

Revised Minutes of the Ouachita Mountain Hikers Members Meeting
March 19, 2015

Executive Board members present: Debbie Van Veghel, Marilyn Hall, Jeannie Eichler, Rick Ericson, Anita Moore, Ralph Butler, Tom Calhoun.

Attending: Glenn Wortham – T-shirt sales; Pat Miller – Hike Flash administrator

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m., Garland County Library, Hot Springs. 33 attending

President's Remarks

Debbie Van Veghel convened the meeting by welcoming guests and new members. She then asked Pam Harrison to present the **annual audit report** of the OMH Treasurer's books and records.

Pam reported that the audit, conducted by herself, Ralph Butler and Glenn Wortham, concluded that all receipts, deposits, vouchers and disbursements were accounted for and validated. The original audit report was submitted to the Secretary, and is appended to these minutes.

Fund Raising

Glenn Wortham reminded the audience that the remaining inventory of club logo wicking T-shirts had been discounted to \$10 for short sleeved and \$16 for long sleeved T's, and were available at the back of the room.

Treasurer/Membership

Jeannie Eichler reported the following:

- Current balance of OMH Checking Account: \$3685.19
- Current Membership: 312 paid members, of which 38 are hike leaders, 82 are lifetime members, and 39 have completed the Ouachita National Recreation Trail.

Secretary/Historian - No report.

Publicity Chairperson

Tom Calhoun introduced many of the features of the new OMH club website, including the photo gallery; hiker references and guide; the latest version of the Waiver and Release of Liability form; "Trails We Hike" links; a new Club Administration section containing forms, meeting minutes, past hike flashes; and a link system to various sources of information about hiking in Arkansas.

Trail Maintenance

Ralph Butler reported that Joe Breashears completed 50 hours of OT trail maintenance, but was never awarded his maintenance T-shirt. Ralph pointed out that Joe now has 138 hours, and then presented Joe with his shirt.

Ralph summarized the repair done on the club's adopted section of the OT during regular and special work days in January and February, which included work from mile marker 168 through 176. Some of the trail service included heavy brush clearing and saw work on large downed trees. A February work day was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Hike Chairperson

Anita Moore summarized upcoming hikes: The annual Dawn to Dusk event is scheduled for March 21, and organized by Joy Linker (Approximately 43 were signed up so far, according to Joy). Also on the schedule: An OT hike that included Hunt's Loop led by Ernie Weidenberger; a Saturday trip to Sam's Throne led by Jeannie Eichler; a tour of Garvan Gardens by Jim Davis; and an overnighiter to the Buffalo National River led by Brent Alexander. Anita also mentioned the North Carolina spring trip in May, and the Glacier National Park, Wyoming, summer trip in August.

Anita asked for a volunteer to take leadership of Mike Moriarity's hike on Mount Nebo on April 25.

Old Business

(Out of order) Member volunteers, organized by Marilyn Hall, staffed an OMH information booth at the **Hot Springs Village Golf and Recreation Expo** on March 9.

The Executive Board conducted several "**Interim Meetings**" during the months of January through mid- March, approving expenditures for T-shirts and web design software, rewriting Bylaws, and revising the Waiver of Liability form. In accordance with the newly revised Bylaws (see below), the proposals, resolutions, and votes on these matters are summarized for the record and appended to these minutes.

New Business

Debbie reminded the attendees that OMH has adopted a **new Participants Waiver of Liability** form, currently available on the OMH website. She asked that *all* members who have not yet done so, to obtain the form, sign it and mail it to Treasurer Jeannie Eichler. Debbie indicated she had copies of the forms with her, and encouraged Hike Leaders to pick some up and use them with new hikers who had not formally filed for membership.

Debbie then announced that club **Bylaws had been recently revised**. She referred to an email to all members earlier in the month which furnished, as attachments, copies of both the old and the new versions. She asked if anyone had questions regarding either. Receiving none, **a motion was made and seconded to accept the revised Bylaws, and it was voted unanimously to do so.**

Debbie noted that under the new Bylaws, the position of Secretary/Historian had been separated into two positions, effective January 1, 2016, and that both would need to be filled, along with the Vice President and Hike Chair positions whose terms were ending.

