

Denver Group Council Minutes

January 8, 2014

In Attendance: Jeff Flax, Marty Billings, Dave Hutchison, Sandy McRae, Alex Petre, Kevin Schaal, Neil Schliemann, Valerie Walker, Ray Shem. Absent: Roger Wendell.

Guests: Sarah Gorecki, acting CEO of CMC while Katie Blackett is out on maternity leave, Claude Newman, Chair of DG Conservation Committee, Phil Kummer, volunteer for the Rampart Range Wildlands Project, and Josh Kuhn, CMC Wildlands Advocate.

1. **Call to Order:** Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Suggestion was made to remove a sentence from section 4 of the original draft of the December 2013 meeting minutes. Council agreed. A motion was passed approving the amended minutes.
3. **Budget and Financial:** Budget reports for October 2013 and November 2013 were distributed. The November report showed that year to date we were \$12,100 over budget. The majority of the shortfall is in revenues, primarily in lower than budgeted school tuition. Membership continues to drop, lowering dues revenue which was below budget by \$2000 in November. A report of membership numbers by group showed that from Jan 2013 to Dec 2013, Denver Group dropped from 3482 members to 2925, a loss of 557 or 16%. Neil pointed out that the final December number (2925 members) might improve after some automatic member re-enrolls kicked in. None the less, the decline is significant and is impacting the financial health of DG. The opinion was expressed that not only were short term members failing to renew membership, but long term members were also leaving the club. Another opinion was expressed that from a marketing perspective, CMC was not effectively getting the message out about the benefits of CMC membership.
4. **Status of HikingDenver.net web coder and related issues:** Sarah reported that CMC transitioned to a new web development company who can better implement and support website improvements. This was accomplished in part by a generous donation from a CMC member. Changes already implemented include improvements and fixes to the log-in module, the trip roster, waitlist and trip registration. During January web development efforts will double with priorities given to improving the trip list view, the calendar view, the trip creation tool and improvements allowing better management of members and schools.
5. **CMC/DG Conservation Committee:** Visitors Claude, Phil and Josh described the work that DG Conservation Committee is doing on the Rampart Range Wildlands Project. Some bullet points from the discussion were:
 - a. Rampart Range Wildlands Project (RRWP) is a joint effort with the Pikes Peak Group. Tom Mowle is the primary contact from the Pikes Peak Group.
 - b. RRWP is believed to be a value added project for CMC. Claude believes it has the potential for improving CMC membership.
 - c. The project area is south of Devils Head Tower and encompasses 32,000 acres of pristine lands. The area provides excellent opportunities for hiking, climbing and orienteering.
 - d. The area is currently designated as a roadless area, but the long term objective is to have it designated as wilderness.

- e. Community meetings are planned as future activities and support by CMC members at these meetings would benefit the project.
- f. An article describing the RRWP project will be included in the next issue of the Mile High Mountaineer.

One specific follow-up action item was the need to link www.hikingDenver.net to the Conservation Group's website, whose URL I could not find.

6. **First Aid Requirements for New, Non-Leader D-Hikers:** Marty described the issue as a two-fold problem. There is no clear policy on exactly what the First Aid requirements are for a new, non-leader D-rated hiker. Second, what is the intent of having a first aid requirement for this classification in the first place?

The requirements stated on the DG Classification Change Request Form are that applicants must have "current first aid certification or equivalent" in order to obtain a D-Hiking classification. The general interpretation is that Wilderness First Aid (WFA) is regarded as the standard, however, there is no definition of what constitutes an acceptable equivalent to WFA. Also, the number of times WFA is offered may be a hindrance to getting new D-hikers classified, thus contributing to membership disgruntlement. As to the second half of the problem, no one on council could state the purpose for requiring First Aid to participate in a D-Hike. Remember that hike leaders are required to have first aid training, so why is it critical for hike participants to have similar training. Two action items were mentioned. 1) Need to get Carol Giffen, WFA School Director involved in this discussion. 2) It would be good to understand how often this is an issue or problem.

