

Denver Group Council Minutes
Oct 8, 2014

In Attendance: Jeff Flax, Dave Hutchison, Sandy McRae, Alex Petre, Roger Wendell, Kevin Schaal, Valerie Walker, Neil Schliemann. **Guests:** Grover Cleveland, Scott Robson, Steve Bonowski.

1. **Call to Order:** Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. **Scott Robson Comments:** Scott Robson, CEO of CMC, spoke to council. He's been CEO for about one month now and is excited, honored, and pleased to be leading CMC. His background includes collegiate degrees from CU and Oregon. Previously in his career, he held leadership positions in both Denver and Evergreen Parks & Rec Districts. He feels the CMC name has a good brand name that is widely recognized within the state of Colorado, and we should capitalize on that brand awareness. He acknowledged we have good people in many of our leadership positions. He commented that Adventure Travel has seen good growth, that Youth is an area for immediate growth and that our schools are well respected. He feels a new approach is needed in the area of membership and member retention. He sees excessive layers and hurdles for the guy off the street to come into the club and be active. He commented that we need to make things easier for club members and cited the example of having 5 different websites that weren't linked and didn't have a common calendar as challenges to be addressed and fixed. He felt simplifying CMC's structure and making CMC more inviting were important for future growth. He wants to review the club's fee structure and discuss what leadership can bring to the table to make CMC a better value. He commented that it will be necessary to implement changes without increasing fees. He cited a need to improve cohesiveness between State and CMC Groups and need to look comprehensively at the fee structure of all the Groups, not just DG. Making progress in 2015 would be important but otherwise, no specific timeline was given. Increasing the number and perhaps types of offerings to members would be beneficial. He would like to see if we can improve discounts given to members at retail outlets who support CMC and work with lodges in selected mountain towns to provide discounts to members as a way to encourage members to recreate in the mountains, and perhaps develop a relationship with the 10th Mountain Hut Division for discounts for stays at back country huts.
3. **Approval of October Minutes:** After discussing the meeting minutes as originally prepared and distributed, council agreed two changes were needed. Motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the amended minutes. The required changes were made and the revised minutes were distributed to council members.
4. **Financial Report:** Neil's finance report is attached as an appendix to these minutes.
 - State CMC is interviewing candidates to fill the vacant bookkeeper position.
 - Regarding the waiver of fees for room charges to DG for leader development, CMC State passed an initiative to encourage DG to train more leaders by reducing costs to DG for these activities. This should translate into lower school tuition fees, an increase in member enrollments and more trip leader school graduates.
5. **Membership Dashboard:** Notes to council regarding the newly developed membership dashboard are attached in the appendix to these minutes.

- Also mentioned was that Brenda met with the “Apline 5 Clubs” to discuss their membership numbers, if they see the same decline in membership as we see, and what their strategies are for reversing membership declines.
6. **Hiker Classification Changes:** Last month, a motion to change the hiker classification system was made, seconded, and passed with the stipulation that a note of explanation be added to clarify the intent and purpose of the change. Dave was asked to draft the explanatory note with the expectation that Council would act on it in October’s meeting. Dave distributed to Council the complete “*Policy for Signing up for a Hike*” along with the explanatory note.
- Council unanimously approved the explanatory note, thereby completing the business of implementing a change to the Hiker Classification System.
 - The “*Policy for Signing up for a Hike*” along with the explanatory note is attached to the appendix.
 - The only other point of discussion was a recommendation that one year from now, council should thoroughly review what effect this policy change had on trip participation and hiker and trip leader satisfaction.
7. **Long Difficult C (LDC) Hike Classification:** Adding a hike classification called LDC is being considered by Council. Such hikes would be longer than 15 miles with an elevation gain of more than 3500 feet, but limited to Class 1, 2 or 3 hikes (no class 4 or 5 hikes allowed). Last month’s meeting minutes provide the background to why this is being discussed. The following bullets were mentioned or discussed during the October meeting.
- CMC hikes are classified according to difficulty as A, B, C or D hikes. Council was reminded that these classifications are acknowledged state-wide, not just within DG.
 - Denver Group requires leaders to be rated to the level of hikes which they lead. A leader of a D hike must be a D-rated hiker. However, leaders may lead trips below their rated level, so a leader with a C-hiker rating may lead A or B trips as well as C trips.
 - Denver Safety and Leadership is OK with council implementing the LDC classification, however the same idea was implemented 13 years ago and eventually abandoned because it reportedly created a lot of confusion.
 - Council was asked if adding the LDC hike classification was being discussed within other State Groups. Answer was no; just the Denver Group is having this discussion.
 - Next question was did DG want to be the only state group having this hike classification?
 - Comment was made that if we implemented the LDC classification, could this lead to some unintended consequences? For example, one opinion was if LDC was implemented, might this have a negative impact on the number of members enrolling in future BMS schools? Logic is that many 14’ers are D hikes, therefore to hike a 14’er, you must have a D-hiker classification, and to obtain the D-hiker classification, you must complete BMS. But with the LDC classification, many 14’ers would only be LDC, not D-hikes (Mt. Elbert, for example). Therefore, fewer people enrolling for BMS.
 - An alternative to adding the LDC classification might be to split D hikes into Technical D and Non-Technical D hikes.