Debbie informed the attending members that the Board had conducted its annual review of the **fee for OMH membership**. The Board felt that \$5.00 for annual membership and \$50 for lifetime membership were still appropriate fees, and recommended keeping them at that level. **A motion was made and seconded to keep the annual membership fee at \$5.00 and lifetime membership at \$50, and was unanimously approved.**

Debbie indicated that volunteers were needed for staffing an OMH information booth at the upcoming **Hot Springs Village Community Fair** on April 29.

Evening Program

Vice President/Programs Chair Marilyn Hall introduced Bo Lea as the evening speaker. Bo, an active OMH member, is also the current president of Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT).

Bo talked first about the history of the Ouachita National Recreation Trail (OT for short). It is 224 miles long stretching from Pinnacle Mountain State Park near Little Rock well into Oklahoma to the Talimena State Park. Most of the Arkansas portion cuts through the 1.6 million acre Ouachita National Forest. FoOT was formed to, and has accepted responsibility for maintaining the entire OT in conjunction with the US Forest Service. Bo indicated that over the years, volunteers have cleared massive damage due to ice and wind storms, built shelters, and promoted a relationship between users...hikers, walkers and bikers.

Bo indicated that volunteerism is the heart and soul of FoOT and set out several ways in which users could "give back:"

- Attend work days on the OMH adopted section known as Flatside Wilderness
- Join FoOT and participate in its projects and programs
- Personally adopt and maintain a section (usually one mile) of the OT
- Consider participating in the Legacy Foundation (include FoOT in estate planning)
- Help with shelter construction
- Become a member of a Rapid Response Team
- Get chainsaw certified
- Help with the annual Ouachita Challenge Bike Race, a major source of funding for FoOT
- Promote the use of the OT

Conclusion

Debbie concluded the evening with a brief talk about the benefits of using hiking poles. Bo Lea demonstrated techniques.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Ericson
Secretary/Historian

Summary of motions, proposals and votes of interim meetings January through March, 2015

1. On January 26, 2015, Secretary Rick Ericson submitted by email a proposed change to the OMH Bylaws that would follow up on an earlier Board vote to separate the positions of Secretary and Historian, which change would be presented for vote at the next general meeting. He also proposed that the revised Bylaws task the Secretary with maintaining a record of motions, proposals, votes and resolutions made by the Board between regular meetings, which record would be entered into the minutes of the next meeting of the Executive Board. The changes were to also clarify that the Hike Flash Administrator was an appointed *nonvoting* Board position. **The above recommendations were accepted by a majority vote,** and Rick volunteered to draft the changes. See additional comments below regarding the drafting and approvals of the changes.
2. On January 26, Rick Ericson also requested by email that the Board consider auditing the liability waiver forms held by the Treasurer/Membership Chairperson in order to determine if every current member and hiker had completed the release. **By majority vote of the Board, the recommendation was approved.** See additional comments below regarding both the actions taken and the revision of the *Participant's Waiver and Release of Liability*.
3. On January 28, 2015, Jim Gifford reported by email **that based on Board approval, he ordered and received twenty 18" X 18" Trail Hankies** featuring a Lake Ouachita Vista Trail design for an invoiced price of \$79. The hankies were ordered for the purpose of awarding the 17 hike leaders and finishers of the entire LOVista-thon held over five days in October 2014, as well as the shuttle drivers that supported them. The remaining three will be sold, used as door prizes, or offered to Jerry Shields as a "Thank you" to the Trail Dogs that constructed the trail. The invoice was forwarded to the Treasurer for payment.
4. On January 30, 2015 the **Board unanimously approved via email the purchase of web design software by Publicity Chairperson Tom Calhoun, for \$56.** The software facilitates the postings of photos and presentations, as well as making the web site more accessible to mobile devices, and was endorsed by member software consultant, Mike Miller.
5. On February 1, 2015, Membership Chairperson Jeannie Eichler stated by email that she had completed a comparison of the current membership roster with liability release forms on file and found many to be missing. She asked the Board to consider which of the following actions the Board wished to pursue:
 - Start over and have each member sign a new release form.
 - Have hike leaders check the "missing" list she compiled to see which of their hikers need to sign a form when they show up for a hike.
 - Send the form via email to those who haven't signed requesting completion and return.
 - Combine the release with the member application form to guarantee that future signups submit the waiver.

