

Mount Hood Chapter, PCTA Caretaker Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2019, 6:45 pm

Location: Clackamas REI

Attended: Bob Arkes, Jane Arkes, Robert Caldwell, Thomas Calvery, Jennifer Calvery, Bill Canavan, Roberta Cobb, Dan Dahlke, Ron Goodwin, Terry Hill, Peter Hoffman, Leif Hovin, Frank Jahn, Chris Keil, Diane Kelso, Kim Kovacs, Tim Lagasse, Susan McDonnell, Steve Queen, David Roe, Rick Schmidt, Tamara Sheets, Brooke Stevinson, Susan Tracy, Tammy Turner, Ruth Weston, Dana Hendricks

Notes: Kim Kovacs

Welcome

- **Absent:** Hilary Renshaw, Becky Wolf.

Round the Room

- Steve: Last year the annual meeting was at the Estacada Library, and it had a fixed agenda. This year we'll spend less time on Round the Room (passing is fine) and Reports. After those, we will look back on 2019 and forward to 2020 and let the conversations go where the conversations go.
- Hilary Renshaw (via email): I'll miss this meeting because of a work commitment, but just want to make sure you know I'm still intending to have a role as a crew leader! Now that I've stepped down as caretaker I'm interested in assisting in scouting vacant sections; I'm also thinking of taking on the role of coordinating NSM partner crews for next year since those fell off this year. I'll need to chat with our new outreach folks to see what the current status is on those.
- Becky Wolf (via email): My kidney failure has decided to come back and I am on dialysis again. I have a session on Wed. Hoping it is only temporary again. Am sorry not to be able to join in on our accomplishments for 2019 and our way forward into 2020. I will look forward to the minutes and an update. Please tell everyone Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
- Leif Hovin: There's a full moon out – the Beaver Moon
- Tami Sheets: It's been a crazy year, and she's glad to be here.
- Jennifer Calvery: She's had agreed to be the chapter's outreach and events coordinator. (All: YAY!)
- Thomas Calvery: Nothing to report.
- Frank Jahn: He's back from Denali and eager to get back on crews. He reports that there are a number of trees down on the Timberline Trail, on the PCT – at least six.
- Rick Schmidt: Nothing to report.
- Bill Canavan: Preparing to do the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) next year.
- Susan Tracy: Went out and worked on Bill's section.
- Tammy Turner: Happy to have a replacement lined up and hoping to go to Hawaii on vacation over the upcoming holidays.
- Jane Arkes: Nothing to report.
- Bob Arkes: Nothing to report.
- Ruth Weston: Nothing to report.
- Ron Goodwin: He went to Devil's Rest over Halloween and took the annual pumpkin. He also re-signed the trails (e.g., Foxglove). He saw 11 trees down, snapped off eight to ten feet from the ground. There's a new temporary ranger at Multnomah Falls – Zev, a former fire-fighter who's stationed out at Estacada. He's eager to get into the area to cut out those trees, but Ron told him he should talk to Nathaniel first. Traffic seems to be a problem at Multnomah Falls, particularly now that the salmon are spawning (11 in one spot below the bridge). Lots of people stopping by to look; Ron's also sending them up to Vista House to enjoy the wind.
- Dan Dahlke: Nothing to report.
- Chris Keil: Hiked Forest Park, no trees down. He usually volunteers for leaf raking. Tami mentioned that she's a crew leader out there and is out there every weekend with her dog, and invited Chris to join her.
- Terry Hill: All the tool inventories are done. They spent five workdays on tools and they're looking really good.
- Peter Hoffman: He and Diane hiked the Paradise Park trail from the Kiwanis Camp up to the PCT. There were just 5 or 6 logs on the trail near the top. Chris said that was very light and he'd have expected more. Peter reported that there were recent cuts that were nicely done – maybe by the Forest Service in September? Peter also said there was a fair amount of tread work and drainage work that needed to be done on the trail.