At the end of the discussion, the motion to add the LDC hike classification was tabled.

8. **Annual Dinner:** The Annual Dinner is scheduled for Sunday Nov 9 at the Green Center on the campus of the Colorado School of Mines. The Social Hour begins at 5:00 PM. The deadline for

signing up is November 3rd and all councilors are encouraged to attend. The Annual Dinner Committee has an excellent speaker lined up for the program portion of the event. Following customary practice, the Volunteer of Year has been selected but cannot be announced at this time. Service Award winners were also announced. Forty-year members will be invited and given complimentary dinners in recognition of their long-standing support of CMC and the Denver Group.

- Council initially approved a \$2500 subsidy to offset costs of the dinner which keeps the price to the participant at \$39.
- The speaker, Jon Kedrowski, will be selling his book, "*Sleeping on the Summits: Colorado Fourteener High Bivys*" and will donate some of the proceeds from the sale of these books back to CMC.
- The cost of a motel room for one night for the speaker will be paid by DG.
- **Subsequent to the October meeting:** In early November, the Annual Dinner Committee requested an additional \$500 subsidy to support the annual dinner, bringing the total subsidy to \$3000, with the following e-mail request:
So far we have 166 registered for the dinner. However, we are honoring ten 40 year members, five service award winners, the Volunteer of the Year (VOY) - all of whom receive comp meals. We are also comp'ing the new CMC Executive Director (as has been the practice for many years) and his guest, the speaker and his guest, the maker of the VOY trophy designer and carver, and the photographer. This is far more than we initially budgeted as we thought there were only two 40 year members.
Council unanimously approved the additional \$500 subsidy via e-mail voting. When the final expenses were tallied, DG subsidized the Annual Dinner in the amount of \$1,735.37.

9. **Nominating committee Report:** The 3 nominated candidates, Brian LeBlanc, Linda DuPuis, and Maddie Philley, are automatically elected since there were three candidates were vying for four vacancies. As of the date of the October meeting, 128 members had voted.

- As mentioned last month, Grover Cleveland volunteered to be on council and council approved his intention to run. Appointing Grover to serve on the 2105 council would have to be done in the November council meeting with the newly elected councilors in attendance.

10. **Other Business:**

- The date and time of Karl Stout's memorial service was announced and council was encouraged to attend.
- A question was asked if DGC had a written policy for making donations to families of members who pass away. During the past year, council has taken e-mail votes on if donations should be made in memorial for a recently deceased member and the amount of such donation. The answer to the question is that no such policy is in place. Council deferred this issued to a later date.
- Council approved \$69 for updating the DG website scheme. Future web site development includes hiring a programmer to update and redesign the site. www.hikingdenver.net will eventually become www.CMC-Denver.org. Jeff will proceed with getting a quote for the above work which may approach \$5000.

11. **November Meeting:** The November meeting of DGC is scheduled for Nov 12 at 6:30 PM. The first half of the November meeting is the final meeting for the 2014 council. After that, the new council takes over leadership of the Denver Group with Dave Hutchison assuming the position of council

chairman. Following long-standing council tradition, the November meeting concludes with old and new council members celebrating at a restaurant in Golden – Woodies or other yet to be decided location.

12. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Schaal 11/07/14 (minutes amended on 12/9/14)

Attachments: Finance Report, Dashboard, Policy for Signing up for Hike, Membership Dashboard:

September 2014 Membership Dashboard

Member Totals	September 2014	September 2013	YOY (Year Over Year)
New Members this month	81	83	-2%
Renewed Members this month	213	243	-12%
Retention Rate % (Renewed / Eligible to Renew)	51%	64%	-21%
Non-Renewed Members this month	108	139	-22%

NEW Membership by Type*	September 2014
Individual	53
Family	23
40 Year/Life/Associate/Honorary non-dues paying)	2
Young Adult	5
Total New Memberships	83

Group	Members		
	September 2014	September 2013	YOY
Alpine Start (State Young Adult Program)	26	3	767%
Aspen	157	191	-18%
Boulder	799	866	-8%
CO Wilderness Families	115	120	-4%
Denver	2897	3,058	-5%
El Pueblo	44	48	-8%
Fort Collins	278	315	-12%
Friends of CO	149	157	-5%
Friends of CMC (supporting membership)	19	N/A	
Friends of Routt	5	1	400%
Gore Range	146	142	3%
Longs Peak	31	38	-18%
Pikes Peak	508	527	-4%
San Juan	36	50	-28%
Shining Mountains	128	142	-10%
Western Slope	51	56	-9%
Total	5389	5,714	-6%

Total Members by Membership by Type

Individual	3021
Family	1790
Young Adult (25 or younger)	100
40 year	177
Lifetime	191
other: associate/ honorary/none	36

Group	Memberships *		
	September 2014	September 2013	YOY
Alpine Start (State Young Adult Program)	25	3	733%
Aspen	99	139	-29%
Boulder	648	728	-11%
CO Wilderness Families	37	45	-18%
Denver	2345	2,583	-9%
El Pueblo	31	37	-16%
Fort Collins	213	246	-13%
Friends of CO	107	131	-18%
Friends of CMC (supporting membership)	19	N/A	N/A
Friends of Routt	4	1	300%
Gore Range	97	108	-10%
Longs Peak	28	32	-13%
Pikes Peak	375	409	-8%
San Juan	35	45	-22%
Shining Mountains	99	110	-10%
Western Slope	41	44	-7%
Total	4203	4658	-10%

* Memberships include families with multiple members

Talking Points

Final Budget 2015

1. The final 2015 budget is showing a bottom line of \$6,286, or 3.03%. This is an improvement of \$14,860 over the original budget request showing a loss of \$8,574.

2. Fee For Service has dropped by \$13,710 from \$82,778 to \$69,068, a 16.6% drop. This covers:

75% of the membership services staff, 1.5 FTE

21.25% of Membership Services Director – Brenda

25% of Accounting

5% of CEO salary

3. Room Charges dropped from \$42,100 to \$34,800, a drop of \$7,300. \$1,150 of that is the waiver of room charges for Trip Leader related meetings. WFA and TLS did not budget room charges and were going to use off site free space. Both Schools have had their room charges waived. That amount is \$3,625. The remaining \$2,525 reduction is more efficient use of rooms by the schools and sections.

Membership and the Dashboard

Membership Services has taken on the role of sending out the monthly membership reports and is providing a new dashboard showing membership comparative data to prior year and the current membership numbers for all groups.

For September Denver Group lost 10 memberships and gained 5 members. It looks like membership losses have begun to stabilize with only 26 memberships lost from June through September and an overall year on year loss of 9%.

Brenda reported that she has started meeting regularly with the membership directors of Appalachian Mtn Club, Mountaineers in WA, Mazamas in OR, and American Alpine Club National. Together with CMC these 5 clubs are known as the Alpine 5. She says that over the last decade our sister clubs have experienced a downward membership trend but are now experiencing annual membership growth. So maybe we will experience the same. She also stated that as a result of those meetings she has gotten some ideas for increasing our membership as well.

Policy on Signing up for a Hike

Denver Group Policy:

Effective 1/1/15, any CMC Denver Group member may sign up for any open hike listed in the CMC Trip Calendar.

Explanatory Comment:

The CMC hike classification system will continue to exist in its present form and Trip Leaders will continue to classify their hikes based on mileage and elevation. Trip Leaders are encouraged to describe their hikes as completely as possible using hike classification (A, B, C, D), difficulty (easy, moderate, difficult), pace (casual, moderate, fast), and, if applicable, trip prerequisites.

Trip Leaders have sole discretion and authority to determine whether their hike is appropriate for a member who has signed up for their trip. Leaders may use discretionary screening criteria to determine suitability.

The Denver Group hiker classification system will also continue to exist in its present form with no change in the qualifying criteria, and members are encouraged to pursue a hiker classification commensurate with their skills. However, member participation in the hiker classification system is optional with the following exceptions:

- Members may need a hiker classification to meet prerequisites established by a Denver Group school
- Denver Group Trip Leaders are required to have a hiker classification equal or greater than the level at which they plan to lead trips (this is no change from the current policy)