

CMC February 2020 Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

ZOOM PHONE CALL

Present

President: Debby Jones

Vice President: Tom Weaver

Secretary: Kathy McAuley

Treasurer: George Bauernfeind

Immediate Past President: Randy Fluharty

Councilor for Education and Community Outreach: Jan Onan

Councilor for Hiking: Brenda Worley

Councilor for Trail Maintenance: Ron Navik

Councilor for Technology: Judy Magura

Councilor at Large: Chris Koebelin

Councilor for Membership: Lynn Saul

Councilor for Conservation: Mike Fisher

Absent

Councilor at Large: Sarah Broughton

Councilor for Communication: Stuart English

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Randy to approve the minutes for the February 2020 meeting, seconded by Chris, and approved by the Council. A motion was also made by Brenda to approve the minutes for the October 2019 meeting, seconded by Judy and approved by the Council.

Business:

Hiking – Brenda

All parks and trails will open May 8, 2020. The Council discussed next steps in reopening the hiking calendar and when, based on the reopening of North Carolina. Once CMC hiking resumes, requirements such as: 6 foot distance between participants, the need for sign up to ensure groups did not exceed 10, no key swaps or shuttles, no sharing of food, parking to accommodate 10 separate cars, and only open trails, were discussed. The hiking committee developed guidelines including those listed, which will be shared with the Council for comments. There was also discussion of Technology adding a Covid-19 tab to the website. Once finalized, the guidelines will be updated on the CMC website.

Brenda has not yet heard back on the North Carolina Recreation Grant.

Action Items: Brenda to share draft guidelines with Council for comment.

Annual Meeting - Tom

The Annual Meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Biltmore village. This is the same location as last year. The room has been secured for November 6, 2020. The cost per person for the dinner will be the same as last year, with the same minimum dollar commitment from meals and alcohol. CMC must sign a document committing to holding the event at the DoubleTree by Hilton, and provide a deposit to hold the date. A prominent speaker has been tentatively identified for the event. Council is checking options for canceling the event if there is another closure due to Covid-19. Brenda motioned to approve moving forward in securing the location, pending confirmation of acceptable Covid-19 cancellation response, Jan seconded, and Council approved.

Action Items: Tom will reach out to the DoubleTree by Hilton to confirm Covid-19 cancellation policy and to secure the date. George will provide the deposit for DoubleTree by Hilton to secure the location. Tom will also reach out to the speaker for the event, to confirm availability to present at this event.

Financial report – George

CMC continues to be in good shape financially. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a noticeable drop in both renewals and new memberships. The Council discussed the option of extending memberships for all members by an additional three months to compensate for the lack of events during the North Carolina pandemic shutdown.

George noted the incredible job Trails is doing with acquiring grant funding. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy grant and the North Carolina Parks and Recreation grants together comprise approximately \$10,000 in funding for CMC trail work this year.

Action Item – Judy will explore how we can extend memberships in our system.

Membership – Lynn

Lynn provided information on obtaining new promotional products for CMC display at outreach events. The products include: a lighter branded display, a teardrop banner to note our location, tablecloth, 3 banners to be used by various committees (made of outdoor fabric and grommets), and a plain pop up tent. Lynn researched several vendors and with the \$1200 budget allocation, narrowed the field down, based on most durable and lightweight. The total for all the items would be approximately \$1350 without tax and shipping. Lynn requested an additional \$400 above the \$1200 already budgeted, anticipating there will be funds left over, but also ensuring there will be enough to cover all graphics and logo. The graphics with logo will include our website motto “Hike, Save Trails, and Make Friends”.

Diamond Brand gift certificate – Lynn will reach out to check if Diamond Brand is still honoring the gift certificates provided to CMC members upon CMC membership renewal.

Judy made a motion to increase the promotional products budget from \$1200 to \$1600, Randy seconded and Council approved. This will still leave Membership with a remaining \$400 budget for the year.

Action Items – Lynn to move forward with the purchase of the promotional materials as noted above. Lynn to reach out to Diamond Brand to determine if they will still be providing gift certificates to CMC members, upon renewal of CMC membership.

Technology – Judy

Judy will continue to encourage CMC membership renewals by continuing to notify of expiring memberships until 90 days past the membership renewal date, rather than the current 30 days. Updated hiking guidelines due to Covid-19 will be posted when finalized.

Action Items: Judy to amend notifications of membership renewal from 30 days to 90 days post member renewal date. Judy to post updated hiking guidelines to website when finalized.

