA 98403**

**Attendees (28):**

**Tacoma (8):** Beth Owen, Marty Mayock, Esther Ladwig, Michael Everett, Alison Reinbold, Tom Harrigan, Robbie Courts, Gary Peniston  
 **Everett (2):** Doug Palm, Donna Garland  
 **Kitsap (0):** Charlie Michel sent email comments, which were read aloud and considered  
 **Olympia (11):** Henry Romer, Brian Hollander, Andy Hix, Karen Hook, Carolyn Burreson, Lisa Johnson, Jim Wilson, Robin Pizanti, Theresa Pizanti, John Dunlap, Dave Stolier  
 **Seattle (6):** George Swapp, Pat Carney, Brian High, Felicia Wibowo, Kay Gowan, Kym Ahrens  
 **Moderator (1):** Chris Williams (Leadership Director, staff)  
 Robbie Courts served as secretary

**Opening Remarks**—(Beth) Introductions & Announcements  
**“Governance”—**(Chris) Explained process of whatever is agreed upon or discussed today will go to the Mountaineers Board of Directors for decisions. Today is “advisory meeting”.

**Discussion Item #1: Amending the Sea Kayak Minimum Standards**

* **Some basic concerns expressed:** \*We don’t want to make minimumstandards that are too stringent and would chase others away.  
   \*There may be additional input from members who are not here today on some of these issues.  
   \*We want to provide and environment/culture of safety and fun for kayaking.  
   \*We want to encourage a culture of continuing rescues for experienced kayakers throughout their time with the Mountaineers.
* **Consensus was reached on some recommended changes to the current Sea Kayak Minimum Clubwide Mountaineer Standards:**

\*See attached Minimum Standards document, with changes indicated in red in the actual document)

* **This items was discussed, no consensus reach, item tabled:** \***Do we want to increase the minimum standards for the number of required rescues (self & assisted) in the Basic Sea Kayak Course to three (1 in pool and 2 in cold water)?** (Tacoma) Current minimums are: Tacoma and Kitsap require 4, Seattle and Everett require 2 and strongly encourage 2 more, Olympia requires 2. Olympia requested we table this discussion until next year, to allow them time to resolve how they would approach the change if it were required. The intent is to increase safety overall and have consistency among the branches for minimum standards. **Table until next year’s symposium.**

**These Sea Kayak minimum standards discussion items were discussed, and either rejected or declared a non-issue:**

**\*Delete the salt water requirement for all student paddles?** (Tacoma) It is a challenge to get rentals that are not on lakes for students without kayaks of their own. This was **determined to be a non-issue since the most recently revised standards (2007) does not list salt water as a requirement for student paddles**, although there was some concern that at least one paddle or training event be in salt water (for experience with tides and currents).

\***Can the pool session be eliminated, or substituted for being done in the salt water?** (Seattle) This would be for the purpose of saving money on pool rental and doing an intense weekend of training all in one place. Due to several concerns about tides, inconsistent water depth, safety, bottom debris, swim test options, water comfort for students, etc. this was **rejected for now**. However, we are willing to revisit this topic if “solutions” to those issues are found.

\***Can we delete the word “bilge” on page 3 of 8 in the Basic Course Standards?** (Kitsap) Consensus was that “bilge” pump need to **remain**, to avoid confusion with “bicycle” or other types of pumps.

**\*Should we add “flares as required by the USCG” to required equipment for participants?** (Kitsap) There was some confusion as to what the USCG actually does require for kayaks, though a quick look at the USCG website looks like flares are **not required** for sea kayaks. This topic **needs more research**, as we do want to be in compliance with USCG requirements. We will request that Charlie Michel send Chris Williams a reference of where flares are required for sea kayaks on the Coast Guard website, and Chris can also ask the legal counsel of the Mountaineer Board, as appropriate.

**Website Issues**: There were many concerns about the website, along with some recent changes, and more changes due to be implemented in late spring. Chris explained that there is some resistance from Mountaineers headquarters to some of the changes that have been requested by other groups. He recommended that the “feedback”, “?”, or “user voice” options be used to input any recommendations and concerns. Some changes we would like to see include:

**Specific website ideas**:  
 \*Can we use some type of calendar system to put all options for kayakers on a specific date in the same place?  
 \*Make “Leader Permission required” the default on all trips.  
 \*Send an automatic email to a leader whenever someone signs up for a paddle or course.  
 \*Get rid of elevation gain on kayak templates.  
 \*Make it so you can list multiple people at once as “successfully completed paddle” instead of having to click on each person to streamline the process.