- Diane Kelso: Nothing to report
- Roberta Cobb: Scouted all of her area including the Herman Bridge Trail. She has a rock wall building party coming up; it's already filled up and she's ready to go. She was also out with Susan McDonnell at Eagle Creek.
- Tim Lagasse: Nothing to report on his section. He did talk about the equestrian trails at McIver, which are graveled and kept open for horses during the winter. The North Valley OET (Oregon Equestrian Trails group) got a club car and attached two leaf blowers to it to get the maple leaves off the trail. The McIver gravel bill has gone way down since they started doing that.
- Brooke Stevenson: Nothing to report.
- David Roe: Nothing to report.
- Dana Hendricks: She's almost completely back to normal and doing fine. She's back to work full time. As long as she manages her neck for the rest of her life she shouldn't have a relapse.
- Susan McDonnell: Dana and I walked 14 miles along Eagle Creek. On 10/15, she finished up cleaning up the very brushy creek area at Three Creeks Crossing. What used to feel like a stream channel is now a nice open trail. Did a hike from the top to the bottom to pick up remaining tools and take them back to Portland. Did scouting while there, did radio checks all the way down the trail. The Indian repeater does pretty well; the Defiance repeater not so well. She also went up to the Muddy Fork with Pace on 11/4. Dana mentioned Susan takes excellent notes. Steve also commented about how well her reports are done as well, particularly her near misses. Very well done, very professional, very impressive. Steve might send out an email with the near misses for others to review.
- Robert Caldwell: Had two crews out, one the middle of last month, one last week. They went up on Upper Muddy Fork and Top Spur and did some brushing. Susan McDonnell was on one, Sue Melone on the other. He got to use his new pole saw and found it really made a difference. He was happy to be able to get all those limbs he's been looking at.

Reports

Columbia Cascades Regional Rep (Dana)

- There's a Mt. Hood National Forest meeting on 11/22 in the morning, in Estacada, which she invited Caretakers to attend. Susan Tracy said she'd like to go, but doesn't drive. Dana will try to work something out.
- The comment period for the fee structure for Central Cascades Permit ends 11/25. The cost isn't too bad for day hikes - \$4 per person. The fee for overnight is \$5 per person, per night, which can really add up for backpackers. The PCTA is going to recommend placing a cap on the fees to make it comparable to other places in the nation. Leif asked what other backpack places have a similar fee structure. Dana said the Enchantments have a \$5 per person, per night fee, but it's a much smaller area. Along the PCT, the only other place that's as long is the John Muir Trail overlap - \$5 for the whole trail plus \$6 reservation fee. The only other place is the Grand Canyon, which has no cap on fees. They also want to find a way to reward volunteers that work in that wilderness. They will waive fees for trail crews.
- The Oregon Mountain Bike Coalition is one of several groups pushing for a Mount Hood National Recreation Area. They're trying to get Congress to designate land outside the Wilderness area. Seems to be a way to get more resources for recreation and put less pressure on logging to meet their resource needs. She'll be looking into it more. Frank Jahn suggested looking at the Sawtooth Wilderness as an example. They've got an interactive Google Map that they've started where they ask group to drop pins on areas we find valuable. Dana asked if anyone would be interested in helping her with it, and Tami Sheets said she would be. She knows Gabe Tiller well - she hired him. He's also the founder of the Oregon Timber Trail as well as a founding member of the bike group. Dana thinks he's very much willing to be a partner/ally on this. Tami said she has a lot of faith in his integrity and would like to help. Leif would also like to help.

North Cascades Regional Rep (Michael)

- No report.

Chair (Leif)

- First aid training will occur at Wind River this Sunday, 11/17, beginning at 8:00 AM. They have 16 or 17 signed up. It will be important for people to complete the online training ahead of time. Frank warned that the online training takes at least two hours, and you can't fast-forward through it. Leif was wondering about getting a key to the

facility, and Dana said they'll be installing a lockbox. She mentioned Carol Lloyd was the caretaker there but has retired; no one else wanted to take over the "mom" responsibilities – which is why the key is now at Trout Lake.

- The tools look great. Bob and Jane Arkes have a chainsaw, and Leif will pick that up from them sometime soon. He also needs to pick up the tabling stuff from Michelle (after 11/23; she's in Hawaii). We received a folding cart, courtesy of Sacramento.

