



Branch Leadership Committee

Meeting Minutes for June 21, 2023

6:00pm to 7:30pm via Zoom

Meeting Information

Zoom Meeting [Link](#)

Branch Leadership Members

- James H,
- Nathan Andrus (BHAM),
- Nick M (EVE),
- Brad P (FH) (report submitted)
- John M (KIT),
- Mel (Kit)
- Janette Z (OLY),
- Curtis S (TAC),
- Craig K (SEA),
- Cindy H (GA),
- Bill A (Safety),
- Sara R,
- Becca P
- Brad Near
- Janette Zumbo (Oly)

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions--James
2. Review and approval of the meeting agenda for June 21, 2023
Motion: Nick/Nathan: Approved
3. Review and approval of the meeting [minutes](#) from May 12, 2023
Motion: Craig/Brad N: Approved
4. Branch Reports—Mountaineer Branch Chairs
 - Open leadership positions
 - Relevant Updates
 - FH: Elizabeth has resigned from the Treasurer position with Foothills.
 - TAC: Still wrapping up 2024 budget build and will provide an update to Becca. Still have put together a nominations team to try to fill open council positions. The branch has a new Sea Kayaking committee chair.
 - KIT: Not too much to update. Basic Climbing course is wrapping up and completion was delayed due to weather. Summer climbs are going and



are full. The Peninsula Park on Kitsap will begin to sunset its current camping areas starting Sept. 21. Since the Tacoma branch also uses Peninsula Park and should be contacted and asked to support keeping the facilities open. The Washington Trails Association was contacted about the situation as well. The Navigation committee leadership will change this year. Mel will take the role as the new Branch Chair, and may be looking for a Backpacking chair.

- EVE: Not too much to update. There was a good crevasse rescue/training field trip for Basic Climbing and students. Basic Climbing is wrapping up with potluck celebration and Intermediate Climbing is nearly halfway completed. Sport Climbing has started and Scrambling is wrapping up. The branch has a new board member and there was a well attended open house featuring Greg Romano. Currently looking to find a new Hiking/Backpacking chair and Nick is stepping down as the Climbing chair.
- BELL: Basic Climbing field trip is coming up this weekend and is the second to last course for the class. Branch potlucks have started with a good showing from members. The Climbing chair is planning to step down in October.
- OLY: Janette has asked for feedback from activity chairs to develop a process to better on-board incoming activity chairs. This included a survey of activity chairs that highlighted specific issues to support new activity chairs. Sixty students graduate from navigation and the program is looking for a new activity chair. The branch has a new social chair and there will be a branch picnic at the end of July. There will be an equity and inclusion presentation at the June branch meeting. Coursework for Basic Climbing has been completed, and the course is getting good support from last year's students to instruct classes. In addition, hiking and backpacking have both seen a significant increase in volunteers.
- SEA: Focus has been on submitting the budget. Both the Basic Climbing and Scrambling courses are now completed. The Conditioning Hike series is well underway and there is a lot of enthusiasm for the course. A candidate for the treasurer position has been identified but we are still looking for secretary and chair-elect. The Scrambling chair is in their third year and work will begin to start recruiting for a new chair for that position.
- Question: Do the branches have enough volunteers for courses?
 - SEA had trouble getting instructors for scrambling. There was less of a challenge getting volunteers for Compressed Scrambling and overall more engagement by volunteers. This could be a way to relook at determining the value proposition for volunteers and how to find and recruit more volunteers.
 - BHAM will be starting a climb leader monthly meet-up to help people move through the climb lead process with the goal of adding more instructors and leaders.



- Everett climbing has several field trips and struggles to get instructors. Intermediate students are expected to help with basic climbing. Currently, volunteering is based on an honor system but the branch will now be putting in place requirements for intermediate students to instruct and basic rock and snow.
- Seems like we are scraping by. We usually have a minimum number of volunteers for courses and can wrangle people into helping but there is no cushion. There could be an opportunity to re-engage members who are no longer active.
- Questions: Are metrics kept for those who graduated from basic or intermediate climbing to help instruct the following year? How can the branch find this information?
 - Depends on data input and how the courses change. It is possible to get the data and would take some time and team work to get that information. There is also the ability for automated push reports about graduates for the branches. Recommend sending a request to Sara.

