

Mount Hood Chapter, PCTA Caretaker Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2020, 6:45 pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attended: Bob Arkes, Jane Arkes, Robert Caldwell, Bill Canavan, Rob Heyman, Peter Hoffman, Leif Hovin, Albert Iggie, Frank Jahn, Renee Janssen, Todd Janssen, Chris Keil, Diane Kelso, Kim Kovacs, Stacey Lee, Roberta May, Susan McDonnell, Kim Owen, Rosemary Prescott, Steve Queen, Hilary Renshaw, Susan Tracy, Ruth Weston, Becky Wolf, Dana Hendricks, Jennifer Tripp

Notes: Kim Kovacs

Welcome

- Jen Tripp, PCTA Director of Trail Operations.

Chapter Chair Report (Leif)

We're at the cusp of seeing changes rolled out. Will be opening back up in a slow and careful manner. Everyone should have gotten the email regarding the phases PCTA has set for reopening. It will change how we're working; it'll be a very different year. There may be things we'd planned to get done this year that'll have to push off to next year. It'll be exciting to see what Mother Nature has left us. Dana and Jen will have more to say about the reopening.

The Foster Trails program has been matching up people with sections, but that's about it since we haven't been able to crews out. The biggest thing will be scouting.

The Forest Service has started to open up some places, but not for volunteers. Leif encouraged us to get out, but as a hiker.

COVID-19 Report (Jen Tripp)

Jen said it was great to be with us again. It's been a few years since she's been at a Caretaker meeting. She asked if anyone knew where on the PCT her computer background was from. After a few guesses, she said it was just south of I-80, above Squaw Valley. It's one of her local hikes she likes to do; an obscure section of Granite Chief that no one's ever on except a few local people she knows and sees there from time to time.

She's sorry that her topic of the day is COVID-19 response. She thanked the group for their patience, and said she knew it's not an easy time personally or professionally, and a lot of people are struggling. The PCTA staff is right there with us. It's not the year we were expecting, and there's definitely a sense of loss. Jen acknowledged our agency partners who have also been dealing with these unprecedented, weird times.

She said she believes everyone should have seen a draft of the re-engagement plan. They're still making updates, incorporating feedback, and they're on the phone daily with the Forest Service to see what's new (they're trying to figure things out also). At the moment the Forest Service's primary concern is fire season, which has started in California. We're continuing to adapt and make changes. We were hoping to get the green light but that hasn't happened; we may have to re-engage ranger district by ranger district. They're discussing putting together a big spreadsheet to let people know which ranger districts are open and at what phase, but that's a worst-case scenario since it's a lot to keep track of for both admin staff and caretakers.

Robert Caldwell asked about the handwashing stations; he thinks that for a small four-person crew, setting up a hand-washing station is overkill, especially since it won't be at the work site, just back at the cars, and they'll be using hand sanitizer. Jen noted that the regulation comes from the State of Washington, and if there's no water at the site we do have to provide the handwashing stations; hand sanitizer isn't considered an adequate substitute. Jen is double-checking with the Forest Service on their requirements, but she expects they'll agree with the state. Plus, while the caretakers may be OK with relying on hand sanitizers, some volunteers may not be. Dana added that hand-washing is still the number one way the CDC says to prevent infection, other than wearing masks. Jen said that some regions do use them a lot. Dana said it might be OK to take them into the work site, although they're not super portable. Or maybe come back to the cars at lunch. Robert asked about staying overnight when scouting, since it may not be realistic to get to a trailhead,

scout, and drive back home the same day. Jen said that the PCTA is prepared to make some small exceptions for the more remote trails, but let Dana know if you plan to do that.

Frank said that in Phase 2, logouts are still prohibited. What about one person, taking out a small log, will that be permitted? Jen replied that they're looking at low-risk activities at Level B, but logs up to 5" in diameter, with no load, are considered pruning and would be permitted regardless.

