SEDONA WESTERNERS BOARD MEETING
May 12, 2025
Sedona Public Library
3250 White Bear Lane, Sedona, AZ

CALL TO ORDER at 11:00 am

Present:
Kelley Malek, Ray LaPorte, Jim Thomas, Gary Morgan, Michael Henry, Jon Petrescu, Dan Celeste, Donna Forsythe, Lou Sideris, Lisa Critchlow, John Regalski, Dave Vanderwater, Mark Bealafeld, Mary McCaffrey, Bill Rolfe, Lynn Moffatt, Clay Dunsmore, Jan Taylor (for Jane Dasher)

Absent:
Jane Dasher, Jackie Pinho, Sandi Heysinger

Introductions

- Handouts – elected and appointed officers
- We still need someone for the position of Roundup Boss

Miscellaneous Logistics

- Website Account – ID and password: Jim Sweeney will send out the login information on June 1 for the new board members.
- Hike bosses need to post their 2025-26 hike schedules by July 1.
- Monthly meetings will continue at the Sedona Public Library. The United Methodist Church would cost three times as much as the library.
- A self-storage unit at Oak Creek Storage on 179 was acquired. Kelley and Lynn have keys, so those storing materials at their homes may use the storage unit. We are sharing the unit with the Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund.

Discussion Topics

- Budget – reviewed last year's major expenses
    - What expenditures require Board approval?
        - This is not in the by-laws, so it is up to the board.
        - Most items are ongoing, such as insurance.
        - Typically, the Trail Boss and Treasurer have used their own judgment on expenses.
        - The budget will be configured in June by Mark Bealafeld.
        - There was discussion about whether Board approval will be needed if the cost of needed items are a particular percentage over what has been budgeted.
        - We've had a stable amount of cash on hand for several years, about $9000, but the cost of everything is going up.

- Annual dues – currently $30/year, which has not changed in about 10 years. Do we want to promote short-term membership? Do we want to raise the dues to $40? The majority of board members voted on raising the dues to $40 if we determine the dues need to be raised.
    - Gary Morgan moved to raise dues to $40
    - Jon Petrescu seconded
    - The motion carried.

- Revised sign-in sheet: Kelley made some proposed modifications to streamline the sign-in sheet (see handout). It was recommended that we add "location data be turned off," but this is something hike leaders can emphasize before the hikes. It was also requested that "no publishing of data" on the hikes be added to the sheet. Lisa requested that the "water" bullet say that everyone should have "two or more liters of water."

- Should we promote membership? What is the desirability of short-term memberships (e.g., 3-fold brochure)? There was discussion about gathering more information to determine the number of full-time residents and short-term residents. Joining the Westerners is sometimes promoted by the Visitor Center and the local hiking shops. But any kind of promotion makes us look like a business, which we aren't.

- Holiday party brainstorming
    - Venue – options may include The Hub, the Elks Club, St. John Vianney, Oak Creek Country Club, Juniper Grill in the VOC, and the restaurant at Poco Diablo. Do we want to stick to the second Thursday in December or change it? Dates can be flexible. Kelley and Lynn will visit the Juniper Grill to look at the site and get information.
    - Food – do we want to do a dinner?
    - Entertainment?
    - Cost – we want to try to keep it as low as it has been with dues subsidizing the difference.

Forest Service Relationship

- 2014 Letter of Agreement (copy provided)
    - Hiking group size
    - Cultural sites (ACTION: Rename Hart Well Canyon hikes)
    - No publicity of off-trail activities
    - Social trails / Don't Bust the Crust

- Revisions to Letter of Agreement (currently on hold) (see handout)
    - The NFS is not currently working on the agreement with the Westerners.
    - NFS Proposed: Local Site Stewards program

- NFS Proposed: More training on cultural site visits
- NFS Proposed: Year-end State-of-the-Forest meeting with Hike Bosses
- Westerners will: schedule November meeting presentation by Forest Service
- Westerners will: Better enforce 2014 provisions, especially off-system trail travel
- Westerners will: Continue to be "eyes and ears," assist hikers, pick up trash, etc.
- Westerners will: Work with Scouts on group norms and NFS restrictions
- The hike bosses need to enforce the rules in the Letter of Agreement (not walking or sitting on archeological sites, etc.), keeping groups separate for lunch/snack breaks.
- We need to change the names of hikes on the website to something more innocuous in order to conform to the NFS restrictions.
- We need to avoid publication of any off-system hiking.
- It is up to the NFS to reinitiate the discussion of the Letter of Agreement at this point.
- Westerners SHOULD NOT wear their name tags during non-Westerners hikes.

Upcoming Key Dates

- July 1 – publish hike schedules on website
- August – Hike Boss orientation
- ? – Hike Lead orientation
- September 11, 5:30 p.m. – Ice Cream Social: Introduce the new board and welcome new members
- October 9, 12:00 noon – Fall Picnic

Open Discussion / New Topics

- Our sound system (microphones) are not doing well and may fail in the near future.
- Take pictures of trash that's been picked up and send to Mark Bealafeld, which will be used by the NFS as volunteer hours.

Motion to adjourn

- Moved by Donna Forsythe
- Seconded by Dan Celeste

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jan Taylor for Jane Dasher