

Trails & Open Space Committee • Regular Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2023 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Board Room & Zoom

(all agenda times are tentative and subject to change)

Committee Members

Karen Aaron Scott Bauhs VJ Bonnard	Richard Bothwell Gayle Dana Lorna Dobrovolny	Carol Lindsay Livia Quan Ellen Raynor	Graham Reid Peter Sawyer Julie Thornton
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Staff, Staff Leads, & Liaisons

John Groom (Staff) Leslie Loveland (Staff)	Benjamin Levine (Board) Patricia West (Staff)	Laura Lindgren (Liaison)
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Guests

Nan Meek (EQ) Cathay Ravano (LRPC, DMWG) Carla Brown (DMWG)	Merle Fajans (Member)	Amy Porter (Applicant)
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I. Opening Business

- ***Call to Order/Quorum Call***
 - It was determined that 9 members of the TOS Committee were present and the meeting came to order
- ***Member Comments:***
 - Julie Thornton commented on the lack of parking at the Tahoe Donner Cross County Center. Her comments are provided below in their entirety.

I am speaking now as a Tahoe Donner member to this committee because a recommendation for XC parking is part of the newly adopted Trails Master Plan.

Most Tahoe Donner members would like to keep the annual dues as low as possible and Cross Country is one of the amenities at Tahoe Donner that is profitable. There is a simple way to increase their profits and, more importantly, improve the member experience.

- *Lack of parking is a long standing problem at TDXC. To solve the problem we need new paved parking for approximately 40 additional cars*
- *On a busy weekend we turn away roughly 40-50 cars from cross country because our parking lot is full and tell them to take the shuttle from the Lodge*
- *Based on the number of cars that have been counted in the Lodge parking lot, we estimate that approximately 20 cars of skiers will not ride the shuttle and simply give up on XC at a significant revenue loss*

- *When asked, XC pass holders and management do not experience overcrowding of trails or facilities with our current parking capacity. Therefore, adding skiers would not diminish the XC skiing experience or require additional operating costs*
- **On average, a carload of skiers (2.5 people) spends \$90 on a visit to XC. Therefore, when a family gives up on skiing at cross country on a busy weekend we lose revenue of \$4,500 per weekend for a total loss of \$22,500 over the course of a season.*
- *The cost of adding 40 parking spaces would be roughly *\$80k. Therefore, with the increased revenue, we would pay for the parking lot in 3 1/2 cross country seasons*

Additional parking would lead to long term increased revenue, would be completely paid for in a few seasons and, more importantly, provide an improved member experience.

**Each skier brings in revenue of \$44.84, estimate that we lose 40 cars/wknd with an avg. of 2.5 skiers in each car = \$112 lost/car X 40 cars/wknd = \$4484 lost revenue/wknd X 5 busy weekends/yr = \$22,420/season. The \$44.84 figure is likely low because I believe it was calculated using daily revenue divided by daily attendance. The daily attendance would include pass holders who are much less likely to spend money.*

***Parking lot will cost approximately \$20/sf (based on John Groom's estimate) and require 100sf/car (based on figure from Google search). Therefore, 40 parking spaces will cost roughly \$80,000.*

Recommendation to improve parking at ACAC is on pg. 68 of the Trails Master Plan

- Peter Sawyer commented that the TOS Committee needs to be careful not to discuss our opinions about issues that are coming before the Committee outside of Committee meetings. He shared two slides from the February 7 Board Training about what is and is not appropriate (harmful) and said that he would share the presentation with the members of the Committee. He also commented that we need to think about how we act outside of our Committee meetings and not have 'meetings' which are not sanctioned, noticed, and videotaped. He also asked Committee members to have an open mind when they come into discussions regarding policy.
- Lorna Dobrovolny added that we can have a 'meeting,' we just can't have a quorum (more than six members)
- Benjamin Levine challenged the Committee to attend Tahoe Donner trivia nights so that we could challenge the LRPC with our knowledge.

Clarifying Comments: Peter Sawyer asked John Goom if it would be cheaper to truck out the pile of snow that now covers a lot of the parking spaces at TDXC than it would to build new parking. John reported that he had looked into it, and that it would cost approximately \$20,000/year. John is looking into snow removal all over the Tahoe Donner operation, not just TDXC (trailheads, etc.).

- ***Approval of the previous meeting minutes*** (November 2, 2022 & January 4, 2023).
 - Peter Sawyer has not yet completed those minutes

II. Summary from John Groom and Leslie Loveland Regarding Winter Activities

Leslie Loveland reported that she has been working in the Nature Loop area doing bird surveys in preparation of tree removal, which should take place soon so that the logs can be skidded out over snow. She has compiled a bird list of the area and marked trees by GPS that either need to be removed or need to stay. A lot of the dead trees will stay because they are critical habitat for some birds and bats. She has also been working on a summer trail management schedule and budgeting and lining up funding for summer projects.