Conservation – Mike

The submission deadline date for comments to the draft National Forest Management Plan (NFMP) has been extended to June 29, 2020. The Conservation committee has identified the issues and the priorities. The details are compiled in a 3000 page document, which includes competing priorities of organizations with differing goals. The Forest Service (FS) has laid out 3 composite alternatives to meet all needs to a degree. It is anticipated that no individual group will get everything they want in this plan, there will need to be a balance among the interested groups. Each alternative provided by the FS includes flexibility and tradeoffs. The Conservation committee is determining input, based on CMC preferences, while also recognizing the tradeoffs associated with each alternative (e.g. wilderness, backcountry, road access, hunting access, and limitations on new trail construction). The Council has been asked to review the composite alternatives document related to the NFMP. CMC will need to choose an alternative from those provided.

Below are descriptions of the management areas included in the NFMP:

Backcountry – where CMC hikes

Ecological interest area – this is an area with a special interest, such as an endangered plant species

Interface – where public meets forest land, such as along roads or a campground

Matrix – what is in between the Interface and the Backcountry, this area will not get the protection and will include logging or other commercial interest, as well as hunting.

Trail bank – under alternatives b and d, there will be no net new trail mileage, however, credits can be obtained for new trail, if a trail is discontinued. There will be additional pressure to make hiking trails multi-use trails. The FS has no money for trail work, so any new trails will need a commitment to maintain that trail. CMC Trail crews are currently at capacity, so CMC would not be able to take on any new trails.

CMC Council has scheduled a meeting on this topic for Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Action Items: Council members to review the NFMP composite alternatives document sent from Mike via email on 5/5/20, to prepare for meeting to discuss on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Trails – Ron

Major trails are currently closed, including the AT, most of Pisgah Forest, most of the Mountains to Sea Trail, and all of the Appalachian Trail. CMC will request to clear trails 2 weeks prior to their opening. An email will be sent to Pisgah Forest to request access to clear trails prior to opening and also a zoom meeting will be scheduled with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to request access prior to opening. There could be safety issues that need to be taken care of prior to the trails opening.

The ATC has cancelled the Konnarock Trail Crew, so that work will not be completed.

National Trail Day on June 6, 2020 has been cancelled.

CMC has received a request for shovel ready projects; there is the potential for help on these projects from another entity.

A major project on the Barnett Branch trail was completed. The trail was releveled and the boardwalk was repaired, due to damage from a fallen tree. The trail is now in very good shape. Almost all of the secondary trails have been adopted, including the Art Loeb trail.

The Green River Game Land agreement expires in June and will not be renewed. This area is primarily used for hunting.

Trails completed chainsaw and cross saw classes in March, 2020, and a CPR course in February 2020.

Trails has requested new awards:

- Volunteers working on 3 separate work crews, on 6 separate days would be provided a hat or t shirt
- Trails crew members participating in hiking or hiking members working with trails crew, based on 50 hours or 100 hours, would receive an award.

Randy motioned to approve the new awards, Jan seconded and the Council approved.

Education - Jan

There will be no Youth Partnership Challenge (YPC) hikes this 3rd quarter. YPC is looking to develop a Hiking Passport similar to that developed in Saluda. YPC is also planning to include a trail maintenance opportunity, like pulling weeds or invasive plants.

Education is planning classes for CMC. Classes could include: Survival, Why Knot, and GPS using smartphone, All Trails, and Gaia. The GPS class may be held via Zoom.

Action Items:

Education to develop YPC Hiking Passport and Scheduling of classes for CMC members.

Nominating Committee – Randy

- Deby and Tom are both in their 2nd year.
- George, Mike, Kathy, and Stu have finished 1st term, but are eligible for a 2nd term
- Brenda is in year 2 of first term
- Lynn, Judy, Jan and Chris are in 2nd year of 2nd term
- Sarah can start a 2nd term
- Ron has completed 2 terms

Randy requested that those eligible to continue on the Council, email him to confirm if they are willing to stay on the Council.

The Awards committee is looking for nominees for the following:

- Distinguished Service Award – this award looks at the record of service to CMC, of the individual over a number of years
- Recognition Award – this award is for service to CMC in this year

Randy requested any recommended nominee names be sent to him. Also, anyone interested in participating in the nominating committee, please contact Randy.

Action Items: Council members are to contact Randy to confirm if they are willing to stay on the Council, if eligible. Members can provide names to the Awards committee for CMC members that are recommended for the Distinguished Service Award and the Recognition Award. Randy is also requesting CMC members interested in participating in the Nominating Committee contact him.

Next Meeting: August 5, 2020 at 6 p.m. Location to be determined

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Submitted by Kathy McAuley, Secretary 5/9/2020