

Pandemic CMC Leaders survey January 2021
Danny Bernstein for the Communications Committee

It has been seven months since CMC returned to group hiking, albeit with several restrictions. On behalf of the Communications Committee, I wanted to learn how current leaders worked with the new rules. I sent all leaders who scheduled a hike in the 4th quarter of 2020, and a few others, a questionnaire asking them several questions on their experience with the pandemic protocol. This will become a vital part of CMC history.

There was a fantastic response - 24 answers out of 36. It is a great response, particularly since the questionnaire asked respondents to write and not just check off boxes.

Here are the raw responses, edited only for the most obvious identifiers.

1Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? One was cancelled due to weather, one was full, one had 7. I assume it was full or not due to interest in the hike itself.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It is not time consuming, just have to have a process in place to create and adjust the list for changes. Knowing who is going to be on the hike is not important to me.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? That is the first consideration as there has to be enough parking. Hikes are definitely rejected due to parking constraints.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Not necessarily but I do have to reject hikes if there isn't enough room at the trail head for everyone to drive separately. I tend not to lead shuttle hikes but I think they are enjoyable and I miss the longer, one way hikes that require a shuttle.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

2Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? No. I had last-minute cancellations and my previous hike had only 6-7 people including myself. My 1/31 hike is full with a waiting list, however, and I anticipate having 10 people.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Not too hard. I tagged all emails I received so that I could make sure I had requests in order and kept a separate running list of who had requested to join. A minor pain but no big deal.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? Yes, definitely. With everyone arriving in a separate car, parking availability is crucial.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

I did reject a hike that was a shuttle. Shuttle hikes are not feasible given the pandemic restrictions. The only options are loops or out-and-back hikes. The hike scheduler had suggested a shuttle hike for my 1/31 Bent Creek hike. I found an equivalent hike without a shuttle and good parking.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

Not really. I think it makes sense to continue limiting group size. It's a logistics tradeoff: managing the RSVPs vs. finding sufficient parking for who knows how many cars.

3Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example]

Yes

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

Yes--always, and with a waiting list. One hike actually included 12 people, but that decision was based on the fact of several "couples" who would drive together so that we'd have more like 7 rather than 10 cars.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? More difficult than it used to be! But then, I'm a new hike leader! Still, hike leaders must be on top of organizing and keeping up with who's signed up, who's dropped off, who's on the wait list, etc.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Not really--not yet--I've only signed on for two! And the two were mostly determined by accessibility in winter months (i.e., no BRPkwy access, etc.)

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

No

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

4Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example]

Yes, I have led several hikes.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

Started with 8, then moved to 10 because I wasn't as comfortable being around people beyond my basic pod at first.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes?

From the beginning I contacted hikers several times to ensure they would show up and kept close tabs on my waiting list which was helpful as I had people drop out on the final (a few days before) contact. So a lot more work than in the before days.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes, parking and accessibility (not too much rough, gravel road driving)

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

Yes, there are several that I might have chosen but ended up doing as in/out. Once example is Tanyard Gap to Hot Springs. Instead I did it as Tanyard gap to second Pump Gap junction and back.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

5Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] I have led several half, three-quarter, and all day hikes since hiking resumed.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

I have had some hikes that filled and others that have not. I think of those that have not - it has been due to low interest (I had 3 on a half-day summer hike in Turkey Pen, and 5 on a half-day fall hike in Bent Creek), changes to the hike after the scout (several people changed their RSVP after I announced a change in itinerary to my upcoming all-day hike) or people changing their RSVP at the last minute not allowing others from the waitlist to join.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? I like knowing who is coming on the hike and being able to communicate directly with them once I have scouted the hike. However, managing the emails myself has been painstaking. I receive numerous emails from each person who RSVPs, often months before the hike, and it has been very easy to miss an RSVP/ change to RSVP (which I have on several occasions). I've also found keeping track of sign up and wait lists manually is another area for mistakes to enter. It seems like many of the people who email me months in advance are only holding a place on a hike, and they may change their RSVP close to the date of the hike. Communicating these changes in attendance with people on the waitlist has also introduced delays, especially when someone changes their RSVP closer to the day of the hike. If this is a system that is going to be recommended for more than the short term, I do think it would be to the benefit of the club to consider ways to streamline or mechanize this process as much as possible.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes, I have had to alter hikes based on parking availability - for example, I did a fall hike in Shining Rock and parking 10 vehicles was not possible. We altered the hike after the scout for cars to park at Devils Courthouse, but even that lot was full and it made for a longer hike which some were not prepared for despite an announcement being made about a change to the itinerary after the scout.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

