



**Branch Leadership Committee**  
*Meeting Minutes for November 16, 2022*  
6:00pm to 7:30pm via Zoom

**Meeting Information**

Zoom Meeting [Link](#)

**Branch Leadership Members In Attendance**

- James H; Nick M (Eve); Brad P (FH); John M (KIT Incoming Chair); Scott Carlson (OLY); Craig Kartes (SEA); Brad Near (SEA); Gretchen Ta (Kitsap Past Chair); Melissa White (Kitsap Chair Elect); Cind H (GA).

**Mountaineers Staff in Attendance**

- Sara R; Becca P

**Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions--James
2. Review and approval of the meeting agenda for November 16, 2022
  - Motion to Approve: Cindy; Second: Nick. BLC Agenda for Nov. 16, 2022, Approved
3. Review and approval of the meeting [minutes](#) from September 21, 2022
  - Motion to Approve: Brad P; Second: Nick. Minutes from Sept. 21, 2022, Approved
4. Branch Reports—Mountaineer Branch Chairs
  - Open leadership positions
  - Review any newly elected positions (especially Chair Elects)
  - Relevant Updates
    - Brad P (FH): Brad just joined as Chair. Elizabeth is the new incoming Treasurer. Foothills annual celebration will be held on Dec. 16 and will be virtual. All committee chairs are filled. Leadership positions open are Chair-Elect and Branch Director (a candidate has been identified).
    - Gretchen Ta (Kitsap): The annual celebration went well and it was an in-person potluck. John M is the new Chair and Melissa is the Chair-elect. Kitsap Executive Committee is filled and includes a new Treasurer and Board Representative, Chair and Chair-elect. Only open position is for a Hiking/Backpacking Committee Chair. The former Chair has been in the position for over 10 years.
    - Nathan (Bellingham): Nathan is the newly elected Branch Chair. The Branch has new officers in the positions of Secretary, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair, and Board Representative. The



Branch celebration was held on Nov. 11. A new Scrambling course is being developed.

- Scott (Oly): Scott is now the Past Chair, Jeannette is Chair and Mandy is Chair-elect for the Branch. In addition, Olympia has a new Social Chair and Secretary. The first leadership meeting of the officers was held last week. The Branch banquet was held on Oct. 15 and was well attended with nearly 100 in attendance. The banquet also recognized course graduates for 2022. The Chair of the Leadership Committee recently resigned and the Branch is taking a fresh look at the Committee to determine its future in the Branch and next steps. One option is the Branch may utilize online program courses instead of courses through the Committee.
- Nick (Everett): Nick is now the official Branch Chair for the Everett Branch. In addition, the Branch has a new Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Chair. Currently the Branch is looking for a new Board of Director Representative. Currently the Branch is looking for the following Committee Chairs—First Aid, and Trail Maintenance. A new Climbing Committee Chair is in place. The Branch banquet was held on Nov. 5 with approximately 150 in attendance. Nick's main focus as Chair will be on rebuilding the Everett Branch community following the pandemic.
- Tess (Seattle): Committee social events for snowshoeing and backpacking are upcoming. The Navigation Committee will be holding navigation classes and activities in city parks. Ellie Gerben from the Avalanche Committee attended the Navigation Committee meeting to provide an overview of recent work and activities by the Avalanche Committee. The Branch recently formalized the Backcountry Ski Committee. Committees for Bikepack and Packrafting are coming together and they will focus on getting courses listed and underway in 2023.

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## 5. Committee & Organizational Reports

- Safety –Bill
  - Safety Updates & Lessons Learned
    - The Mountaineers attended a national safety and risk conference recently. Overall, the Mountaineers are doing really well in terms of safety and reporting compared to peer organizations. The Safety Committee is interested in participating in efforts to establish an industry standard for safety and reporting.
- Global Adventures—Cindy
  - There are two new Global Adventure leaders in the Foothills Branch. Upcoming trips include Slovenia in 2023, and the Everett Branch is developing a climbing trip to Mexico.
- Operations - Sara & Becca
  - DNR Permitting for 2023 trips