**Intermediate Kayak course:** Beth discussed the “process” of Tacoma Branch developing the course to offer students a guide of “what’s next?” The goals of having an Intermediate Sea Kayak Course include encouraging more advanced Mountaineer sea kayak trips, and offering some type of consistent way of identifying experience level, while making the training affordable (as compared to the ACA or BCU route.) It is also more consistent with the Mountaineers tradition of allowing skilled volunteers (rather than paid professionals) to train volunteers. She showed how the Intermediate Sea Kayak skill levels compare to ACAL4, BCU3\*, and BCU4\*.

**General Agreement about the Intermediate Sea Kayak Course:** \*Everyone likes the concept of an Intermediate Sea Kayak Course; minimum standards still need some fine-tuning.   
 \*This is NOT a requirement/prerequisite for participation on paddles  
 \*Trip Leader discretion is still required for any SK IV and V trips (as it is for all kayak trips), and being an “Intermediate” paddler does not qualify or disqualify anyone for or from a trip. In fact these trips are probably needed in order to get the experience for the designation.  
 \*Current experienced kayakers who meet the existing current standards will need to be grandfathered into qualification in order to get a core group of instructors. Each branch can determine who those people would be, and would be responsible for granting Equivalency to those kayakers  
 \*The Trip Leader path is intended to be separate from the Intermediate course.  
 \*This is not intended to be a just a checklist for classes, but rather a measure of proficiency in the various skills.

**Concerns moving forward with the Intermediate Sea Kayak Course:  
 \***Tacoma Branch is concerned about “signing off” and graduating paddlers from other branches that the Tacoma branch has not paddled with under conditions such as surf, currents and wind. They would like each branch to take responsibility for “signing off” and graduating paddlers from their own branch, since they would best know those paddlers and their proficiency level (ie, just like the Basic Sea Kayak Course format.)

\*Each branch needs to determine how they want to go forward with an Intermediate Sea Kayak Course for 2015, pending further discussion of the course at our 2016 Kayak Summit. Seattle indicated that they are planning on implementing this course soon. Olympia and Everett are still discussing if, when and how they will implement the course.

\*There was discussion about doing “shared” training of Intermediate Kayak Course students between the branches, but leaving the final “sign-off” and graduation of students to the branch that is best able to evaluate the student’s proficiency.

\*Interested branches would need to set up their own Intermediate Sea Kayak Course on the website.

\*Fine-tuning the wording on standards to get a club wide standard will get started by establishing a subcommittee with members from all interested branches. The goal is to develop recommendations that can be presented at the 2016 Sea Kayak Summit

\*Chris Williams mentioned that the concept of Skill Badges is going to be introduced soon, if we wanted to break the skills out into categories.

**Proposal:** Develop a subcommittee made up of members of interested branches, who will work on this via email and branch committee meetings, with goal of having a minimum standards recommendation to present at the 2016 Kayak Summit.

**SK Ratings for paddles:** There was a lot of discussion regarding this and no consensus. **Tabled for later**.

**Sea Kayak Leader Requirements/Standards:** **Tabled for later discussion.**

**Mechanics of Basic Sea Kayaking Equivalency Process between branches: Tabled for later discussion**

**Mixed Youth/Adult Programs:** Kym Ames has a proposal on this topic and will email it to anyone interested. **Tabled for later discussion.**

**Next kayak Symposium: February 13, 2016** (1st Saturday after Super Bowl)

**Minimum Clubwide Standards The Mountaineers (Approved 2/5/15)**

**Sea Kayaking**

**Application**

This standard applies to club-sponsored sea kayaking trips in saltwater or freshwater. This standard applies to any branch or committee that sponsors sea kayaking activities.

**Trips**

Sea Kayaking trips will be rated with the categories shown in the Appendix. The rating must be available to participants when they sign up.

**Equipment**

The following equipment is required for any sea kayaking trip.

Sea Kayak Related Equipment – required of all

• Sea kayak with flotation in both ends

Flotation can be compartments separated from the cockpit by bulkheads or bags specifically designed to provide the kayak flotation. A sea sock ~~should be used in boats without bulkheads, but~~ is not adequate flotation without float bags.