Yes, I had two hikes that were scheduled at the start of last year prior to the pause in hiking that I was not able to reschedule because both were shuttles.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

6Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] I have led hikes since then, about one a month.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Most filled. On one I had two last minute (morning of hike) cancellations.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? There is some work managing the list, but I wouldn't say it is difficult. After the hike with 2 last minute cancellations I began to cheat a bit. People seem to be registering early and then

cancelling, so I decided to accept up to 12. As the hike date approached, I did not add anyone from the wait list until I had two cancellations, so I still ended up around 10.

It's not important to me to know in advance who will be hiking but having a limit on hikers and knowing how many will show up is beneficial, as is the ability to communicate with my hikers by email if something comes up. Breaking News is OK but the email is better. I always thought our previous system with no limit sometimes resulted in a group that was too large to safely manage (like 20 and up).

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? The inability to limit cars at the trailhead through carpooling was a major criteria for hike selection.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

I can't say that I did, but it would be nice to be able to include shuttles in the mix of hikes under consideration,

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

No. Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

7Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes, more than one.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

Did not fill to 10-person limit because some hikers who registered did not show up. We need to use airline rules, and register more than ten, expecting drop-outs.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Registering hikers and keeping track is time-consuming and annoying. The good side is that hike changes or cancellations can easily be transmitted via email to registrants. Ten hikers is too low a number because hikers have to be turned away. 15 would be better.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Most parking areas are large enough. There are a few notorious ones which fill up, like Turkey Pen and Jones Gap. Leaders and schedulers need to review each selected parking area to verify the anticipated parking conditions.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

Yes, dozens of hikes. Avoiding shuttle hikes restricts hike choices.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

Shuttle hikes should be acceptable if safety rules are followed (wear masks in car(s) and leave car windows open).

8Response

#1.) Yes

#2.) No (I do not know the reason that ten people did not sign up.)

#3.) It wasn't too time-consuming. It was nice to know who was coming. But, under normal non-virus conditions, it's also nice to have a surprise as to who is coming.

#4.) Parking availability was included in the thought process. Creative parking for future hikes that I'm leading will probably be cars doubling up (one in back of the other).

#5.) Yes. It seemed rather silly to be doing an "in and out" on a trail that I was used to starting and ending at different locations.

#6.) It will certainly be good when the virus and these restrictions are over with. Many members who would like to hike with the Club are not able to do so at the moment because of the limitations. Will they lose interest in being a member?

9Response

Yes, to question one.

The two hikes that I have led were similar in that they had 10 people and only 6 on the actual hike. Having less people did not bother me, but if I had to leave someone behind on the wait list because I was not informed of an absence, this did bother me. Most hike leaders are sending an email to those signed up asking if they are coming a week before the hike. But you can't depend on that.

But that is one of the problems that go with what we have to deal with today. I do not mind avoiding car shuttles or going to big parking lots.

10Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example]

Yes, I have led a hike on September 30 and December 30.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

Nine on each hike. I had more on the waiting list but could not fill last minute cancellations.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It was not difficult to manage. I would have appreciated knowing about cancellations sooner than the day before so I could fill the openings. I did like knowing who was coming. It let me know about fitness level issues I might encounter and it allowed me to make changes in the plans like meeting places and times. The drawback to reservations is that hikers can't make last minute decisions to hike. Back in pre-COVID days, I could look at the weather and how I felt and decide last minute if I wanted to go. The other drawback is that with only 10 spots, you have to jump on the schedule as soon as it comes out to get most hikes. This means I have to think three months out about my schedule. These drawbacks are for the hikers, not the leaders. For leaders, the drawback is the added management time, but I didn't find this burdensome. You ended up hiking with those who were fastest to ask for a spot and not necessarily the ones who you know and like to hike with.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Oh yes. I only chose hikes with adequate parking. Then, with the Montreat hike, I had to park at a different place than planned. I felt it did cut down on choices when choosing a hike.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Please explain and be specific. Yes, one reason I like hiking with CMC is because you can do shuttle hikes that you cannot do on your own.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

Some leaders are not following the rules. I think this is dangerous and careless. Carpooling should only be done with people you live with. Or it may be OK to carpool with one other person not in your family if one rides in the back seat and you roll the front passenger window and the left rear window to create an air wall. This is what I read as being safer for riding with

someone you do not live with. Keeping space between hikers should be emphasized, especially since we are not wearing masks on the trail.

11Response

1. I have led seven hikes since July 1, including the one yesterday.
2. Of the seven hikes, only the first three were filled -- with nine hikers on the day of the hike. The others were filled but with cancellations prior to and on the day of the hike, I had six on three hikes and three on yesterday's hike due to unfavorable weather conditions. It appears that as the pandemic progressed, more new members were signing up for hikes, but they seem less committed.
3. I would not say it was "time-consuming" in that the changes did not require a significant amount of time to process; but it does add a certain level of stress to make sure I keep the roster accurate. It is helpful to know who are planning to come and it enables targeted messages to be sent to them.
4. Yes, parking availability has been a significant criterion in choosing a hike. It has created some 'stress' in the case of my selection of Looking Glass Rock as a half-day hike after I noticed how very many cars were parked along FS475 at times.
5. I think many A.T. hikes in the area would be better hikes as shuttle hikes. However, in most cases, we can still have a very satisfying hike doing just an in-and-out. A good example is the hike a couple months ago. The A.T. from Devil's Fork Gap to Carmen is usually a shuttle hike; the leader did the part from Devil's Fork Gap; we went about 4.5 miles and turned back.
6. Some hike leaders have started over-booking to try to compensate for unwanted vacancies when cancellations happen at the last minute. Not a bad approach. Other leaders get help from another leader to create a second group so that everyone who signed up gets to go. A very good approach too. That's all that comes to mind at this point.

12Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes.
2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Yes, but inevitably some cancelled at the last minute.
3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It wasn't too difficult. It was similar to leading a wilderness hike. While I did like having people sign up ahead of time, I missed seeing people that didn't try to sign up for a hike because they assumed they were full. Also we felt badly when people on the waiting list didn't get to hike and people cancelled at the last minute. It wasn't too much of a problem though.
4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? Yes, we made sure the hikes we did had enough parking. It didn't really alter what hikes we did or didn't do. Most trailheads have enough parking. We did have an almost full parking lot when we hiked the A.T. to Little Hump and Big Hump mountains. We had an early start, but it's a long drive.
5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Please explain and be specific. No.
6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? I think the club has handled pandemic hiking well. While I was disappointed not to

be able to have club hikes during the beginning of the pandemic, I think it was prudent and it didn't keep me from hiking. I appreciate the measured, but not militant approach of the club.

13Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes. Led 1 hike end of June and 2 hikes after.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Two hikes had 9 hikers due to last minute cancellations. The third I chose not to fill all slots due to limited parking.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Didn't find it difficult or time consuming. Was a bit annoying with last minute cancellations since it was too late to contact someone on the waitlist. I did like knowing who was coming and if any people were new to CMC so I could ask about hiking experience prior to the hike. Also liked knowing how many people to expect.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? Please explain and be specific. Not really. There was only the one I didn't know what the parking availability was until I scouted it. Dealt with it by limiting the number of hikers I would sign up.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Please explain and be specific. No, wasn't a consideration. I don't like to lead hikes with shuttles.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

I think the Covid rules have worked out fine for the most part. One issue is that people have learned to just register for all hikes they think they may want to go on during the quarter. I do this as well. However, if people cancel at the last minute, there is little or no time to contact those on the waitlist. Most leaders have been contacting the group before to confirm attendance which does help mitigate this problem.