7. **Avalanche School Requirements for New, Non-Leader Hikers:** Getting skiers classified with the Advanced Skier classification has similar problems as described in Section 5 above. The requirements stated on the DG Classification Change Request Form are that applicants must have "CMC Avalanche School or equivalent training". Two problems exist. CMC Avalanche School is no longer offered – Avalanche Terrain Avoidance (ATA) and AAIRE Level 1 are offered in its place. Second, there is no definition of what constitutes an acceptable equivalent to CMC Avalanche School. One action item coming from this discussion was that Marty would investigate competitive, non-CMC class options and report back to council. Then council must determine if imposing this requirement is necessary and/or advisable. Remember, the cost for AAIRE Level 1 is \$215 which may be cost prohibitive for some people wanting to obtain advanced level skier certification. Finally, it was pointed out that if one is participating in an advanced ski trip, avoiding avalanche terrain is unlikely – the trip will undoubtedly encounter avalanche terrain – therefore requiring avalanche *avoidance* skills seems inconsistent with the reality of advanced ski trips.

8. **Denver Group Hiking Classifications:** The usefulness of the hiker/skier classification system is being challenged. The discussion centered around three questions – is the classification system a problem to DG or not? Is further action required or not? If there is a problem, what is the problem? Remember, Denver Group is the only CMC group using a hiker/skier classification system.

Items discussed were:

Safety First: Safety cannot be jeopardized.

Objective: Is the objective of having a classification system to classify hikes, or people, or both?

Efficacy: Need to have the least burdensome policy that accomplishes the objective.

Currency: The policy of not requiring needed competencies to be current is flawed. Today's accepted practice is, "I took it once a long time ago but nobody's required me to update my skills".

Administrative Burden: How burdensome is the policy for CMC staff, for individual members.

- Today hikes are classified as A, B, C or D, then easy, moderate or difficult.
- Hike participants are also classified as A, B, C or D.
- Certain skill competencies are required for hikers to be classified as C or D rated hikers
- Those skills are generally obtained by taking CMC classes.
- Many C and D hikes do not actually require the prerequisite classification skills thereby creating a conflict between the classification system and the true needs of the hike. The classic example is, why is BMS required for a D hike like Mt. Elbert which is an on-trail, non-technical walk-up?
- This led to council concluding that there IS a problem and it needs to be addressed.
- Several additional comments were:
 - If we had an additional trip category such as 'C Long & Difficult', would that help?
 - Can we eliminate people's classifications but maintain trip classifications?

The discussion ended by asking for interested Council members to volunteer to engage in further discussions.

9. **New Business:** A thank you letter was received from Wild Connections for the \$250 donation DG made to help restore damaged areas in Geneva Basin. A copy of the letter is attached to these minutes.
10. **Ratification of new Denver Safety and Leadership (DS&L) Committee Member:** Linda Lawson, Chair of DS&L asked Denver Group Council to ratify a new committee member, Tracie Sawade. DGC Bylaws permit voting by electronic means between meetings, and it is DGC's responsibility to ratify members to serve on this committee. Communicating via e-mail, Tracie's qualifications were reviewed and a motion was proposed and seconded to ratify Tracie for this position. Motion passed unanimously with one abstention.
11. **February Snacks:** Alex volunteered to bring snacks for February's meeting which is scheduled for Feb 12.
12. **Adjournment:** Council was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Schaal
1/31/13

Attachment:
Thank you letter from Wild Connections



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January 5, 2014

Jeff Flax
Chair, Denver Group, Colorado Mountain Club
700 10th St.
Golden CO 80401

Dear Jeff,

On behalf of Wild Connections I want to thank the Denver Group of the Colorado Mountain Club for its generous donation of \$250 to help restore damaged areas in Geneva Basin. Your donation helped ensure wild lands in Colorado will be conserved as desirable places for outdoor recreation.

In September, we worked with the South Platte Ranger District of the Pike National Forest to restore three areas along Geneva Creek that had been damaged by off-road motorized use. Our 26 volunteers helped 4 Forest employees move rocks and timber to block access to user-created routes, broke up the compacted soils in those routes, and planted native seeds to encourage regrowth.

Pending final invoices for mileage, we spent a total of \$1560 on this project, of which \$416 was paid to John Chapman for coordinating the project with the Forest Service, \$364 was for liability insurance, and \$479.29 was for restoration supplies. Most of your donation was used to purchase seed and other supplies, with a small portion used to pay the project coordinator.

We plan to continue working with Forest Service on similar projects in 2014 and beyond. Thank you again for the generous support given by the Denver Group of the Colorado Mountain Club in 2013.

Best regards,

Tom Mowle
Treasurer, Wild Connections