

Snowshoe Summit

April 6, 2019

Tacoma Program Center

11am-3pm

[Snowshoe Standards](#)

[2017 Snowshoe Summit \(Minutes\)](#)

Attendees: Hillary Shearer (Everett), Russ Immel (Foothills), Travis Prescott (Foothills), Tom Eckhout (Olympia), Morgan Boyle (Seattle), Patrick Podenski (Seattle), Gene Keltgen (Tacoma), Sara Ramsay (Staff)

Agenda:

Coffee & Light Snacks (10:30am)

Welcome & Around the Room (11am)

- Introductions (Name/Branch/Role)

Branch Program Updates (11:15am)

- Around the Room (What has each branch been up to over the past year?)
 - Foothills
 - Intermediate Course: Added a dedicated back-up FT day, worked well when the primary date needed to be cancelled due to avalanche conditions.
 - Have started using course functionality to track mentored leaders and assign leader badges. Allows committee admins to assign the correct badges (Basic or Intermediate). Similar to how other committees have been tracking Equivalency. Gives prospective leaders visibility to leadership requirements.
 - [Basic Snowshoe Leader Mentorship](#)
 - [Intermediate Snowshoe Leader Mentorship](#)
 - Branch Constraints
 - Physical meeting space, have to rent a facility for meetings and courses. Program has expanded, so can afford it, but still difficult to administer and manage.
 - Available trails/routes. Getting pressure to reduce number of people on FT in some locations because of permit regulations.
 - Seattle
 - Leadership seminar was recorded on Zoom. Permission from Seattle to share with Snowshoe Summit.
 - https://www.icloud.com/#icloudrive/01Juimk27JA-Q-RTtal_fi--Q

- Have asked leaders for help with adding S&T ratings to routes/places. Slow process. Want to help students/participants identify trips that are a good fit for their abilities. Goal of opening up more trips to Basic students, confusion/controversy about what constitutes a Basic vs Intermediate trip.
 - Continuing to partner with NWAC and offer NWAC Avalanche Awareness seminars. Has allowed Basic instructors to remove some avy content from their lectures.
 - Continues to dig snow pits on FTs.
 - Kirk Petersen now works/lives in Spokane, in search of a new committee chair.
 - Basic course is in good shape, but somewhat constrained by volunteer resources. Fairly good instructor turnout.
 - New: Surprised that we were graduating students from Intermediate who are uncomfortable on steep snow. Want to revamp that process, add more content about avalanche safety.
 - Idea to add a separate course called “Snow Travel”, which would be relevant to multiple activities - climbers, scramblers, snowshoers. Walking on snow, using ice axe, etc.
 - Two FTs for Intermediate:
 - 1. Walking in balance, self-belay.
 - 2. Ice axe arrest, review of other skills.
 - Supplemented course content with online instructional videos.
 - Low enrollment in Intermediate course because of how the registration dates were listed.
 - Unsuccessful to incorporate new AIARE 1 rescue class, plan was to cover the cost through the committee budget.
 - Want to create a more practical guide for avalanche safety. Transitioned to new book *Avalanche Essentials*. Focus on terrain selection.
 - Winter camping. Ran into a ranger on way to Austin Pass, ranger was okay with group dispersing.
- Olympia
- No Intermediate.
 - Olympia Offers: Winter Travel, Basic Snowshoeing. Includes the NWAC Avalanche Awareness seminar taught by a former NWAC founding member.
 - FT = One each for snowshoe and cross-country skiing.
 - Includes avy pits for a glimpse at snow science.
 - Interested to develop Intermediate course for overnight and backcountry travel, but doesn't have adequate volunteer support.
 - Question about whether or not AIARE will be brought in-house to help reduce cost to students.

- Interesting energy year. Small course, students not as interested in course. Experience trips would fill, but not with Olympia students. Very few students who will graduate.
 - Tacoma
 - Basic, Intermediate, Winter Camping
 - In the past, have offered all three courses lumped together at a discount.
 - Prefer to offer each course a la carte. More of a headache to manage the tracking of three courses over 5 years.
 - Package deal was a lower value for students because they were buying into something that wasn't the right fit.
 - Excited about S&T ratings. Looking forward to supporting implementation.
 - AIARE: Important, but recognize that it is expensive.
 - Question in Tacoma Branch about what is/will be offered and required for future years.
 - Plan to move Winter Camping to February and push Intermediate later to April/May, this should allow for better snow to practice ice axe skills. Challenge will be fitting in FTs.
 - Everett
 - Snowshoe is a sub-committee of Scrambling.
 - Just offer Basic. Don't have the volunteer resources to offer Intermediate. Struggled to get enough instructors to support a Basic group of 18 this year.
 - Plan to offer Winter Camping next year if there are the volunteers to support it. Jointly offered between Scramble and Snowshoe.
 - Many students are overflow from Seattle and Foothills.
 - NWAC Avalanche Awareness is a part of the lecture taught by Lyle Harvey, an Everett Mountaineers member and AIARE 1 instructor.