Bill Canavan asked about the PCTA staff. Jen said that they sent their staff home on March 13, and everyone's been working from home since then, with the exception of a few people going into the office as needed (for example, getting volunteer t-shirts mailed out). It's very limited, and most days the office is empty. They're in Sacramento County, and the county is under orders that only essential workers who can't work from home are permitted to go in. They hired some agency staff to work with the Forest Service, and those people have been traveling with the Forest Service. Our staff isn't doing any traveling at all – this is the longest she's been home in more than a decade. Many of the regional reps aren't used to sitting behind a computer for eight hours.

Jen received a question about how the PCTA is handling the pandemic financially. She said they hadn't had to furlough anyone, but they did lay off one seasonal employee, and didn't hire a second as they'd planned. Most of the PCTA's money comes from private donations, with 25-30% coming from the federal government. That's still secure, and we're receiving what we expected to receive. The Forest Service and BLM are being flexible with the funding, allowing us to move around how we spend it or carry it over. We've also applied for and were accepted into the Payroll Protection Program. Also, we've been saving; we have a solid rainy-day fund that hasn't been touched yet. For the foreseeable future, the funding remains strong, and funds will be available to you once you get back in the field.

Robert asked about the status of the agencies we work with, Mount Hood, Columbia Gorge and Gifford Pinchot. Dana said that they're actively talking to representatives of these forests. We're submitting the documents they're requiring to make sure they know what we're doing. Maybe in two weeks, maybe sooner, they'll allow us to go to Level A. Robert is going to manufacture the handwashing stations (six are done, they'll need eight). We won't need those until Level B, and that's a month or so down the road. We'll be getting the sanitizer next week; Jennifer Calvery's company donated some, and sold us the rest at a nice price. Tammy Turner tracked down the spray bottles we need. Amazon is sending Dana bazillions of little squirt bottles. She'll have it all in Stevenson, and they'll need to get it distributed to the other caches. If we can get our agency partners to sign off, she's estimating that we'll be able to enter Level A two weeks from now or sooner. Jen added she thinks that the agencies we work with will go as a whole. Dana said that maybe not the Mount Adams district; they may go on their own, apart from the Gifford Pinchot. But that's all we care about in this chapter anyway.

Regional Rep Report (Dana)

Dana spoke about the DNR Washington Discover Passes. If you work on a section that's up the 2000 road out of Stevenson (the Rock Creek/Red Bluff Road), that's DNR land, and Pace's car was ticketed for not having a Discover Pass. So Dana got some and put them in the Stevenson cache. There are about 15 of them, good until November, and she'll get more next spring. If you have a section up there, feel free to snag one and keep it with you; otherwise let's return them to the cache please.

We are transitioning our leadership of Trail Skills College. Thomas Calvery is going to be the new head of that. We're also working on getting new food coordinators. Tammy's been working with Becky and Sway. Sadly, Becky is stepping down after doing it for 10 years. Thank you, Becky!

Dana also said that we may have received an email regarding the Trailhead Ambassador program. It used to be run by Friends of the Gorge but it's transitioning to TKO and we're trying to partner with them, especially at PCT trailheads. We'd love to have those who've worked on the PCT be ambassadors. During this first phase it'll only be experienced volunteers. We will be concentrating on educating hikers about LNT principles.

The Caltopo snowpack feature that Dana demoed a few months ago is now only available in the Pro version. Steve will remove it from the chapter's Trail Conditions page.

There's a Gorge Trails Recovery Team webinar next week. Dana's been meeting with TKO and WTA fairly frequently, to make sure our re-engagement protocols are consistent across the organizations. We've introduced the information to

crew leaders, but thought it would be good to have a webinar for the average volunteer/hiker as well. It'll be a quick 30-minute slide presentation – “we know the trails look bad, and here's why...” The caretakers and other crew leaders are not the intended audience for this.