John Groom has also been working on a budget. He met with Krystal-Rae Mecham (TD Equestrian Center Manager) about Equestrian Center issues and has been looking at using adaptive management in the formation of designated use and multiple use trails

III. Explanation of Path Forward for Dog Management and Equestrian Subcommittees

It was decided to form the Dog Management Subcommittee before other Subcommittees as it probably has the most work to do. The Equestrian Subcommittee will come later. Peter Sawyer explained that we can't have a Subcommittee until the Trails and Open Space Committee approves the Purpose Statement/Charter and the Tahoe Donner Board of Directors approves the formation of the Subcommittee and the membership of the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee can't meet until these procedural hurdles are met, but they can meet as a Working Group, which they have done with Benjamin Levine to craft the Purpose Statement/Charter. Benjamin met with John Groom and David Mickaelian to make sure that the Dog Management Purpose Statement/Charter fits within the Tahoe Donner Covenants and Covenants & Restrictions.

IV. Discussion: Dog Management Subcommittee Purpose Statement/Charter ('Charter')

- ***Explanation of Procedure and Draft Charter***

The Charter has been worked on over the past several weeks by Benjamin Levine and some members of the proposed Subcommittee to make sure that it fits into the Trails and Open Space Committee's Workplan.

- ***Discussion of any changes to the Draft, including Subcommittee membership***

Benjamin explained that in the last several weeks the idea of a “comparative matrix” of like agencies was added into the Charter. He stated that David Mickaelian really wants us to look at other open space districts (ie Counties). Both John Groom and Benjamin Levine emphasized that Subcommittee members should not interact with outside agencies directly so as to make sure that Tahoe Donner is not misrepresented. Through discussion amongst the TOS Committee members it was agreed that talking to people you know outside Tahoe Donner was fine, but if Subcommittee members are soliciting information from outside agencies that they don’t know, that they should go through John Groom to get the desired information.

Nan Meek brought up the fact that the Tahoe Donner Giving Fund is looking into a fundraiser called the *Dog Mayor Campaign* and that perhaps this campaign could fall under the purview of the Dog Management Subcommittees Charter.

Livia Quan clarified what the Dog Management Subcommittee can and cannot do. She is concerned about the enforcement aspect of the ultimate Dog Management Plan and wants to make sure that there is an effective etiquette statement in the Plan. She also stated that she is researching other successful off-leach communities.

Peter Sawyer refocused the discussion on the Charter.

Ellen Raynor wanted to make sure that the expectations for meetings is set and that appropriate notice for the meetings was given. She stated that the first order of business for the Subcommittee should be to set a schedule.

Carol Lindsay said that she would put together a spreadsheet so that everyone on the Subcommittee could approve of the dates and times of their regular meetings and that the meetings would be held a week ahead of the regularly scheduled Trails and Open Space Committee meetings.

Benjamin Levine stated that the Dog Management Subcommittee is one of the first Subcommittees with a Charter and that notice regarding meetings is important.

Nan Meek asked about when or how Subcommittees could meet and Benjamin Levine shared that it is very flexible, but they should also look to Leslie Loveland and her schedule as she might want to be a part of the meetings. The meetings don’t need to be noticed or audio/video recorded, but it would be a good idea to keep minutes of the meetings and that, because this is an important issue amongst the homeowners of Tahoe Donner, notice might be important.

Carol Lindsay asked about the election of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary and was told that this should be one of the first orders of business for the Subcommittee once the Charter was approved.

- ***Vote to Submit the Charter to the Tahoe Donner Board of Directors.***

A motion was made by Karen Aaron to approve the Charter and send it to the Board for approval. That motion was seconded by Carol Lindsay and approved by the Trails and Open Space Committee by a vote of 9-0.

Peter Sawyer thanked Benjamin for all the work he had done recently to get this to the Trails and Open Space Committee and to get the motion passed.

V. Review of 2023 TOS Task List

Peter Sawyer reviewed the Trails and Open Space Task List with the Committee and pointed out that we are on track to complete our tasks this year.

Ellen Raynor asked about adaptive management on the trails and was informed that the Trails and Open Space Committee would be consulted before any actual changes take place on the trails.

VI. Discussion of Items and Concerns from the January Equestrian Club Meeting

The Equestrian Club has been meeting regularly with Miguel Sloane, Tahoe Donner Director of Operations to voice their concerns concerning safety and outreach (ie etiquette).

Lorna Dobrovolny shared that she has been talking to a group in Marin called *Trial Partners* (formally *Slow and Say Hello*) who will be launching their national website in April. She said that the website will provide a resource for Trail Managers.