Volunteer Coordinator (Rosemary)

- No report.

Trail Skills College (Tammy)

- They're going to have a meeting in the 12th to start planning.
- This is her last year as chair; they're looking for a new chair for 2021.

Budget (Little Brown)

- Sacramento got far behind because they lost people. The September report showed we had just \$169 left, which was at odds with what Bill thought we should have. It turns out those doing the accounting deducted donations (as they're supposed to do) but didn't add that figure back in. It's fixed now, and we're at \$1226. We have to spend that by the end of the calendar year. He's thinking about buying kitchen equipment, although he's also asked Sacramento to give them money for kitchen equipment. If you're going to make a purchase, check with Bill first.

Crew Leader Development (Pace and Little Brown)

Stats (Pace)

- The end of year stats show us ahead of 2017.

Mount Hood Chapter Stats - Oct 2019									
	CY	CY	CY	YTD	YTD	YTD	Final		
	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	FY	FY	FY
	2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017
Total Volunteer Hours	875	1,134	993	16,831	25,170	16,368	18,948	26,882	17,069
Specialized hours	113	161	124	3,250	4,906	2,369	3,442	5,062	2,477
Number of Trail Crews	7	9	10	104	159	98	118	165	94
Miles Logged out			3	244	186	162	244	184	166
Logs cleared, crosscut				275			275		
Logs cleared, chainsaw				403			403		
Miles Maintained	3	10	17	67	114	91	80	113	86
Feet of Rehab/Recon	2,810	2,223	1,033	25,550	62,597	15,313	33,313	63,333	17,375
Volunteer hours by Category									
Trail Maint - crews & scouting	598	740	515	10,312	15,733	9,245	11,564	16,057	9,374
Trail Maint - support	248	340	331	2,501	3,646	3,248	3,260	4,290	3,480
Trail Skills Training	9		147	3,577	5,262	3,529	3,585	6,024	3,828
Outreach Events	20	54		441	530	347	540	512	388
	875	1,134	993	16,831	25,170	16,368	18,948	26,882	17,069

Discussion

- 2019 Review
 - Tami mentioned that she couldn't have continued being a caretaker if it hadn't been for support from Jon Arp on the tool team and Bill Canavan. She counts on the group to be her social outlet. Last year it was David Roe; this year it was Jon and Bill.
 - Terry suggested that Steve send an email to Jon to let him know how appreciated he is. Steve and Leif were receptive and appreciated his contributions. Tami reiterated how supportive he's been.
 - Steve asked Susan Tracy how her first year was. She felt it was a great year and she was really productive. Suggests a revised caretaker process. It should be easier, and people should know what to expect, kinda like what we do for our crew leaders, like these are your milestones or gates. She thinks she went out on at least a dozen projects. Kayla – also a new caretaker – is probably wrestling with the same issues. She mentioned confusion about scouting, which was made more challenging by the burn area, which has different rules.
 - Bill Canavan mentioned that we got commended because of our paperwork on an after-action report. The paperwork does matter.
 - Chris Keil felt that even with all the things he's had going on that he got a surprising number of hours in this year. Over the past few years, though, he hasn't made time to get on others' crews very often, and he'd like to do better about that next year. It's how we get to know new people and recruit others, and feels it's an obligation all caretakers have. He thinks it's too easy for caretakers to turn to the people we know, rather than recruit others, particularly for harder trails. He feels there's a real disconnect that we have more vacant sections and fewer leaders when the volunteer numbers are up – like maybe we could go about it a different way. Going out with new volunteers is also the way to see who's really interested in becoming a crew leader.
 - Steve said that crew leaders should always be looking at volunteers to see if they'd make a good crew leader. Tami mentioned not judging them so much on how they perform, but where their heart is at. Susan McDonnell likes crews that are mixed; having experienced volunteers around really makes a difference. Leif said it's challenging to retain those we picked up due to the burn; their needs were met and they moved on. He felt organizations will always struggle with retaining members.
 - Roberta – This year they felt the burn area trails would require a lot of work, but it turned out to be not so bad. Trees will be coming down in a couple of years, but right now, it's pretty easy. Except for Eagle Creek, which required a lot of work. But it was good enough that there's no longer a need for a burn area manager. Leif mentioned we're basically on-call during the off season. There are places where it makes sense, places where we may want to take on more, since it's a great recruitment tool, particularly in the off-season as a way to pull people back in. Our busy season is May – September, and people are on vacation a lot during that time period. Roberta added that we've always done a lot of work in the Gorge during the off season.
 - Chris also wanted to mention that he thinks the leadership transition went well; the group dynamics didn't change, in fact nothing really did. We've also managed to live without the tool cache at Roberta's.
- Tools
 - Steve mentioned that the PCTA is moving away from using private residences to more commercial facilities. It's still on hold until a meeting between the chapter and PCTA leadership, which has been postponed and date has not been set yet.
 - Terry said that the PDX cache doesn't have a host. Jon is the host for Stevenson, but often gets questions about the caches he doesn't have answers to. Bob is in charge of Trout Lake. David is in charge of the trailer.
 - Terry is trying to get Pace to join the tool team to help with the technology side and some of the emails, which would take some stress off Jon.
 - Leif reminded Terry that the caches are a new thing, and people used to have to run around picking up tools. Leif went on to say that it's the crew leader's responsibility to look at the calendar to see who's got what coming up when in order to properly manage their use. Maybe you figure out someone used the tools you'll need, and you go to their house to pick them up instead of the cache. We have to work together to share the tools.
 - The Stevenson cache got more complicated because it's the most heavily used and tools from both Bridge of the Gods and the Wind River caches were merged.
 - Terry said Jon feels responsibility for missing tools. Leif responded that's not the responsibility of the cache host when tools go missing.

