



### Welcome to Leader Lines

In this edition of LeaderLines, a monthly eNewsletter written especially for Mountaineers volunteer leaders, we've got a ton of suggestions for working together more effectively and involving more people in our programs (volunteers and those with disabilities). As always, there's a ton of information here, all of which applies to someone and for which we expect no one to be interested in all of it. Take a look and see what applies to your unique role in The Mountaineers - or your life in general.

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*

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### Progressive Stack: How to ensure all voices are considered

Two staff members and two Tacoma Mountaineers recently attended a regional summit of outdoor environmental educators that focused on improving Equity in Environmental and Sustainability in Education. One concept that jumped out at people was how to bring equity to a conversation.

Education Director Becca Polglase writes, "middle-aged adults are conditioned to make themselves heard - especially men, and especially white people. Women and people of color have been told for centuries that they have no voice - speaking out of turn risks punishment or death. People who identify as LGBTQ risk marginalization or death for speaking honestly."

A concept called "progressive stack" can dramatically reduce the ways this negative conditioning can manifest itself. "The idea is to very intentionally give a voice to those who traditionally have not had one and for those who speak freely and often to stop and let others speak first." In your next meeting or trip, allow space and encourage others to allow space. If participants haven't said much, invite them to share. That's it. Space and invitations. [Read the rest of Becca's eloquent article here.](#)





## Connecting You With Volunteers

It's been years in the making and we're excited that **Leaders and committee "admins" can now search for members with specific skills and interests to recruit volunteers!** You can now search the "[Volunteer Profile](#)" to find volunteers (and you can still use me for recruiting large numbers of people for a project).

The best volunteer situation is one when a person *wants* to do something an organization *needs*. For this reason, we designed the volunteer profiles to

ask members to tell us their interests in addition to their skills. This way, you can look for people interested in becoming activity leaders or branch administrators, and also search for members who already possess a specific (like AMGA) certification. There's a long list of skills and interests specifically relevant to 90% of all Mountaineer programs to help in your recruiting.

The search function works just like our course or activity searches. Check the box for what you're looking for and select a branch you want. Right now you can't download a list of all the results, but if this is important to you [PLEASE TAKE THIS SURVEY](#) (no, seriously, take [the survey](#). It's going to help us clarify many of the suggestions we've received in the feedback system). This connects you directly with people who might love what your program does - but simply don't know about it.

**Encourage everyone to update their [volunteer profile](#) regularly and good luck recruiting!**

## Disabilities and The Outdoors

A few times a year, the question comes up whether Mountaineers programs need to comply with requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act or the Washington state Law Against Discrimination. The answer is not a simple "yes" or "no".

In general, the laws protecting the rights of those with "disabilities" require places of "public accommodation" to make "reasonable accommodations" for people who otherwise cannot access them. Now, here comes the lawyer-speak, brace yourself:



1. The law defines a "disability" far more broadly than most people understand. Be careful not to describe someone's limitation as something that isn't a "disability." The odds are, you are wrong.
2. Under these laws, places of "public accommodation" are *not* the trails or waters we access. However our program centers and classrooms (most likely) *are*. Therefore, the law (most likely)

does not obligate our Leaders to take someone out who can't access the wilderness safely on their own, but we suspect that we *are* obligated to accommodate people with disabilities when we teach courses, hold events, or offer seminars to the public (there may be caveats, which we aren't waiving, but we have to prepare for foreseeable possibilities under these laws).

3. What constitutes a "reasonable accommodation" is a highly fact-specific inquiry. Therefore, statements such as "you don't have to allow anything except a certified seeing eye-dog" is not true. Under state laws ([including in Washington](#)), there are legally-recognized [seeing-eye horses](#), [seizure snakes](#), and [emotional support animals](#). *How* to accommodate someone can cause conflicts too. In a past life, I observed a federal agency tell a municipal entity that it simply had to "figure out" how to accommodate one person with an extreme allergy to pet dander and another disabled person who needed their pet to access the same facility. Neither person could be in the same room together, but the entity was threatened with a finding of discrimination if it told either one they had to leave. Bottom line: it's complicated. Call us. I'm available to answer specific questions.