- ***Discussion of Outreach Possibilities***
 - *Safety Video*

Karen Aaron reported that she is looking for a videographer to put together a safety video similar to the one that Carson City made, and is hoping her husband might be interested.

It was pointed out that the Carson City video didn't include dogs

Peter Sawyer stated that the feeling of everyone on the Committee is that it is a really good idea, but to do it on a limited budget is important. He also pointed out that Leslie Loveland is on board with the idea and is willing to help.

Benjamin Levine brought up the idea that we might want to move this project out of the Trails and Open Space Committee and put it into the tasks of the Equestrian Committee.

- *Dog/Horse Meet & Greet and User Fair*

Peter Sawyer talked about the possibility of a ‘User Fair,’ bringing together folks from the hiking, biking, and equestrian communities and letting people try out another mode of using our trails. It would take the buy-in from the Bikeworks, Mountain Biking Club, and the Equestrian Center.

Livia Quan like the idea of a ‘User Fair’ as a way of celebrating the diversity of trail users

- *Pop Ups and Adaptive Management as it Impacts the Equestrian Community (trailheads).*

Peter Sawyer stated that when we roll out designated trails, that we might want to bring back the Ambassador Program to educate the public on the expectations and etiquette.

- *Coyote Crossing Trail Build as it Impacts All User Groups*

Leslie Loveland informed the Committee that there will be a temporary crossing across the creek until the permanent crossing is built and that the temporary crossing will be open once the meadow dries out. Once the permanent crossing is built, horses will have their own single track trail away from the boardwalk. Construction will probably not start until later in the summer due to wildlife concerns.

- *Equestrian Center History Display at the Alder Creek Adventure Center*

Peter Sawyer informed the Committee that Krystal-Rae Mecham (Equestrian Center Manager) is working on a display that would be set up in the Alder Creek Adventure Center on the history of the area’s recreational use.

VII. Update on Stewardship Opportunities and Committee Engagement

- *Pyramid Trail Adoption Revisited*

Peter Sawyer informed the Committee that he was taking on the possibility of the adoption of the first ¾ mile of the Truckee to Pyramid Lake Trail as his personal project and was taking it outside of the Trails and Open Space Committee

- *Adoption of Bear Trash Cans*

Leslie Loveland informed the Committee that there are 16 trail trash cans that need to be maintained in the summer and that she has been taking care of 4 of those cans this winter (Bergarten, Glacier, and The Nature Trail (2)). She must dig the trash cans out from under the snow in order to service them. The trash can at the Hansel Mailboxes was dug out by a ‘good samaritan’ and she has had help from Maintenance to dig out some of the cans, but it is a huge job. She has decided to put small boxes (nailed to trees) up in the winter at Glacier, as digging out the cans is not a good use of her time. She will use this method if it seems best and concentrate on Glacier, Bergarten and The Nature Trail. She will be putting up signs at the other cans to ask dog owners in particular, to pack out their poop bags. Because

the garbage cans can't be checked without fully digging them out, she is going to order canvas covers for the boxes that will say something to the effect of "Thank you for a great summer season, see you next year."

Someone suggested that information about the trash cans might be written up by someone to go in the Tahoe Donner news so that the membership knows of this change before next winter.

- ***Other Ideas (Leslie Loveland)***

Leslie Loveland informed us that there will be volunteer days this summer

Peter Sawyer mentioned that the idea of a Stewardship Subcommittee had been brought up to be a clearing house for these types of volunteer efforts.

Benjamin Levine mentioned that in the past the Trails Club took on the task and responsibility for the administration of volunteer days and that a Stewardship Subcommittee could function in the same way to help Leslie Loveland. He also mentioned that the Trails Club built the Teewinot Trail in Tahoe Donner

VIII. Update on Site Visits (availability and timeline)

Peter Sawyer mentioned that part of our monthly meetings could be site visits in the future.

Ellen Raynor stated that she thought that monthly meetings were good, but that getting out into the field would be great! She stated that the monthly meetings help to keep us focused.

Karen Aaron shared that she had snowshoed Bergarten and really enjoyed it.

Peter Sawyer brought up the Tahoe City Winter Sports Park as an area where winter recreation was being held on a golf course.

Livia Quan added that the Sports Park allows dogs, and asked about the purpose of the "Winter Trails Spreadsheet." Peter Sawyer explained that getting some feedback on the winter trails will help John Groom make the case for money, equipment, and personnel to maintain them.

Leslie Loveland brought up the possibility of allowing fat tire (winter) bikes on some of our trails.

IX. Upcoming Meetings and Meeting Adjournment

By consensus the meeting was adjourned with a reminder that our next scheduled meeting is March 1 at 3:00 pm.