These issues were addressed on February 23, once the Membership Application and Waiver of Liability forms were reviewed, redrafted and approved. See paragraphs 6, 7, 9 and 10 below.

6. On February 2, 2015, Web Master Tom Calhoun volunteered to post the liability release form as a separate document on the web site, indicating he would attempt to reformat the member application form to include the release. See additional comments below.
7. Between February 2 and February 8, the current *Waiver and Release of Liability* form was submitted to John Burn's attorney son-in-law, Mark, for review of and comment on its content. He, in turn, submitted the document to two Arkansan attorneys for further *pro bono* review of whether the elements met current standards. On February 10, Tom Calhoun emailed the attorney-revised version to the Board, recommending acceptance and suggesting that the application form require submission of the signed waiver as a condition of membership. He then attempted, unsuccessfully, to consolidate the application and waiver forms into a single page document, resulting in a two-page process whereby potential members would be required to submit *both* the Membership Application and Waiver of Liability forms simultaneously. Both would be posted on the website with suitable instructions. On or about February 10, the **Board approved, by majority vote, the Applications and Waiver forms, as revised**, and the posting of both on the OMH website with instructions requiring both be signed in order to gain membership.
8. On February 3, 2015 Rick Ericson proposed by email further changes to the Bylaws, asking if the duties of Web Master and Publicity Chairperson should be separated, making the Web Master and Hike Flash Administrator appointed positions *without vote*, but allow the positions to be held by the Publicity Chairperson if the Board so approved. Rick also proposed that Bylaw 9 be changed by adding a paragraph that authorized the **Board to approve blanket purchase amounts not to exceed a specified dollar value**. The **Board subsequently approved by majority vote the above changes**, and they were incorporated into a revised draft of the proposed changes. On February 16, by majority vote, the **Board approved the final draft of the Bylaws**, as they will appear if they are approved at the next general meeting. On this same date, President Debbie Van Veghel drafted and caused to be sent a Special Hike Flash to the general membership which notified it of the intent to change the bylaws, and attached copies of the proposed changes, as well as the current bylaws for comparison.
9. On February 16, Tom Calhoun submitted by email a final draft of a single page revised *OMH Membership Application* form. The revision was a culmination of recommended changes. **The Board, by majority vote, accepted the draft on February 17.**
10. On February 23, Tom Calhoun proposed the following actions for obtaining all-member compliance with signing and submitting the newly drafter Waiver of Liability form:
 - Attach the WL form to a special hike flash to all members, requesting that the form be printed, signed and returned by mail to the Membership Chairperson.
 - After 30 days, require hike leaders to ask at the trailhead if all hikers have signed new WL forms, provide the form to those that haven't completed one, collect the signed form and submit it to the Membership Chairperson. Also begin adding a

request for compliance to each weekly hike flash, reminding hikers and hike leaders to get the forms signed.

- After 60 days, again use a hike flash, with the WL attached, to solicit compliance, and finally, evaluate the status of the overall effort.

On February 23 and 24, the proposal was approved by majority vote of the Board.

11. On February 27, Marilyn Hall reported that she had reorganized the booth staffing for the upcoming Hot Springs Village Golf and Recreation Expo on March 9 after the earlier event on February 23 was postponed due to inclement weather.
12. On February 28, Jeannie Eichler requested the Board's response regarding whether she should expend \$35 to secure a booth at the upcoming Hot Springs Village Community Fair on April 29. The Board was generally supportive of participating again in the Fair, and on the same date, Jeannie emailed she would draft a check and put it in the mail immediately.
13. On February 28, Tom Calhoun drafted a sample transmittal letter to be emailed to the general membership, with the new Liability Waiver form attached, and asking all members to sign the new form and return it by mail to Jeannie. The format and text was approved on the same date by a majority of the Board.
14. On March 18, Debbie Van Veghel emailed Board members asking if they cared to get involved in Hot Springs Village's 2nd Annual Lions for Diabetes Awareness Walk and Health Fair to be held May 2nd. Booth cost is \$50 and the 4-mile walk registration fee was to be \$25. Board members felt that OMH was getting enough exposure via the recent HSV Golf and Recreation Expo, newspaper coverage, and the upcoming HSV Community Fair in April.