5. Committee & Organizational Reports

- Safety: No Update
- Global Adventures—Cindy
 - Thanks to Brad Peacock, we now have a skilled Treasurer in Caroline Fox. Thank you Brad!
 - We also have another new volunteer who responded to our blog posting asking for volunteers, who will help with secretarial tasks.
 - Our FY24 budget has been submitted, with 15 Global Adventures planned for the year, and \$388K in anticipated gross revenues.
 - When in Norway prior to the beginning of her Lofoten Islands Backpacking Global Adventure, the leader Cheryl Talbert developed an acute problem with her vision and decided it wouldn't be prudent for her to lead the trip. She turned the leadership over to a very experienced activity leader who was a participant. (It's Cheryl's practice to always have a back-up leader identified on her trips.) The trip also has a professional guide and includes a very experienced participant who has Global Adventure leader training.
- Operations - Sara & Becca
 - (Sara & Becca, please add your agenda items)
 - Volunteer Appreciation: Staff has been thinking about the next volunteer appreciation event. Historically the event is a dinner in January at the Seattle program center. However, attendance has declined year over year especially after COVID. Mountaineers staff sent a survey to membership about event participation. One of the results is that members are not interested in traveling to events and would prefer attending events closer to their home.



Based on the feedback, staff is exploring partnering with branches to integrate award ceremonies into branch banquets. Sara will develop an email to send to branch chairs about the proposal.

- Mount Rainier Timed Entry: There was a recent blog about a proposal for a timed entry system for Mount Rainier National Park. The window to comment on the proposal is closing. The major concern with timed entry is for trips because there is no group entry. This would cause more coordination issues for large parties. Below are the links to the blog about timed entry as well as the comment location.
 - [Blog Post:](#)
 - [Blog Comment](#)
- Strategic Plan: A high priority for the plan is to address bottlenecks to access to space for courses and activities. Staff will send out a survey to branch leaders and committee chairs to determine the extent of the bottleneck to help determine where investments need to be made.

6. Activity Charters & Standards

- Snowshoe Council [Charter](#)
 - 2nd Reading & Discussion
 - Motion to approve: Nick; Second: Craig: Snowshoe Council Charter was approved.
- Branch Leadership Committee Charter
 - Update and Next Steps (estimated 1st reading in August)
- Updated Activity Council & Standards [Spreadsheet](#)
 - Continued great progress for 2023!

7. Information & Discussion Items

- Branch Leadership Committee Proposed Retreat
 - Identify key issues to address, format and potential dates.
 - Discussion on how to grow volunteerism.
 - Activity centric vs branch centric. Check in on that issue again.
 - Could be linkages between the two.
 - Most people gravitate to social engagement with activities. Even at big events people congregate for activities.
 - Three potential retreat topics:
 - What can the board and staff do for the branches?
 - Volunteerism leads to recruitment
 - Iterating faster. Make things less bureaucratic or more accessible.
 - What do we need—data/information—for a good discussion?



- Determine what data that might be available to determine how many graduates from each branch and program end up volunteering.
- Examine leader/volunteer descriptions or information about volunteerism and what is needed from volunteers. Understand what is the feeder process from student to leader. How do we certify leaders? What is the process? Do we have different standards among branches?
- Set up a basecamp message board to brainstorm on this.
 - Develop a hypothesis for what we are trying to understand. What are the parameters we are trying to get at? Staff can help with data and information.
 - Is there an opportunity to market volunteer opportunities? If so, where would that budget come from (branch, committee, HQ, etc)? Are there opportunities to partner with the private/non-profit sectors to strengthen volunteer leadership opportunities? For example, Craigslist, REI, Vertical World and Edge Works, Washington Trails Association, Turns All Year, AIARE, NWAC, etc.
 - Link to volunteer [roles](#).

9. Adjourn

- Next meeting BLC Meeting: August 16, 2023