This is all an extremely high-level and shallow overview of a very complicated area of law. **Regardless of whether we could argue our way out of any legal obligations, it is our *mission* to help as many people access and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest.** Although we are not equipped to serve all people with all disabilities, *we value everyone's interest in our programs and want to accept them whenever we safely can.* [Please contact me](#) if you are ever faced with **questions** about how to handle a situation involving disabilities. I am happy to give, or get you, the guidance that will best serve the unique situation you are facing.

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### You Are Going To Love This: Support for Posting Courses

Who loves posting courses on [Mountaineers.org](#)?

Anyone? Bueller. Bueller. [Ferris...](#)

Alright, we get it. No one likes it. It's one of the more complex things to do on Mountaineers.org despite the ridiculous amount of brainpower we've put on the problem (no laughing, we *will* come make you answer calls in Member Services if you laughed). So we've created a magic button for people who just don't have the time to post a course. It will direct you to a form that will help staff and volunteers in Member Services **post it for you.**



[Check out the magic button](#)

HOWEVER - we do not have the staffing to do this for everyone. This remains a volunteer-led

organization and there are far too many courses for the current level of staffing to provide this service for everyone. That's why we are also recruiting for volunteers who are willing to process these requests. If you have the time and interest in supporting your fellow volunteers, **we can build the capacity to post courses for others**. We've described the roles and responsibilities of that volunteer position [here, please consider applying](#).

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## Quick Hits

- **Lots of website enhancements:** Improvements to auto-renewals and record-keeping, easier-to-access badge expiration dates, skill badges from trips and seminars, more info about participant performance on a trip, changes to incident reporting, etc. [Read all about Mountaineers.org 2.5.1 here](#).
- **NEW Hiking & Backpacking Minimum Standards:** After an extensive and effective set of cross-branch summits, the Managing Committee (soon to be known as the Branch Leadership Committee) approved a new set of minimum standards. You'll find clarifications to expectations for leaders as well as recognition of skills. [Make sure you know what's in them now!](#)
- **Seattle Program Center Reservations "deadline:"** Because we earn revenue from non-Mountaineer rentals, we've tried to make sure they don't interfere with Mountaineer programs. Before we open those up, remember that Andriana has let committees know that she will start going through internal conflicts and requests on **April 1**, then open the building for external rentals. [Get your requests posted now](#).
- **Baker Lodge Snowshoe Photography Weekend:** [We have a few spots left on this really well-designed photography trip up to Baker Lodge this coming weekend](#). Creatively designed trips like this are great for our new members to learn more about everything The Mountaineers can offer.
- **Cultural Standards Reminder:** Recently, a prominent article featured some [atrocious behaviors in the National Parks and Forest Service](#). Never underestimate how entrenched some attitudes can be and speak up if you ever see anything remotely similar. Hostile or discriminatory behavior of any sort has no place in The Mountaineers, and it will take all of our efforts to maintain across-the-board standards.
- **Jetboil Recall:** Voluntary recall after reports from a "[very limited number of users experiencing leaking gas \(and subsequent ignition of the gas leak\)](#)." Check your gear (nothing impresses me more than these [pocket stoves](#) anyway).
- **Citizen Science:** Last year Conservation Director Katherine Hollis and I posted an opportunity for our membership to contribute to a citizen science study on snow pack. We got a brief mention in the study because some of you contributed. ["We are grateful to the many organizations and individuals that supported this effort each year, especially...the Mountaineers..."](#) Good work!
- **Five Signs of Bad Leadership:** [A short article from the business community](#) serves as a *good reminder* about *bad habits* to avoid when you are in a position of leadership.
- **Seriously:** [Take this survey to help us clarify some of the suggestions in the feedback system](#).

## **Stay Safe Out There!**

**What Activity is Leading the mileage tally so far this year?** Day hiking (6298), Snowshoeing (4164), Scrambling (3994), and Skiing/Snowboarding (3219)

**Elevation?** Scrambling (1.58 million feet), Day hiking (1.43 million), Snowshoeing (.8 million), Skiing/Snowboarding (.69 million)

**Number of Leader Badges Issued in 2016:** 76