Round the Room

- Roberta May
 - She's doing great. Her trail is done as far as she knows, and she's working on trails around her house.
- Stacey Lee
 - She updated the Facebook page today with the information about the planned 3-phase re-engagement plan. There will be a message going out Friday regarding the Friends of the Gorge webinar. She's seeing plenty of “likes” but there haven't been many comments.
 - She's on her third week of a new job and still adjusting. Otherwise, life is good.
 - Steve reminded the group that at the last meeting, Stacey volunteered to work on the Facebook page since Vanessa is retiring along with him. He thanked Stacey for taking that on.
- Hilary Renshaw
 - Nothing new. She's still working on her new house. She recently held interviews for a position, and it was very strange to interview prospective candidates from six feet apart, with half their faces covered.
- Chris Keil
 - He's currently in Oklahoma seeing his parents. He said flying in the COVID period was interesting; the plane was very clean and everything went smoothly. He'll be back in town on Friday.
- Kim Owen
 - Was breaking up too bad to hear. 😞
- Peter Hoffman and Diane Kelso
 - Not a lot going on. Lots of farm work, ramping up a little on their food bank volunteering, too. They've done a little bit of hiking. They weren't scouting, but they did happen to take notice of trail conditions while hiking.
 - They did a section from Road 2000 up to Sedum Ridge, and emailed Tami log counts and information from that. The trail's in pretty good shape. It had 12 logs, three of which are large, in her section. One of them is a big cedar that'll require Pace to work on it.
 - They also hiked their own section; it's in pretty good shape – one large log and five small ones.
 - They also hiked the Twin Lakes section. There were a lot of logs down – 32 – six of which are large, plus the Twin Lakes loop itself had 12 logs, 6 very large ones. They believe David maintained the Twin Lakes Loop, even though it's not part of the PCT, is that correct? Steve confirmed the loop isn't part of our system, but yes, David did take care of that.
 - They made it up to Olallie Lake, which still had snow and they needed four-wheel drive to get in there.
- Frank Jahn
 - He's in Central Oregon. He spent the day hiking on Lookout Mountain, the highest peak on the Ochocos, looking at flowers and old mining equipment. He's hiking in Central Oregon again tomorrow and then coming home.
 - He was on a section of the PCT recently looking for a lost hiker who wasn't really lost, and who also wasn't on the trail. He walked from Wahtum Lake almost up to Buck Point. The trail's in good shape but needs brushing, and there are a number of logs down.
 - On the job front, Glacier National Park did offer him a position at Logan Pass but it was dealing with parking and patrolling trails. He's more interested in interpretive opportunities, so he politely declined. Maybe there will be something later but probably not.
- Renee and Todd Janssen
 - They continue to cancel races and spend time at home. They're getting out on trails a little more. Todd started up the chainsaw the other day.
 - “Run the PCT” is a new virtual race they're holding (people probably saw the email). They have over 100 people signed up from all over the world.
- Bob and Jane Arkes
 - Bob's working on four months of his hairdo and doesn't know if he'll ever get it cut again.
 - They live in downtown Portland just a few blocks from the Justice Center, but are still doing some work. They used a machete to knock down some Himalayan blackberry on a slope above their house.
 - He asked Dana about the trails in the GP, wondering if we're not allowed to officially scout because they're not officially open. She said that that was correct.

