

Denver Safety and Leader Newsletter

March 2018



A communication for CMC Denver Leaders

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www.hikingdenver.net

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Welcome New Leaders

Congratulations to these new leaders who were recently certified by the Denver Safety and Leadership Committee (DS&L): Sue Ahlberg, Ander Peterson, Victoria Seacrist, and Dale Statler. Sign up for one of their trips and share some of what you've learned as a CMC leader!



Revised Trip Leader School (TLS) Prerequisites

In response to feedback, DS&L has adopted new prerequisites designed to expedite the leadership qualification process for new members who quickly become engaged in the club after joining. The changes eliminate the current one-year membership requirement in favor of more CMC trip experiences.

Currently, aspiring trip leaders must meet three requirements before enrolling in TLS: (1) be a current CMC Denver Group member for a minimum of one year; (2) have a current Wilderness

First Aid (WFA) certification; and (3) complete at least three CMC trips, of which two must be non-school field trips.

Effective June 1, 2018, before enrolling in TLS a member must:

- (1) **Be a current CMC Denver Group member;**
- (2) **Complete five CMC trips, of which at least three must be non-school field trips;**
- (3) **Have a current WFA certification (within two years).**

If you encounter new members who would be good trip leader candidates, be sure to point out that they could complete the requirements without having to wait for a full year.



Announcing SALT Program Changes for CPR

Effective in late 2017, CPR through the support aid for leader training (SALT) program requires that applicants be ACTIVE leaders or senior instructors. This means they must have completed one trip or led one field trip as a senior instructor within 12 months prior to the application date. Potential CMC Denver leaders and members need only have participated in one event listed in the online activity schedule within 12 months prior to the application date. This change makes CPR qualification requirements equal to those for Wilderness First Aid (WFA).

Come to Mountain Fest at AMC/Saturday March 24, 12-4 pm FREE – Open to the Public

The 10th Annual Mountain Fest is a great way to introduce friends, neighbors, and new members to all that CMC has to offer. There will be free outdoor skills clinics, open climbing on the indoor rock wall, and an exposition on CMC hiking, mountaineering, fly fishing, and camping schools as well as Adventure Travel trips, Conservation programs, and our Youth Education Program. If you need any more incentive, the first beer is free too!



DS&L Fundraiser: King Soopers Neighborhood Gift Cards



A big thank you to all the leaders who continue to use their KS Neighborhood Gift Cards. Since the first cards were distributed to interested leaders three years ago, DS&L has received almost \$6,000 from the fundraising program, which distributes 5% of total spending to participating nonprofit organizations. The funds have been used to support avalanche education for leaders as well as leader recognition.

Given the success of the program, DS&L will consider distributing more cards later this year.



Build Your Trip Leadership Skills

Most of us have heard the adage that “Great leaders are made, not born.” No doubt some of us have more natural leadership skills than others, but everyone can improve those skills through a combination of good mentors, experience, and training.

Why is that important? Well-trained leadership is what distinguishes CMC volunteer leadership from casual hiking groups. Leaders are most frequently the face of CMC to new members who are eager to learn but have not yet taken any schools.

At a minimum, new members should expect to:

- Feel safe (about the weather, risk of injury, or getting lost)
- Be well informed before the trip (about weather, terrain, stream crossings, fitness requirements, necessary equipment, wildlife)
- Be encouraged to learn about the flora, fauna, geography, and history of the area
- Learn about field techniques like assembling pack contents, tying knots, using their poles, crossing streams, and assessing the weather

Leaders can also promote closer contact with CMC by identifying and being friendly to new members, introducing them to other members, soliciting their ideas, and educating them about CMC offerings. Ask new members to ride with you and take the opportunity to connect them with activities they might be interested in. Distribute a list of your upcoming trips and give them pointers on navigating the hikingdenver.net website.

Guard against the tendency to assume new members or guests know more than they do, particularly if most of your group are CMC veterans. Take the time at the meeting site or trailhead to make sure everyone has the 10 essentials and set clear expectations for the trip – staying together, bio-breaks, anticipated turnaround times, and the need to be flexible should

you encounter unanticipated events. Review procedures for Incident Management and First Aid. Old hat for the vets, but they'll understand.

