Bobcats Leader Gathering – January 3, 2019

Members Present: Sue Ahlberg, Suzanne Allexan, Jeff Damp, Jim Guerra, Tom and Linda Jagger, Cynthia Lehr, Roger Leikas, Sarah Maurer Robbie and Durrie Monsma, Carol Munch, Tom O’Connor, Vaune Pelletier, Jerry Rowe, Kevin Schaal, Ralph Shroba, Jeff Stevens, John Wethey, Mark Wolf, Stephanie Wright.

Thanks to Suzanne for making the arrangements with the El Rancho Brewery. The food was delicious and the meeting space was very accommodating.

Thanks to Mark for leading the majority of the meeting. Fantastic job.

Bobcats board members introduced themselves: Mark Wolf, Treasurer and Trip Leader Coordinator; Robbie Monsma, Communications Manager; Stephanie Wright, Social Director; Kevin Schaal, Secretary; and Vaune Pelletier, Trip Coordinator. Cynthia Lehr was introduced as the Newsletter Author and Editor.

Robbie Monsma and Carol Munch represent the Bobcats by serving on the Denver Group Council. Durrie Monsma, Mark Wolf, Tom O’Connor, Jeff Damp, Sarah Maurer and Kevin Schaal are members of Denver Safety and Leadership Committee.

Agenda Items:
1. **Introduce the new leaders since our last meeting.**
   The new leaders added during 2018 were Jim Guerra, Tom Jagger, Cynthia Lehr, Sarah Maurer, Jerry Rowe, Victoria Seacrist.

2. **Statistics, Trips, Leader/member ratio**
   There are currently 25 Bobcats leaders but two are, or soon will become, physically unable to lead trips. We anticipate they will resume leading once back to full strength. We also have two couples who lead trips, where one member leads and the other member is typically the co-leader. We discussed if we should count the couple as a single leader instead of as two leaders for the purpose of calculating the ratio of members to leaders. If counting each couple as a single leader, and not counting the physically unable to lead, we have 21 currently active trip leaders. Regardless of how we count, we appreciate the two couples for leading the number of trips they do lead and mean them no disrespect.
   There are 621 Bobcat Section members as of today, making the leader to member ratio equal 28. We had established the target ratio of 1 leader per every 25 members, so by calculation we should consider adding 3-4 additional trip leaders. Leaders in attendance were asked to begin thinking of existing non-Bobcat leaders who in their mind would make good Bobcat leaders. Then present the potential leader candidate to one of the Board members and the Board would consider inviting that person to become a Bobcat leader.
   Trips lead in 2018 totaled 185 trips or about 15.5 trips per month. 1691 people participated in these trips, meaning there are on average slightly over 9 people per trip. There was a lot of discussion about trip wait lists and that in many cases, a significant wait list will dwindle down to only a few or in many cases zero prior to the day of the trip. On average only 6.5 members per month ended up not getting added from the wait list.

3. **Incident reports**
   We had two incidents on trips this year. Both were due to digestive tract issues.
4. **Financials**
The Section Treasurer reported we had approximately $180 in the bank.

5. **King Soopers Cards**
DS&L initiated a revenue generating program to benefit DS&L, namely the King Sooper Neighborhood Rewards Program. 5% of expenditures made at Kings Soopers which are paid for by a King Soopers Gift Card goes back to the sponsoring organization. DS&L had previously distributed about 30 of these cards. Cards to two Bobcats leaders were distributed at this Leader Gathering.

6. **Bobcat History**
Mark reviewed the history of the Bobcats Section
I propose we write a separate document of the History of the Bobcats and keep it as a separate document and not a part of these meeting minutes. I’ll get Mark’s notes from the Leader Gathering and begin preparing it.

7. **Misc. Topics**
A. **Cyndi’s-Read, Ramble and Reflect Hikes.** Cynthia selects a book which must be read prior to the day of the trip, then discusses it during the hike. The book may be about a significant person or place and may have historic significance. She requires ‘sign up with leader’ for trip signup after experiencing one instance where trip participant balked at having to read a book in order to hike.

