



Welcome to Leader Lines

Well here we go! It's 2016 and it's time to get ready for our heaviest course season yet. In this edition of LeaderLines, a monthly eNewsletter written especially for Mountaineers volunteer leaders, I've got a HUGE - MISSION-EXPANDING - announcement with respect to our youth policies. Read a reaffirmation of our collective values, and reflect on how our work fits into some larger trends with respect to national policy and practices. I start out the "quick hits" section with great blog written by one of our super volunteers and a LOT of smaller bits of information that should fascinate a variety of different people.

As always, I welcome your suggestions for future story ideas and thank you for all the ways you support our mission.

--Chris Williams,
Leadership Development Manager

It's Easier to Involve Youth Now - Board Policy Changes

At the Board meeting on January 21, **significant revisions were made to the policies** that govern how Leaders incorporate youth into their activities and programs safely. Big changes include allowing youth under 14 to participate in trips as long as an adult - that is NOT the Leader - is present and responsible for supervising them, and youth participating in an activity for adults now only need ONE Qualified Youth Leader to be present (not all the adults).



[Learn more about how](#) to easily and safely incorporate youth into your programming! We're excited to make it easier for parents and youth to participate in what we have to offer, thus expanding our reach to a greater audience!



Holding Ourselves Accountable to High Standards

As a large organization with MANY programs and volunteers, you may naturally think of yourself as a "[kayaker/hiker/climber/insert your favorite activity here]" rather than a "Mountaineer." But **we are bigger than the sum of our parts**, and you serve as an influential ambassador to the greater outdoor community when you represent The Mountaineers. Therefore, **we collectively have to identify and address mistakes and errors to hold each other accountable.**

Do you know how to access the [Safety Committee and its work](#)? Do you know the difference between addressing [problem behavior](#) vs. [harassment](#)? Are you looking for [more training](#) to ensure success on your trips?

We have systems to maintain high standards, but know sometimes mistreatment and misunderstandings take place. Let's strive to keep this to a minimum at The Mountaineers. You can help by [taking a minute to briefly explain](#) an unpleasant outdoor experience or a time you were treated unfairly, and share how you dealt with it, what you learned, and recommendations you have to minimize future bad behavior.

I've found that our members generally value hearing each other's experiences and this may be an insightful exercise for everyone. **Share your stories for the betterment of all** (note: this is strictly anonymous; any references to specific individuals will be omitted from shared results).

The Bigger Picture for Our Collective Passions

The Mountaineers membership [accomplished a lot last year](#) because of your leadership. Where does that fit into the larger outdoor community and the world in general? **Consider some of the following trends and policies from 2015** and how they intersect with the reasons you love the outdoors

([summarized by Richard Louv on his blog](#)):



Help protect the outdoor experience

- [Revisions](#) to the federal No Child Left Behind act included provisions to support environmental literacy and conservation education as part of how we define a well-rounded education.
- [Using nature for therapy](#) and harm-prevention gained ground as a recognized and accepted healthcare practice.
- Concepts of [biophilic design](#), the incorporation of nature into places we live and work, became increasingly recognized by builders and architects.

[...and much, much, more.](#) There is, literally, evidence all around that our "work" as Mountaineers is touching an increasingly important set of issues for all walks of life. **Be proud of what you do. Know that it brings significant value to our members.** Keep learning how you can spread the happiness you find in the outdoors to those around you.

Member Satisfaction Survey

Every two years we survey ALL of our members to learn how we can better understand our community. Your answers help us improve our programs, and will be used to help shape our next strategic plan.

As a volunteer leader, we know we've asked you to fill out a lot of surveys lately, but **your voice is especially critical in this survey** as we do it so infrequently. You should have received an email from us asking you to participate, but in case you didn't, please take 10 minutes to [tell us what you think](#). Thanks!



Quick Hits

- **Altimeters: Friend or Foe?** Board Treasurer Steve McClure put six apps and three wrist altimeters to the test and observed some interesting results in a [fantastic article](#) he wrote.
- **Enhanced Committee Document Sharing:** You can now share, and access, documents from any committee that is "shared with committees" if you are an "admin" or "leader" on a committee roster. In addition, there are...
- **...many new website features:** Seminars and clinics now show up under the "Learn" and the "Explore" tabs, we've added enhanced filtering of - faster - site-wide searches, you can toggle "on" or "off" whether you see certain trips or courses in your profile pages to help find what you're looking for faster, youth program enhancements, and [more!](#)
- **Did you know leaders can control course refund amounts after registration closes?** Now that it's course season, Member Services is getting lots of leader questions

about our cancellation policies. Be sure to familiarize yourself with [our cancellation and refund policy](#) today!

- **Hiker or Backpacker?** We had a great summit of available committee leaders in these activities on January 10. They made draft revisions to the hike and backpack minimum standards, which will now go through a review process in each committee across the branches. Contact your committee leader for more information before any final submission is proposed to the [Managing Committee](#).
- **Interested in acting?** [Tryouts](#) for The Mountaineers Players outdoor summer plays at our property on the Kitsap Peninsula are scheduled for late February and early March.
- **New Mountaineer Magazine Schedule:** In case you didn't hear, The *Mountaineer* Magazine is now a [quarterly publication](#). 68% of survey respondents supported the change and most people are now accessing our courses and trips via the website.
- **Expedition Behavior:** NOLS has [9 tips for using good expedition behavior](#) to create a happy workplace. Check them out.
- **Money in your pocket?:** According to the State Office of Financial Management, the median household income in Washington is about \$58,000/year, meaning more than half of Washington state citizens are eligible for [free tax preparation assistance](#) from United Way partners.
- **Committee Social Media Pages:** Does your committee's web page let new members know whether you have an external communication tool (such as Facebook)? Make that available on your committee page at Mountaineers.org so people feel welcomed to join!
- **Stay safe out there:** ["It's better to wimp out than to limp out!"](#)

Thanks for everything you do. Already this year, we have assigned leader badges to 51 different people (just this month)!