I do have a problem with the few leaders, and scheduler, that have ignored the rules and think it's okay to do shuttles. Either you play by the CMC rules or you shouldn't lead the hike.

As a member though, I do miss being able to decide the night before or day of, whether I want to go on a hike.

14Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes, I led numerous hikes - some scheduled, some Meetup - from July 1 through mid-October, when I temporarily left the area.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? I adhered to the 10-person limit because it was CMC's guideline, but I occasionally split larger groups and arranged for a co-leader to guide a second batch with a 10-15 minute gap between the two groups.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Yes, I like to know who's signed up. It helps in setting pace and allows me, in advance, to discourage hikers who are not a good fit for the group. CMC's email registration and cancellation procedures for scheduled hikes were cumbersome, error-prone, and time-

consuming. The Meetup process is significantly better with programmatic management of sign-ups, cancellation, modifications, and other communications.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes. Because carpooling was discouraged, I either rejected hikes without adequate parking or reduced the hike limit below 10.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

I categorically reject shuttle hikes for reasons of simplicity unrelated to Covid.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? I haven't led a hike since mid-October, so I'm not sure what rules are currently in place.

15Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example]

Yes

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

Yes

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes?

I do not find the sign-up process difficult at all. I use email communication with hikers. I do like the fact that I do know who is hiking or cancelling.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes, due to Covid, most hikers drive solo, so you need a large enough parking lot for Sunday hikes. Popular spots fill up quickly on Sundays. This also impacts starting time for some hikes.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

Yes, as example, I love the Pilot Cove-Slate Rock Creek trail for half Day Sunday hike, especially in the fall. Due to length it needs to be a shuttle and has a lack of parking. The lack of shuttles and parking has a huge effect on trail choices.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

I find distancing very difficult to maintain while on hikes for both me and the hikers. When I lead a hike, I try to share information about the trail or aspects of the trail with the group to enhance the hike. This often leads to hikers crowding to hear. Also, most hikers like the social aspect of hiking and find it difficult to distance and still chat. I also have been considering not leading any more hikes till the Covid threat is lessened.

16Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example]

Yes, we have led several.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

On the average we had more than 10 sign up, but more than often we got late cancellations bringing the actual number that hiked with us under 10. On a couple of occasions we had more than 10, so we split the group into two teams.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes?

We did like to know who was coming on our hike in advance. It improved our communications with them prior to the hike.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes, we selected hikes that we knew would accommodate the number of vehicles.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

We did not schedule any hikes that required a shuttle because of Covid concerns.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? No concerns at this time, we both prefer smaller groups on our hikes. Ten to twelve hikers is fine.

17Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] 4 hikes

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

I limited my hikes to 7 plus the leader. I had a last minute June 10 cancel due to thunder. Nov. 22, I had a last minute cancel but a walk-in joiner. He said CMC but think he was a defunct member.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? I find having hikers text no. immensely time saving. This helps management of Covid schedule hiking so much. I've had big waitlist. I see a text instantly or quickly. Not so with email.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes. I feared responsibility for getting (potentially) 10 cars a spot. I selected hiker numbers and hikes accordingly.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

Yes. The new Wildcat rock to Bearwallow mountain

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

I so appreciate the CMC and all the efforts that has gone into scheduling and maintaining safe hiking. Once again, my gratitude to CMC!!

18Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes, one. I was to lead it twice, but knee issues caused me to ask someone else to lead one of those.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

For the one I led, there were only 7 of us, but it turned out that the rain prediction for the day of the hike wasn't good, but no one cancelled. And we got really wet but had fun!

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Not difficult at all, or time consuming, to manage those who registered. It was nice to know who was coming and to be able to communicate with them ahead of time.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes, I tried to ensure that CMC cars - likely 8-10 cars - would be able to park, along with the expectation of other hikers using that parking as well.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Please explain and be specific.