• Paddle

• Bilge pump

• Paddle float

• Spray skirt

• USCG approved PFD

• Appropriate ~~clothing~~ attire for the conditions ~~encountered seasonally~~

• Whistle

Sea Kayaking Ten Essentials – required of all

1. Navigation (Chart and compass – deck or orienteering type)

2. Spare clothing in a dry bag

3. Water

4. Food

5. First aid supplies

6. Lighter or waterproof matches

7. Sun protection (sun screen, hat, sunglasses with retainer strap).

8. Illumination (flashlight or headlamp)

9. Emergency shelter appropriate for the trip (space blanket, tarp, or tent)

10. Repair kit appropriate for trip and gear

Required Equipment for Leaders

• Chart

• Tide and current data for the trip

• Waterproof watch

Required Equipment for the Party (carried by any person)

• Spare paddle

• Towing system

• Duct tape for boat repairs

• Pliers, screwdriver (Phillips and spade) and knife or “Leatherman” type tool

• Weather or VHF radio

• Toilet paper and plastic bag

~~The following~~ Additional equipment may be required of all participants at the leader’s discretion

• ~~Spare paddle~~

• ~~VHF radio~~

~~• Sling~~

~~• Wetsuit and dry top or drysuit~~

~~• Tow rope~~

~~• Chemical light stick~~

~~• Emergency signaling device (flares, smoke)~~

~~• Additional flotation~~

**Leaders**

Leaders must be approved to lead trips by the sponsoring committee. Sponsoring committees must be satisfied that leaders of sea kayak trips have these qualifications:

Training

• Graduation from the Sea Kayak Course or Equivalency

• Completion of a leadership course or demonstration of leadership skills to the satisfaction of the sponsoring committee

Experience

• Participation in at least two club-sponsored sea kayaking trips

• Serving as a mentored leader on at least two trips (with a different mentor each time)

Leaders must demonstrate skill maintenance by satisfactorily leading at least one trip every three years.

**Participants**

Graduation from the Basic Sea Kayak Course or equivalency is a prerequisite for participating on a Sea Kayak trip. Current-year Basic Sea Kayak Course students may participate on trips after they have successfully completed all course field trips.

Participants are responsible for signing up only for trips that are within their capabilities, wearing suitable clothing, and carrying appropriate equipment including the ten essentials.

**Courses**

**T**he content of the Basic Sea Kayaking Course shall include:

~~Classroom~~ Off-water instruction (at least nine hours) covering:

• Equipment

• Charts and navigation

• Hypothermia

• Tides and currents

• Weather for kayakers ~~including the Beaufort wind scale~~

• Leadership and followership including group dynamics

• Trips and the trip rating system

• Ergonomics, avoiding repetitive injuries, safe handling of heavy loads, shoulder protection

• Basic conservation principles as they apply to sea kayaking

Pool Instruction (at least two hours) covering:

• A swim check without flotation (participants must be able to swim 50 yards)

• Wet exits

• Self- and assisted-rescue

Open-water Instruction (at least two six-hour days), covering:

• Launching and landing techniques

• Basic paddling strokes

• Use of required equipment

• Wet exits

• Self- and assisted-rescue

A sponsoring committee can substitute a club-sponsored sea kayak trip for one day of field trip instruction.

In order to graduate, Basic Sea Kayak Course ~~graduates~~ students must demonstrate competence in the course content and satisfactorily complete at least one club-sponsored sea kayak trip rated ~~at least SK-II~~  SK II or SK III that covers at least seven miles.

Committees may grant course equivalency for applicants who:

• Submit an application that shows that they have training or experience that meets or exceeds the requirements for course graduation, and

• Demonstrate, without instruction, a level of competency in sea kayaking knowledge and boat handling skills that is equivalent to that expected of a Basic Sea Kayak Course graduate, and

• Based on the above criteria, receive approval by the sponsoring committee.

**Instructors**

Instructor qualifications are:

• Graduation (or equivalency) from the **Basic** Sea Kayaking Course and

• Approval from the sponsoring committee to instruct. First-time instructors should also participate in a train-the-trainer session coordinated by the lead instructor.

**Related Club Policies and Standards**

None at this time

**Comparable Standards**

American Canoe Association (www.americancanoe.org)

• ACA Guidelines for Safe Coastal Kayaking

• ACA Coastal (Sea) Kayak Curriculum

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