- Nathan Zaremskiy
 - Had to leave the call before Steve called on him. 😞
- Dana Hendricks
 - Gets to go camping this weekend. Oregon State Parks opened just in time for her family to take their annual trip to the Coast with two other families.
- Susan Tracy
 - Went backpacking for a couple of days with her dog in the Herman Creek trail system. There were lots of mosquitoes.
 - She did find out that the Forest Service logged out and brushed Teakettle, so there's no need for us to plan work there. Herman Creek has a couple of big issues by Noble Camp at 7.5 miles in. An enormous cedar exploded all over the trail - one of those giant old trees - and probably 50' of trail is completely buried. Lots of overgrowth and poison oak, but otherwise the trail's in pretty good shape. They're going down to Cultus Lake on Sunday to hike, down in the Deschutes National Forest.
- Albert Iggi
 - Doing what everyone else has been doing. He also backpacked at Herman Creek, and said Susan's description of conditions was pretty accurate. He's enjoying his three grandkids. They're renting a house in Manzanita one week from now.
- Jen Tripp
 - At first she was looking forward to having time off, but found that she's actually been too busy to take time off. She lives at Lake Tahoe, and said it's a fabulous place to be "stuck." She said she and her partner have been doing a lot of walking, although the trails are popular; there are still too many people, especially tourists.
- Steve Queen
 - He's been doing a lot of geocaching. Early in his geocaching career he and Jen went out geocaching together in Sacramento before he hit 100 caches. Now he's pushing 13,000. He went out today; it's a great way to get out while at the same time maintaining social distance.
 - Facebook created its own programming language in JavaScript, and he's been learning it and writing an app in it for the City of Portland.
 - He also wrote his first Android app today (well, it comes up on the phone).
- Robert Caldwell
 - Mount Hood opened on the 29th. He got up to Top Spur as well as Ramona Falls. He's hiked almost all of his trail. There are 172 logs down, quite a bit more than in previous years. He enjoyed being able to hike again.
- Bill Canavan
 - He had to cancel his CDT trip. He had the tickets in-hand and was one week away from leaving when everything shut down. Now he and his wife exercise for an hour, four days a week, and one day a week he walks (today it was seven miles). One day a week he delivers food boxes for the food bank. He's looking forward to being able to hike so he gets in some elevation gain (there's not much elevation in Vancouver).
- Kim Kovacs
 - Just staying home, baking, cooking. She's also participating in Todd and Renee's virtual run, and has found it's encouraging her to get out more.
- Becky Wolf
 - She thanked Dana and Jen for their kind words about her cooking at Trail Skills College – the Backcountry Horse crew had a lot to do with that.
 - She was camping on the Metolius last week – lots of riding and campfires. Her PCT section is getting close to being out of the snow.
- Rob Heyman
 - He hasn't been on his section. He imagines there's still snow on it, but will find out soon. He built a section of trail in the backyard. He's looking forward to getting back out.
- Rosemary Prescott
 - She seconded what Bill said: Vancouver is very flat. She climbed Elk Mountain last week and was sore afterwards. Her climbing wall is getting built this weekend. She was going to visit her family in BC but it's not safe, so she's visiting family in Bellingham. She's in need of simply getting out, she doesn't care where. She's explored every trail at Silver Star.
- Sue Melone
 - Her dog had surgery today and they just got home a little while ago.

- Her business is really busy, and since she's working from home it feels like she's working almost non-stop.
- She was out on Tuesday, and her trail is looking good except for one place where there's a slide. She sent pictures to Pace. A couple of big trees came down in that spot, 4' high, 40' long bank of material has slid down as well. Dana is familiar with the area.
- Sue's eager to talk about the Foster trails and get that taken care of before we get out and scout. More about that soon.
- Susan McDonnell
 - Hasn't been out on her trail since it's a closed trail. Went out of town for the first time in three months. She's been doing lots of yard work, during which she tripped and fell on her knee, and moved the kneecap, which has kept her indoors more than she'd like. She ended up going to Observation Peak in the Trapper Creek Wilderness, since it was short but she still got to see mountains.
 - She's been spending a half-day a week at Cooper Mountain, volunteering for her former employer.
- Ruth Weston
 - She said she's discouraged about trail work, since they won't be allowed to work on weekends for a while and that's all the time she has available.
- Leif Hovin
 - Today's the first day he drove to the office to do a hand-off in the parking lot. It was different from his new normal commute from the computer to the sofa to the chair...wherever the sun's not beaming into his computer screen. But not a lot of trail work. He is in need of a haircut.

Reports

Volunteer Coordinator (Rosemary)

- She's still working on fillable forms to make it easier to get the info she needs when posting events to Eventbrite.

Outreach and Events (Jennifer absent)

- No report.

Trail Skills College (Tammy absent)

- No report.

Training and Safety (Dana)

- We've got a whole bunch of new safety protocols.
- One of the things they're working on is a pre-work party video that goes along with signing documents online. It'll be required before all work projects, including scouting. For caretakers, you'll just have to watch it once. The paperwork will be required every time, but not the video.