Well, I definitely did not consider any hikes that necessitated a shuttle.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? I think the current format and rules are appropriate and necessary as long as we are dealing with the Coronavirus.

19Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes, I led hikes in July and November.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Both hikes had 8 - 10 hikers. I didn't have a waiting list on either hike.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It was no trouble having hikers registering via email. Knowing who would be hiking was good because I contacted them before the hike to confirm participation and establish a more convenient meeting place to caravan cars to the trailhead.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Both my hikes had trailheads that had adequate parking for 10 hikers. A few hikers did carpool, but that was their choice. Any hikes I plan will have to have enough parking to accommodate 10 hikers.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

There are some shuttle hikes I would like to lead, but I am patient and will wait until it is safe to do so. There are enough loop and in/out hikes in the meantime.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? As I noted above, there are CMC hikers who are carpooling to trailheads, but that is their choice. I believe the CMC needs to continue with the COVID protocols until state and county advisories and CDC guidelines say otherwise. I am comfortable hiking with COVID protocols in place.

20Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] I led a fall hike and will lead another on March 7.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? The Nov hike was full.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It is definitely more time-consuming, and there were a lot of back-and-forth emails to fill the hike. I hope all leaders are sending out confirmation emails before hikes so no one has to worry about no-shows.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

I would not consider leading a hike where parking could be problematic during this Covid time.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

This is not the time to be doing car shuttles, so I would not consider one.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment? I hope all leaders are sticking to the guidelines. This is not the time to "wink-wink" scoff at the protocols. Because I am old, I have had my first vaccination, but I believe many of our hikers may be waiting into the summer. Even when all have been vaccinated who want to be vaccinated, I will require proof of vaccination for carpooling or shuttles.

21Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Twice and one coming up next week.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Always, with wait lists

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Not nearly as difficult or time consuming as I expected. Just had to keep up with it every day keeping a list of hikers & replying to them. Then, close to time for the hike, emailing them reminders & asking if they were still going so I could give spots to those on the wait list. Knowing who was coming was a big plus.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

Yes. Two of my favorite hikes have ample parking for our size group Boogerman Loop and Rough Creek (Canton). I like to do hikes I haven't led before so Waterrock and Black Rock was a natural choice with almost unlimited parking. There are other hikes I will enjoy leading in coming years when carpooling and shuttling are again possibilities.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

I had been scheduled to lead Pink Beds to Pisgah Inn shuttle hike, modified it to just the Pink Beds Loop with a side trip to the cascade up Barnett Branch. That hike in early June was listed on breaking news, I believe with a limit of 10.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

Everything is going great. We might work to have more times when 2 hikes are scheduled on the same day to accommodate more hikers. I have gone on 2 that were double groups with 2 leaders and leaving at slightly different times or different routes. Others were at places with lots of parking. The double hikes also help accommodate twice as many hikers.

22Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] I have led 6 hikes and a 7th was cancelled due to weather.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not?

I had 7, 7, 7, 8, 10, 11 total on these hikes. The 11 was a Carolina Mountain Meetup for Thanksgiving since I only had one extra on the waitlist and did not want to leave them behind.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? Not really a problem, though more work to keep account of people. I sort of like to know who is coming rather than whomever shows up.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability?

YES. I only picked hikes with sufficient parking and with an earlier meetup time.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles?

I am still new to the area, so I do not have favorite hikes. I did eliminate hikes I would have done since we could not car shuttle. I tried changing some of the standard CMC hikes to create something new due to parking limitations.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

I don't have any problems with the present method since I realize and accept the constraints due to the pandemic. In the future, we may consider asking about vaccinations, date and still requiring masks even if we carpool [next Fall].

23Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes.