Staff Updates (12:00pm)

- [Becoming A Mountaineers Leader eLearning Course](#)
 - Great resource for new or currently leaders wanting an overview of admin responsibilities.
- Pathway to Leadership
 - Goal is to provide clear and transparent pathways for prospective leaders.
 - Nick will follow-up in coming months with more information.
- Leader Badges
 - If you have not yet done so, please send your list of intermediate/basic leaders to Nick Block for proper badge assignment.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Need to update prerequisite badges for leaders on the activity templates.
- [Leadership Development Fund](#)

- Available to all committees. Application and funding parameters available on the website.
- [Leadership Development Series](#)
 - Ongoing leadership development opportunities throughout the club. Click the above link for more information about upcoming seminars.

Afternoon Discussion Topics (12:30pm)

- Intermediate Trips: Intermediate trips currently listed as T3/T4, but students can only go on T3. Do we want to create a new template, or change language to say T4 leader permission only and students can go with leader permission? Or, create a new definition of an “advanced” type of snowshoe?
 - Beginner = S1-2/T1
 - Basic = S1-4/T2
 - Intermediate = S1-4/T3
 - Intermediate (Intermediate Graduates Only) = S1-4/T4
 - Consensus from all branches that there is no issue with adding an additional activity template template. Saves leaders some cross-check with leader permissions.
 - Some question about what to name this template. Intermediate Graduates? Intermediate T3 and Intermediate T4?
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Nick to work on a solution and loop back to summit group.
 - Foothills: Consider granting the student badge only after students have completed the FT, then they get the graduate badge when they finish remaining course requirements. This would prevent students from signing-up for experience trip before they have course FT experience.
 - Downside is that students may not be able to sign-up for experience trips (after FT) well in advance because they wouldn't have the badge requirements until after finishing FT and receiving badge.
 - Consider creating a skill badge for ice axe arrest to help identify students/participants who are appropriate for a certain trip. Better skill transparency.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Consider adding a Snow Travel Course. How does this fit in with the current Intermediate course? Could be cross-discipline to also support climbers and scramblers.
 - Steep Snow Travel Clinic - Current offered by Seattle Scrambling. Everett Scrambling also offers an Ice Axe Refresher.
 - Working Group: Russ, Travis, Hillary, Morgan
- Graduation Requirements: Discuss the disparities in graduation requirements for the Intermediate course.
 - Tacoma and Foothills require AIARE; Seattle does not.
 - Tacoma:
 - Lecture
 - 1 FT

- 2 Intermediate Experience Trips
 - 1 Stewardship
 - WFA/MOFA
 - Wilderness Navigation
 - AIARE 1 - But will drop that. Plan to include companion rescue as a part of the FT.
- Foothills:
 - Lecture
 - 1 FT
 - 2 Intermediate Experience Trips
 - 1 Stewardship
 - WFA/MOFA
 - Wilderness Navigation
 - AIARE 1
- Seattle:
 - Lecture
 - 2 FT
 - 1. Walking in balance, ice axe self belay.
 - 2. Ice axe arrest.
 - 3 Intermediate Experience Trips (One of which can be a Basic trip.)
 - 1 Stewardship
 - WFA/MOFA
 - Wilderness Navigation
 - Proposed to do AIARE Companion Rescue course , currently working into FTs outside of AIARE.
- The sticking point for all committees is AIARE. Recognize the importance, but the cost/time of the course makes it inaccessible.
- Seattle: Idea for avalanche gear checkouts to reduce cost to students.
- **UPDATE: What's going on with AIARE training within the club at large?**
 - Branches are working together on an org-wide solution to get Mountaineers volunteers certified as AIARE instructors.
 - Please talk with your respective Avalanche Safety/Education or Backcountry Skiing Committees for an update of what's happening at your branch. If you don't know who to talk with, please let us know and we're happy to point you in the right direction.
 - NWAC is developing a one-day course specifically for snowshoers. If this is something that feels valuable, talk with your Avalanche Chair to share that feedback!
- Routes/Places: Complete the S&T ratings for [Mountaineers Snowshoe Routes](#).
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Complete rating designations so that staff can update the route/place listings on the website.
 - Working Group: Pat, Travis, Brian Booth (nominated by Hillary), Russ, Gene
 - Supported by Nick to ensure conversation.