B. **John Wethey and Kevin Schaal** presented a brief discussion of the effort to establish road biking trips outside of the RMOTHG biking program. John was granted bike leader status by DS&L and was also granted Instructor Leader Status to train future interested bike trip leaders. Two action item goals were stated: 1- finish the road bike classification system initiated by John. Kevin to handle. 2- communicate road bike classification by publishing an article in Mile High Mountaineer. Kevin to handle.

   a. **Mountain Bike Trips.** John is a road biker, not a mountain biker. The path to qualify someone for leading mountain bike trips is unclear. The suggested approach was for an interested mountain bike trip leader to have John do an LIT bike trip for them and become a bike trip leader. Following that, the new leader could offer mountain bike trips based on their individual expertise.

C. **Trail Head Discussion by Jeff Stevens.** Jeff suggested checking with all trip participant to learn if anyone was new to the club or new to Bobcats. If any newbies were in the group, please welcome them and take extra effort to ‘show them the ropes’ and not leave them to fend for themselves.

D. **New Member, Beginner Snowshoe, and Ascending Hikes.** Various Bobcats Trip Leaders support these programs. Increased support from the Bobcats would be welcome. For information how you can help, please contact Robbie, Jeff Stevens, Cynthia Lear or any of the other Bobcats Board members.

   a. The new member hikes and beginner snowshoe trips are pretty self-explanatory. Maybe the Ascending Hikes need a bit of explanation. The ascending hike series is geared towards new members and individuals seeking to gradually increase their fitness and hiking difficulty, with the goal of reaching the summit of a Colorado 14er in September of the year of the program. The program typically starts in June and runs through September. Members can sign up for any hike and do not have to sign up for the entire Series. The Series begins with easy A hikes and progress to more difficult B and C hikes.

E. **Robbie, Vaune, Cynthia-Trip Scheduling, Ideal Trip Size, Leader/member ratio, etc.** Please submit your trips to Vaune and Cynthia when they request them. It makes their jobs easier. No comments were made regarding ideal trip size, although some areas limit number of participants such as Indian Peaks Wilderness.

F. **Suzanne-Questionnaire.** Suzanne passed out a questionnaire asking leaders for input. Questionnaire could either be filled out on the spot or taken home and eventually given back to Suzanne. The questionnaire solicited input on desired new activities, level of anticipated
participation and request for new ideas and areas for improvement. Robbie reminded us that we are able to use CMC’s Survey Monkey platform for this and any future questionnaires or surveys.

G. Questions.
   a. Leading Winter Trips was discussed. A winter trip is defined as a trip led between November 1st and April 30th. CMC trip leaders must have taken the Avalanche Terrain Awareness (ATA) course in order to lead winter trips in “non-backcountry” terrain where there is no danger of avalanches. The ATA course should be repeated after three years. CMC trip leaders must take AIARE Level 1 to be qualified to lead winter trips in “backcountry” where the area is prone to avalanches. The AIARE 1 certification should be repeated after five years.
   b. Leader Liability was once again discussed. Leaders do have liability protection through the club UNLESS there were instances where gross negligence or willful and wanton negligence caused an accident, injury or incident.
   c. Having the carpool meeting place near the terminal point of RTD Light Rail may increase participation and may provide some differences in who signs up.

8. Leadership
   A. Leaders were reminded that Bobcats trips should focus first on trip safety, then having fun, followed by destination. We should avoid ‘summit fever’ which was also slightly restated as ‘destination fever’ meaning the push for the goal should not interfere with being safe and having fun. Mark also recommended the approach of asking ‘how did I do in leading this trip’ or ‘please give me some feedback on what you liked and what you would have liked better on this trip’ as a way for leaders to learn if there is room for improvements in their leadership style from the perspective of their trip participants.
   B. The issue of splitting the group or not to split the group was discussed. There are times when splitting the group is acceptable, but in some situations, it is ill advised to do so. Some points to consider were made
      i. What would others do or have done in the same situation?
      ii. What is the worst potential outcome if the group is split?
      iii. What other options are possible?
      iv. What is the safest option?
      v. Or adopt the policy of never splitting the group. It’s the leader’s decision to make.