And most important – strive to be a POSITIVE point of contact for members new and old. In the rare case in which an unhappy member files an incident report, it almost always can be summed up with that memorable movie line from Cool Hand Luke –“What we have here is a failure to communicate.”



Socializing After a Trip

By Jeff Stevens, Bobcats Leader

Everyone knows that our competition (“Meetups”) likes to go out to eat (a meal, a snack) and a drink (a coffee, a cola, or something a little more tasty) after a hike or snowshoe or ski outing. On CMC trips, very few leaders offer an after-trip outing. Usually the idea never comes up. It seems that many of us either don’t care for extracurricular socializing, or we simply want to get home as soon as possible.

Trip participants also come in various flavors: always ready for more, never ready, and maybe/maybe-not. Meet-up organizers often schedule social time after a trip and so do our very own Rocky Mountain Over-the-Hill-Gang Trip Leaders. When people expect an after-trip stop, they either look forward to it or plan ahead to skip the event and so feel comfortable they will not feel pressured to attend.

So it would seem that there are lots of opinions on this issue. And maybe this is what should inspire us as leaders. Maybe we should want to encourage a bit of social activity at the end of a trip, and suggest a spot for a reconnoiter, emphasizing that each participant can go or not, completely at his or her choice.

A little social activity at the end of a trip, in a setting more congenial to conversation, out of the wind, the rain, the snow, the wonderful distractions of Mamma Nature, is actually a **good way to build camaraderie among our members.**

And we can try two different approaches.

If the recommended place is along the highway back to the original meeting place, where the carpools are arranged, then drivers and riders can be divided into those who do and those who do not want to participate at the place and time of the meeting with the carpools being formed based on this principle.

If the social activity is to occur somewhere near the original parking lot, then there is a simpler approach. In this case, the leader and the participants can even wait to decide once they have returned to the starting gate.

The key word in all this is **optional**. Participation in the *apres*-trip social event should be optional for each of the participants, **as well as the leader her- or himself**. We should not feel obliged to join in the fun, especially if we have other plans, or we are too pooped to continue, or we just can't wait to take a shower and get ready for the evening's festivities with our significant others.

How to get started with this? One thing you can do is to alert potential trip members by adding something like this to your trip description:

There will be an **optional** celebratory stop after the hike. It is completely optional; don't feel any obligation to join in if you can't or just don't want to.

And what to do if you just don't want to bothered organizing (and attending)? Why not ask someone on your roster to take the reins? Recruit a social director for the event.

Kudos and Thank You



...to Bob Collins, Pat McKinley, Tracie (Sawade) Piller, and Nancy Stevenson, who are stepping down from DS&L after 3-4 years of faithful service. We will miss you!

If you know of potential committee candidates who are interested in safety and leadership issues and have strong CMC or mountaineering backgrounds, please have them contact DS&L Committee Chair Linda Lawson at lkl14er@comcast.net.



Test Your Leadership Skills – A Scenario

From time to time we'll pose a leadership challenge and ask you to think about how you'd respond. If you think your insights would be useful, please distill them to 250 well-chosen words and we'll publish them in the following newsletter. Here's the first:

Your group of eight hikers is climbing Mount Sniktau, planning for 1,500 feet of elevation gain over 6 miles. Today's forecast, which you shared via a pre-trip email and updated this morning, calls for wind and rain beginning at 11:00 a.m. It's now 9:00 a.m., the group is about 1 mile from the summit, and the weather is currently clear.

At the meeting location, you provided maps and identified which route the group would take. You also talked about lightning and weather safety protocols. Chris, one of your participants, says he just heard a peal of thunder and wants the group to turn around immediately. Chris previously told the group that a close friend was struck by lightning last summer.

What do you do? How do you go about making a decision, and what factors should influence it?

Please send your responses to djmonsma@gmail.com.