- Reach out to other Scramble leaders for input.
 - Can use the Salesforce database to show which leaders have led actively on which route.
 - Can also use the Canadian [avalanche terrain exposure scale \(ATES\)](#) as a guide for discussing T-ratings.
 - Consider adding CalTopo tracks as a resources to show different basic/intermediate routes.
 - [Winter Scramble Peaks List](#) - Possible reference from Everett to help finish ratings.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** May want to take some routes/places and split into to two to accommodate different S&T ratings for different “routes” at the same “place”. Ability to list multiple routes (with different difficulties) for a single place. Nick to look into options.
- Activity Standards
 - Equivalency Applicants: Many candidates are not adequately prepared.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Update the [Snowshoeing Equivalency Application](#), update the Equivalency section of both Course Badge pages, update the Equivalency section of the [Course Overviews](#) page.
 - **QUESTION:** Do we need to update the [Backcountry Snowshoe Skills Badge](#) to the Intermediate Snowshoeing Course Badge?
 - Should there be a cutoff time to apply for Equivalency? If the main way of granting Equivalency is through course instruction, we don’t have a way to intake late applications.
 - Consider setting-up the application to “deny” folks who aren’t meeting a base requirement. Don’t even send to committee if they aren’t meeting base requirement, such as having attended the NWAC Avalanche Awareness seminar.
 - Russ: Instead of “robot” denying an application, review and use as an opportunity to redirect unqualified candidates to courses or leadership pathways.
 - Can we make application more clear on simple topics like Avalanche Awareness? Consider using a Y/N checkbox instead of paragraph response.
 - Consider creating a template response to folks who are denied equivalency with other opportunities.
 - Include information about application window, what the process looks like, how long to expect the process to take.
 - Consider splitting the single application to two (Basic and Intermediate)?
 - Should we have Equivalency application for Intermediate? Or just Basic?
 - Working Group: Russ, Hillary, Morgan, Tacoma (Representative TBD)
- Leader Pathways

- Seattle's Process:
 - <https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/seattle-branch/committees/seattle-snowshoeing-committee/leadership-1>
- Foothills has created a more in-depth description of the above process in the course listing.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Should the Wilderness Navigation Course be a specific requirement? Consider updating the language in Activity Standards to "Wilderness Navigation or Equivalent".
- Discussion about how many trips are required for prospective leaders, desire to be consistent across branches.
- Field Trip Locations, Permitting
 - Review the [Facilitated Access Permitting](#) page for information about each of our land manager requirements.
- Donations to NWAC and other non-profits.
 - As a non-profit, The Mountaineers needs to be careful about how we donate funds to other non-profits. Best practice is to avoid donating funds from The Mountaineers as a centralized organization, or event from a branch/committee budget. This avoids any perception that The Mountaineers is "passing through" donations to another organization.
 - If committees or branches want to make a donation to NWAC, the best practice is to collect a suggested cash donation from seminar attendees and forward that directly to NWAC. If the NWAC instructor cannot accept cash, a representative of the committee should write a check for the total sum of the cash donations and note on the memo line that the donation was made on behalf of a specific branch of The Mountaineers.
- Difference between Winter Scramble and Intermediate Snowshoe.
 - What are the differences in requirements for Winter Scramble Leader and Intermediate Snowshoe Leader. Is the only difference footwear?
 - Seattle/Foothills Scramble: Ropes and anchors clinics. This isn't included as a Intermediate Snowshoe Leader requirement
 - Snowshoe doesn't explicitly teach crampon use.
 - Scrambling has a focus on summiting.
 - Intermediate Snowshoe can't go on Scramble, but Scramble grad can go on Intermediate Snowshoe.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Ongoing discussion to provide more clarity.
 - Possible discussion with Scrambling committee.
 - Can this be supported by a Winter Travel Course that works for both Scrambling and Intermediate Snowshoe?
 - Working Group: Tom, Travis, Hillary

Action Items & Next Steps (2:30pm)

- Review Action Items
- Upcoming Meetings

- **ACTION ITEM:** Consider scheduling a mid-year phone check-in.
 - Summer meeting to focus on routes/places updates.
 - Do we also need a meeting this fall to get updates in place before next season?
- April 25, 2020 in Seattle from 9am-2pm
 - Event Page:
<https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/seattle-program-center/events/2020-snowshoe-summit>

Adjourn (3pm)