- Chris Keil suggested some sort of tracking system. Leif said there's really no money for that, and reiterated that the best way to handle this is for crew leaders to look at the calendar and see who's got trail parties coming up. Bob suggested sending out an email to all with the information that they are taking tools and returning tools. David Roe thinks emails are important, as he's had people show up at the Southern Cache to find no tools available. Ron added that that's why there's a calendar. Chris said it's never been formalized. Bob said when someone files a work party, there should be a reminder on it for people to please connect with someone on tools. Jane feels that we need to have a system so people know it's their responsibility to deal with tools. Showing up and just taking tools isn't the way to go. Leif said that that's the caretaker's responsibility to communicate.
- Leif added that the Southern Cache should be used more; with the off season it's not heavily used. Roberta mentioned that the trailer isn't used much at all, but can be used for trail parties.
- Vacant Sections
 - Steve turned the discussion to the increasing number of vacant sections. People have pulled out plus people are retiring out of their sections next year. He acknowledged that over the years the number of vacant sections has ebbed and flowed; at the moment we're in an ebb. When the number of vacant sections is high like this it becomes important to decide as a group how we manage these orphan sections.
 - Leif has been trying to connect with Susan Melone to review what she learned last year when she grappled with this issue, but she has a new job and so is very busy.
 - Steve said that the leadership team identified scouting is the #1 priority: getting good information on how good or bad the trail is. Leif added that he'd like to get a more formal process in place. Chris said that one thing that might help is to set up a tentative schedule listing approximately when these sections are open, and then at a caretaker meeting get commitments on the trails supposed to be available in the upcoming weeks. Steve asked if he meant that, for example, at the January caretaker meeting we say, here are our open sections, who wants to sign up? Chris responded that he wants to go deeper; at the January meeting he'd list only those trails open in February and recruit people to scout for those. Susan McDonnell felt that someone needs to coordinate the effort. Steve wondered if putting it in the caretaker reminder email would do it, but Susan reminded him that he'd get the replies. Leif said we need a tool and a signup process, and some type of timeline as to when it gets done.
 - If we have saw work that needs to be done we can certify on the trail. Bill mentioned scouting Brooke's section with Sue Melone and writing up the scouting report with the understanding that he wouldn't be the one to do the work; it was consequently pretty comprehensive. Chris suggested not listing whole sections, but breaking it down into chunks to make it more manageable. Tami said she learned how to create a good scouting report from David Roe, who reviewed her notes and helped her refine them. Tim asked about an interactive web site that would allow people to sign up for scouting sections. Leif concurred that we need some method of signing up, so we see who's doing what, and likes the idea of a web-based form.
- Trail Tips
 - Dana brought up Trail Tips, a new feature that the leadership team wants to add to caretaker meetings. Each should be a 5-minute (max) presentation on an insight into working on trails, such as a unique way of carrying a chainsaw, or a demonstration on the best way to get information on snow levels, or when to use a waterbar vs. a drain dip.
 - Bill Canavan gave the first one. He proceeded to tell the group that there's actually a best practices for bushwhacking, specifically never walking on a log. He said to Google it, there's a lot of information on it.