Tools (Terry via email)

- All trail maintenance tools are ready for trail work. The two Stihl Brush Cutters in the South Cache were tuned up by David Roe and refueled.
- Radios: Please check the battery charge when selecting a radio. Some batteries may be low and need recharging. This is because we have more batteries than chargers.

Saw Program (Leif)

- The teams are meeting, but nothing is really happening. They're trying to figure out what needs to be done and how to fit it in this year. Most first aid certificates have been extended, as are the saw certifications.

Foster Trails (Sue)

- She believes there are 15 open sections and will share them in an email. For those fostering trails, they'll take the lead on scouting and prioritize what needs to be done this year. Steve asked her to send the information before the next meeting and she said she would do so.

Budget (Bill)

- There's still no budget and we probably won't have one until everything opens back up. They do have some money available, and will be able to pay Pace for the handwashing station materials.

Crew Leader Development (Susan)

- Susan McDonnell will be handling this report in the future.
- She hasn't done anything on it this month. She'll be reaching out to assistant crew leaders to see what we can do once we're open. She's not sure what to expect.

Stats (Robert)

- It's slow. We have just 19 hours. He's missing one report – the Caretaker Meeting report. Steve was surprised he hadn't submitted it, and will do so right away.

	May 2020	May 2019	May 2018	May 2017	YTD May 2020	YTD May 2019	YTD May 2018	YTD May 2017
Total Volunteer Hours	19	1,935	2,430	1,785	1,651	7,998	13,474	7,762
Specialized hours		528	644	501	240	1,631	2,270	979
Number of Trail Crews		17	23	16	12	33	68	32
Miles Logged out		58	42	20	7	73	56	41
Logs cleared, crosscut		64	n/a	n/a	10	64	n/a	n/a
Logs cleared, chainsaw		228	n/a	n/a	69	228	n/a	n/a
Miles Maintained		6	18	3	13	24	50	27
Feet of Rehab/Recon		1,720	3,702	590	1,970	7,592	29,054	2,567
Volunteer hours by Category								
Trail Maint - crews & scouting		1,654	2,060	1,310	930	3,131	6,542	2,722
Trail Maint - support	2	267	324	318	535	1,242	1,649	1,562
Trail Skills Training	17		17	158	112	3,568	5,129	3,381
Outreach Events		14	29		74	57	155	97
	<u>19</u>	<u>1,935</u>	<u>2,430</u>	<u>1,785</u>	<u>1,651</u>	<u>7,998</u>	<u>13,474</u>	<u>7,762</u>

The May Caretaker Meeting Report is missing

Final Comments and Discussion Items

- Jen Tripp
 - The tool cache relocation is proceeding. They're working on a formal agreement and then will transfer funds to the Mazamas. There was a delay with the architect, but it's moving forward.

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. **None** due to pandemic response

Other Events

1. **None** due to pandemic response

Future Events

1. **July 8:** Caretaker meeting (Location TBD)

Notes

PCT Vacancies

1. Mount Adams North
2. Grand Meadows (fostered by Kim and Pam Owen)
3. Steamboat Lake
4. Twin Buttes
5. Panther Creek (fostered by Bill Canavan)
6. Wind River (fostered by Kim Kovacs)
7. Sedum Ridge
8. Birkenfeld Mountain (fostered by Thomas Calvery)
9. Table Mountain (fostered by Thomas Calvery)
10. Teakettle Springs (fostered by Susan Tracy)
11. Benson Plateau (fostered by and reserved for Susan Tracy)
12. Timberline - South
13. Twin Lakes (fostered by Renee and Todd Janssen)
14. Little Crater Lake

Non-PCT Vacancies

1. Gorge Trail 400 (fostered by Roberta May with Nathaniel Brody's team)
2. Lower Eagle Creek Trail 440 (fostered by Susan McDonnell)
3. Upper Eagle Creek Trail 440 (fostered by and reserved for Albert Iggi)
4. Indian Springs Trail 435

Columbia Dispatch

7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, waccc@firenet.gov, 360-891-5140.

Remember to submit a TCP to your agency partner, your dispatcher or alternate dispatcher, Dana, and Leif.