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Ten on one hike and only eight on the other. Two people (a couple) did not show up and did not cancel beforehand or send any note of apology afterwards. So those two spots went empty. So very rude to deny others. I had a waiting list looking for cancellations. Since that time, several other leaders have experienced the same thing with this same couple. I have decided that I will not allow them on any of my future hikes.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? I did not find it overly time consuming to manage the registrants. As a leader, I did like the fact that I knew who was coming. However as a participant non-leader, I really like that we can make last-minute decisions on whether to attend or not (during non-Covid times).

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? Please explain and be specific. Parking is more of a consideration than normal due to more non-club people hiking and less carpooling. I did not find that overly burdensome, however.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? I did reject a favorite Slate Rock Creek/Pilot Cove loop this Fall due to the fact that shuttles are shut down and no one likes to walk on that dusty gravel for more than a mile.

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

No. Maybe in a few months we can get back to normal. :)

24Response

1. Have you led a CMC hike since July 1? If not, what was the reason? [Weather, for example] Yes

2. On the average, did you fill your hikes to the 10 person limit? If not, why not? Yes, I went a few over because the trails were wide and we had plenty of parking.

3. How difficult or time consuming was it to manage the people who registered (and maybe canceled) on your hikes? Did you like the fact that you knew who was coming on your hikes? It was no problem at all. I like knowing who is coming on my hikes so I can contact them regarding any changes in times, meeting places or whatever may come up.

4. Did you choose or reject hikes based on parking availability? Please explain and be specific. I made sure there were enough parking places for the number I allowed on the hike.

5. Did you have to reject your favorite hikes because they were shuttles? Yes

6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the way hikes are being led at the moment?

I feel like we could do short shuttles, 5 miles or less, as long as everyone wears masks and have car air on circulating from outside.

From Danny Bernstein

For those who want a mechanized registration system, this is what Meetup is for.

It works well, lets the leader put a limit on the number of hikers, and lets hikers sign up and back out as needed. Right now, as I write this article (February 2021), I see that our last CMC meetup hike was Thanksgiving morning, 2020.

I see a couple of problems with using Meetup for hike signup:

1. Many leaders will not want to use the Meetup system. One can get around that by having the hike schedulers put the hikes on Meetup but that's a lot of work. I don't think you can have a hybrid system.
2. Many hikers will be discouraged by having to use the Meetup system to sign up for hikes.
3. Anyone can sign up on a CMC hike. Even if the hike clearly says, "Members only", people will ignore it. The two Thanksgiving morning hikes that were led were full within 30 minutes of it appearing online.

Here are the rules for leading hikes during the Covid-19 Pandemic – from the website January 2021.

How to Register for a Hike under Covid-19

During Covid-19, every scheduled CMC hike has a limit of ten hikers. To get a space on a hike, click on the hiking icon which appears on the first page that comes up after you login. Then click on Current Schedules. Click on the day of the week you wish to hike to get the schedule for the current quarter. Then scroll down to view the available hikes. When you find the ones you want, you must contact the leader via email to let them you want to be included on their hike. The leader will respond to let you know if you are on the "go list" or the "waiting list". If you are put on the "waiting list", the leader will contact you if one of the hikers drops out and leaves a space. Happy Hiking.

COVID19 Hiking Regulations

- 1) Bring hand sanitizer to use on the trail.
- 2) No sharing food and drink.
- 3) Avoid touching face.
- 4) Cover your mouth whenever coughing or sneezing using inner elbow or tissue and dispose of it using Leave No Trace Principles.
- 5) Keep some distance between you and other hikers. Six feet has been recommended by CDC.
- 6) People at higher risk for severe illness as noted by CDC should refrain from hiking at this time.

- 7) Any hike leader or hiker who is feeling sick should refrain from hiking and congregating with others.
- 8) Hikers and hike leaders should number no more than 10. This means hike leaders will have to take reservations for any hike they are leading.
- 9) No more carpooling. Everyone should drive themselves to the trail head unless they live in the same household.
- 10) Bring face covering to use when passing other hikers or when crowding occurs.
- 11) The CMC waiver must be signed. Hikers are responsible for their own safety and can use gloves, their own pen, hand sanitizer.