Final Comments and Discussion Items

- Ron mentioned that ODOT is no longer providing shuttles through the Gorge, but Columbia Area Transit (CAT) is picking up the slack, providing bus service from Portland all the way out to The Dalles.
- Ron also spoke about new snow-zone signs along I-84 that are causing additional questions at the Lodge. The signs are up from November through March, but it doesn't mean conditions are unsafe.
- Steve asked about advanced skills training? Do we want to do this again? Do we want to identify a weekend now? Dana said attendance was low last year even though they had amazing instructors. If you were to have it again, she'd like to know why and what you'd like to learn. Leif said last year the topics were emergency preparedness and tread perfection. Leif mentioned that we need time to think about it, but our window is very short. Frank would like to see rock work; Bill added he liked using feathers and wedges. Roberta said rigging would be good, it's something we need

to practice. Dana asked how many would attend, and everyone said it would depend on the weekend, and we should avoid Spring Break.

- Jennifer Calvery asked how old kids have to be to come on a trail party? Dana said it's up to the crew leader, but generally not under 12, or maybe under 14. It's mostly about focus.
- Jennifer also asked if we had some highlights that she can use to sell the organization at tabling events, and said to email her. Ron mentioned the free Northwest Forest Pass, giving back to the trails, helping the Forest Service out. At 40 hours volunteers get a tee shirt. You're not stuck to a number of hours, do it once or twice or lots of times.
- Leif mentioned a piece on Marketplace about the Trail Gorillas in California. Volunteer-wise, there were over 1 million hours contributed across the nation.

Past Events

This is a brief accounting of projects that occurred since the previous caretaker meeting. For a full accounting of projects, visit <http://mthood.longtrails.com/projectreports/project-reports-2019.pdf>.

Trail Work and Scouting

1. **October 12:** Upper Muddy Fork brushing: Robert Caldwell
2. **October 13:** Brushing Big Huckleberry: Bill Canavan
3. **October 14:** BOG Oregon Side: Guided tour for Travel Oregon: Roberta Cobb
4. **October 15:** BOG Oregon Side: Tread work on hill to Moody: Roberta Cobb
5. **October 15:** Upper Eagle Creek: Rebuilding Water-damaged Tread: Susan McDonnell
6. **October 25:** Scout BOG Oregon Side and Herman Bridge Trail: Roberta Cobb
7. **October 30:** Eagle Creek Trail Scouting: Susan McDonnell & Robert Caldwell
8. **November 4:** Upper Muddy Fork brushing & drainage: Robert Caldwell

Other Events

1. **October 22:** Eagle Creek Burn Area meeting: Roberta Cobb, Susan McDonnell

Future Events

1. **January 8:** Caretaker Meeting at REI

Notes

- **13 Vacancies:** 1) Potato Hill; 2) Grand Meadows; 3) Steamboat Lake; 4) Twin Buttes; 5) Panther Creek; 6) Wind River; 7) Birkenfeld Mountain; 8) Table Mountain; 9) Teakettle Springs; 10) Gorge Trail 400; 11) Lower Eagle Creek Trail 440; 12) Upper Eagle Creek Trail 440; 13) Indian Springs Trail 435
- **1 Reservation:** 1) Benson Plateau (reserved for Susan Tracy)
- **Columbia Dispatch:** Dispatch 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday (no staffing on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day), waccc@firenet.gov, 360-891-5140. Remember to submit a TCP to your agency partner, your dispatcher or alternate dispatcher, Dana, and Leif.