- Sara: As part of the annual land use license with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the Mountaineers need to submit planned trips and course uses for 2023 by the end of December 2022. Sara has made the request for planned trips and courses Committee Chairs. Sara is asking the Branch Chairs to also forward the request to their Committee Chairs.
  - Tess: Is there a committee in particular I need to reach out to?
    - Sara: I can do some followup. Will re-remind the Branch Chairs next week.
- “Exploring Nature” Activity Type Discussion and Potential Resolution
  - Sara: On the website we have activity types to help members sort and find trips. The website currently has the “Exploring Nature” activity tag. Unlike other activities, that activity does not have corresponding standards. Last year the Naturalist Council [Charter](#) defined their council charter and standards that were approved by the Branch Leadership Committee on May 18, 2022. The Naturalist standards correspond to the “Exploring Nature” activity tag and Naturalist activities were linked to this tab on the website. The “Exploring Nature” activity tag has caused frustration for the Hiking Council. Hiking has used the “Exploring Nature” activity tag to qualify some of their hiking trips. As a result, both Hiking and Naturalist activities are using the same activity type and has caused confusion. As we have been working on in the BLC, activity types need to follow approved standards and those standards define who can lead activities and the qualifications that are needed for leaders. Finally, changing activity types on the website is difficult.
    - Question to BLC: Should the “Exploring Nature” activity tag represent the Naturalist or Hiking activity? And, who can lead “Exploring Nature” activities? Naturalists or Hikers?
  - Becca: There is a precedent of activity types and activity leaders overlapping. For example, Scramble leaders have led conditioning hikes and the conditioning hikes are part of the Scramble Charter and Standards. The Naturalists believe that the “Exploring Nature” activity tag is technically more complex and Hikers don’t have the level of expertise to lead an Exploring Nature activity.
  - Tess: If you want to go on a trip with a qualified Naturalist you will pick the “Exploring Nature” activity tag. It would be useful to differentiate between tags and activities. Could the Mountaineers do messaging around what the “Exploring Nature” activity tag means?
  - Brad P: The “Exploring Nature” activity tag has been a loose category used by both Naturalists and Hikers. The tag is used by



both to provide members who want to have a certain outdoor experience. Is there a way to make both happy? Do we need an activity tag that signifies a Naturalist activity or a Hike only option? Do we risk losing members if we make a change? Or, can we in the long run create a category/tag that satisfies Naturalists and have a tag that has a “Hike-lite” experience that can be captured under the same tag?

- Melissa: Looks like we need a tagging system that gives an idea of the content? Can it be used as a tag or a label?
  - Sara: Can't do sub categories of activities.
  - Becca: It's being used as a tag by hikers so it shows up in the search. Does it create confusion?
  - Sara: Naturalists feel proud of their standards and their trip template. Want to retain their brand of this is what we do.
- Brad: I can appreciate why the Naturalists are frustrated as they followed the process to create their own standard. What will they lose if the “Exploring Nature” tag is gone? There should be a way to satisfy both parties.
- John: When you list a trip one of the tags is suitable for families. There are groups and committees that specialize in taking families and kids. There is little confusion about those types of trips.
- Tess: Is it a committee leader pride issue? Is there confusion among the members? Do they not know what they are getting into by signing up for the trip?
- Sara: Here is a possible solution for the BLC to consider:
  - When there is a new activity we add a new activity type tag to the website. We did not make an activity tag for Naturalists because there was the existing “Exploring Nature” activity tag. Urban Walk has an activity tag . BLC discussed whether Urban Walk should absorb the “Urban Adventures” activity tag and decided to keep the two separate. For the Naturalists we could do the same thing and Add a new “Naturalist” activity tag and leave exploring nature as somewhat undefined that other activities could use.
- Proposal: Propose a new activity type “Naturalist Activity” for the Naturalists and socialize that proposal within the Branches and the membership.
  - Motion to Approve: Brad; Second:Tess,. Motion Passed.
  - Sara and Becca will take the lead on communicating the proposal to the Branches and membership.



## 6. BLC Retreat

- Meeting summary and discussion about outcomes and issues from the retreat.
  - Nick: I really enjoyed the retreat. There was a good vibe and energy from holding the retreat in-person. The idea for the Mountaineers to have a focus on activities was provocative and led to a lot of good discussions.
  - Branch Charters
    - Becca: I worked with Kitsap for a first round review of their charter. The best approach is for the Branch and Mountaineers staff to work together to develop a charter. The template we have could be limiting and not capture everything that a Branch might want to include in their charter. Once the Kitap Charter is nearly final I will share it with the other Branches.
      - The timeline for Branch Charters is to have BLC review the Charters in January 2023 and the Mountaineers Board approve the Charters in March 2023.
    - The Branch Charters will support the Mountaineer bylaws that calls for the approval of Branch Charters and defines the authority of the branches.
    - Once a Branch has a draft charter they should submit the charter to BLC for review.
    - The goal is to have all charters to the Mountaineers Board for the March Board Meeting, but we can stagger charter submissions and approvals if needed.
    - Becca will change the permissions for the Kitsap Charter so the branches can use that charter as a template.

## 7. Activity Charter

- Climbing Council Charter & Workflow
  - 1st Reading & Discussion
  - Becca: The charter and workflow are derived from the climbing summit. The decision making workflow is designed to accommodate small Branches. Always an option for something to be tabled or moved to basecamp for support. Reason to stick with 3 representatives per Branch is to prevent a single voice from one Branch drive decisions and to ensure all perspectives are represented. For a Basecamp vote, one needs to vote for quorum, there has to be one vote from each Branch, and a simple majority of those who voted is needed to pass motions.
  - Motion to Approve the Climbing Council Charter & Workflow (First Reading): Motion to Approve: Tess; Second: Nick. Motion Passes.

## 9. Information Items

- Report out from Board Retreat–November 11-13, 2022

## 10. Adjourn

- Next meeting BLC Meeting: December 21, 2022



- Motion to Adjourn the November 16, 2022 BLC Meeting. Motion to Adjourn: Cindy; Second: Scott. Meeting adjourned.