

OLYMPIA HIKING & BACKPACKING COMMITTEE CHARTER

1. HIKING & BACKPACKING COMMITTEE NAME AND DEFINITIONS

The name shall be the Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee. It is sometimes referred to herein as “the Hiking & Backpacking Committee” or “the Committee”.

1.1. Committee Members

The term “Committee Members” includes all persons holding the offices described in article 5 of this Charter, “Governance”, all members of any sub-committees created under this Charter, and all At-Large Members appointed to the Committee pursuant to this Charter.

1.2. Hiking & Backpacking Members

The term “Hiking & Backpacking Members” includes all persons on the Hiking & Backpacking Committee’s roster of trip leaders, instructors, and other volunteers, not including Committee Members who are hiking & backpacking leaders, instructors or other volunteers, and who are also listed on the roster.

2. AUTHORITY

This Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee Charter is adopted by authority of the Olympia Branch Council Charter.

3. PURPOSES AND MISSION

The mission of the Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee is to promote safe and enjoyable hiking & backpacking, which is sustainable and ecologically responsible, and is consistent with The Mountaineers’ mission statement and core values. On behalf of the Olympia Branch of The Mountaineers, the Committee offers courses in hiking, backpacking, oversees the branch’s Hiking & Backpacking program, and recruits, develops and supports volunteer hiking & backpacking leaders, instructors and other volunteers.

Hiking & Backpacking Committee Responsibilities

- Work to achieve the mission and goals of the Olympia Branch and The Mountaineers organization.
- Develop a diverse, open and inclusive population of members, students, instructors and leaders.
- Supporting hiking & backpacking courses, clinics, seminars and events.
- Establish leader and instructor qualifications and maintain a current hiking & backpacking leader and instructor list.
- Ensure hiking & backpacking trips are led according to Mountaineers Club-wide Hiking & Backpacking Standards, including regular review of feedback.
- Coordinate with the club-wide Safety Committee investigating hiking & backpacking accidents and incidents originating from trips sponsored by the Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee and make recommendations or adjustments as appropriate.
- Administer Hiking & Backpacking awards and leader incentives.
- Periodically review Olympia Hiking & Backpacking committee controlling documents.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee's Roster of trip leaders, instructors, and other volunteers is open to all current Mountaineers members in good standing, regardless of branch affiliation. Current Hiking & Backpacking leader status is desirable but not required. Hiking & Backpacking roster members are expected to contribute to the purposes and mission of the Hiking & Backpacking Committee by leading trips as primary, co-, assistant, mentoring or mentored leaders, instructing in hiking & backpacking courses, seminars, clinics and other events, and otherwise volunteering.

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5. GOVERNANCE

The Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee may be composed of the officers described in this Article 5. The Hiking & Backpacking Committee is led by group governance. Collectively, the group is responsible for convening regular meetings, addressing issues brought by course chairs, and ensuring that clubwide updates are brought to all members. An annual meeting, for the purposes of communicating Club updates, will be facilitated in February and will be led by the Hiking and Backpacking chairs. The Committee shall be responsible for the governance of the Hiking & Backpacking Committee, communicating clubwide policies to members, and approving new hike and backpack leaders.

5.1. Committee Officers

The Hiking & Backpacking Committee shall consist of the following members:

- Hiking co-chair
- Backpacking co-chair

5.1.1. Appointment and Changes in Officers and Sub-committees

Those interested in committee leadership, specifically the co-chair positions, can express interest to the current co-chairs via an application. The co-chairs will discuss the applicants and make a mentorship plan. If needed, the co-chairs will ask for references.

5.2. Term Conditions and Stipulations

Each co-chair shall serve for a period of two (2) years, with terms ending on September 30th of the even year. In the event that a replacement cannot be found for the Hiking and Backpacking Chairs, the Committee may extend the incumbent's term for up to two (2) additional years. If extraordinary circumstances lead to the inability of a co-chair to complete their term, or if the incumbent does not agree to an extension, then the Committee may appoint any qualified individual until a replacement can be found.

5.3. Chairpersons' Duties

Each Chairperson shall serve as the liaison to counterparts in other Branches, and attend meetings pertinent to the position, as well as executing any additional tasks. Additionally, each Chairperson in the Committee shall perform the duties as assigned.

5.3.1. Hiking Chairperson

The Chairperson shall:

- Preside over all Hiking & Backpacking Committee regular and special meetings.
- Be the spokesperson for the Committee.
- Oversee the Hiking operations, activities, programs, and budget of the Committee.
- Acting in place of the Backpacking Chairperson in their absence.
- Assist the Backpacking Chairperson with duties of the office.
- Review new hike leader applications

5.3.2. Backpacking Chairperson

The Backpacking Chairperson shall:

- Act in place of the Hiking Chairperson in their absence.
- Assist the Hiking Chairperson with duties of the office.
- Be a spokesperson for the Committee.
- Review new backpack leader applications
- Oversee the Backpacking operations, activities, programs, and budget of the Committee.

5.4. Hiking & Backpacking Members

The term Hiking & Backpacking Members includes all persons (other than Hiking & Backpacking Committee Members) on the Hiking & Backpacking Committee's roster of trip leaders, course instructors, and other volunteers. Hiking & Backpacking Members shall be eligible for appointment to any appointed position or committee.

6. BUDGET SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

The Hiking and Backpacking Chairpersons shall have the authority to commit/disburse budgeted funds. Once the budget limit has been reached then any and all additional requests must be brought before the Branch Treasurer. All disbursements must be submitted for approval by the Branch Treasurer or Branch Chair.

7. MEETINGS

The Hiking and Backpacking Committee may convene annual or more frequent meetings called Hiking and Backpacking Leader Meeting. This meeting is typically held in February, after the annual Hiking and Backpacking Summits convened by the Program Center. Additional Committee meetings may be held at the discretion of the Hiking and Backpacking Committee.

8. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

A Hiking & Backpacking Member may be removed from the Hiking & Backpacking roster in accordance with the policies and procedures then in place for the removal of volunteers by The Mountaineers and/or the Olympia Branch Council.

9. AMENDING THE HIKING & BACKPACKING COMMITTEE CHARTER

Amendments to this Hiking & Backpacking Charter may be proposed by petition by any Committee Member or Hiking & Backpacking Member. The co-chairs must come to a group consensus to approve amendments.

Draft prepared by Mike McIntosh, 12/30/24

Revised draft prepared by Anna Batie Kuka, Donna Kreuger, and Monty Pratt, 1/14/25

Amendment History:

The Hiking & Backpacking Charter was first approved by verbal vote of the Committee on 4/15/25

The Hiking & Backpacking Charter was first approved following review and consent of the Olympia Branch Council Chair on 11/12/2025.

The Hiking & Backpacking Charter was approved for the second time following review and consent of the Olympia Branch Council Chair on 12/10/2025.