

Taconic Hiking Club Member Meeting

June 11, 2022, 9:30 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.

Spring Gathering

PRESENT:

Board members: Martha Waldman, Karen Ross, Sue Jordan, Margaret Parks, Christine Boucher.

Members: Cliff Prewencki, Sharon Bonk, Mary MacDonald, Bob Armao, Walt Addicks, George Astle, Mike Boucher, Peg Grogan, Sheila Rorke, RJ Hydorn, and new members Karen Lin and Carol Brown.

WELCOME:

Martha greeted everyone and thanked them for coming to the THC Spring Gathering meeting and hike.

MEMBERSHIP:

To date, THC has 242 members, 65 are new this year and Martha has met a few on THC hikes.

FACEBOOK AND WEBSITE:

THC's Facebook page has a following of 924 followers and 864 likes (vs. the ADK website's 802 follows and 708 likes). The THC website is also getting a lot of traffic.

OUTINGS:

We have several new outings leaders:

- Leslie Siegard has been doing hikes and cycles since last year
- David Dutra has posted 2 hikes in the Berkshires
- Jim Gorman posted a June 10th Berlin Mtn hike; there were 9 sign-ups and 2 or 3 were new members.
- John Berringer is planning to lead hikes later this year.

Martha said we need to find new Outings Chair; the position would require the person have a "newer" computer/laptop and Microsoft Word or another editor. We are looking for someone who can work well with leaders to obtain outing descriptions, edit the details for correctness, post them on the website, and post them in the newsletter.

TRAIL UPGRADES FOR 2022:

Working with NYS DEC, one small reroute on the Taconic Crest Trail near Rte. 346 has already been completed, and THC trail maintainers will either install new (replacement) planking that will be paid for by THC or reroute another short section near Rte. 346 and mark a reroute south of Robinson Hollow. DEC will review, modify and approve the plans; then the THC will schedule trail crews to install the planking and to clear a trail.

We have a new trail worker, Bill Coyle. He has helped fill the void created last year when Ed Slattery had to give up his sections of the TCT.

AMC MATERIALS:

The recently dissolved Mohawk Hudson chapter of AMC gave away its remaining picnic supplies and Kevin's trail guides to THC members.

END TO END DISCUSSION:

The TCT End-to-End event, held on May 14, 2022, attracted hikers and trail runners, and posted the shortest time in its history for the last hiker in. Some lessons learned include:

- With trail runners, the sweeps need to be at the checkpoints earlier.
- Sweeps at Petersburg Pass must be ready to move out earlier than before; do not assign them other tasks.
- To avoid volunteer fatigue, we need a better plan, perhaps more volunteers, for hiking water up to the Mattison Hollow junction prior to the event and then sweeping during the event.
- The new park policy of having both gates on Circuit Rd locked between 7:30 PM and 7 AM when the Berry Pond campsite is closed presented a new, unwelcome challenge. By holding the event the first weekend the campsite is open (second weekend in May) we can avoid this issue.
- Participants will need to make their own reservations via Reserve America if camping at Berry Pond or elsewhere at Pittsfield State Forest.
- The Club will not be providing breakfast at Berry Pond.
- A larger committee is needed to plan and execute the tasks of the End-to-End logistics plan.

Members wondered if the End-to-End event had outgrown the members, or if THC should end the event if we are just supporting ultra-runners. It was suggested the event be open to THC members only, but not all event participants were THC members. Sharon Bonk proposed surveying members.

Karen Ross stated that the End-to-End event is signature feature of the THC and worth preserving. She proposed contracting with professional event planners to organize and represent the club whether trail runners or hikers. It was noted that the THC is the only organization solely associated with the Taconic range. Cliff Prewencki reinforced the need to keep the End-to-End as the THC signature event. He commented that the Appalachian Mountain Club Mohawk Hudson Chapter (AMC) did not have its own identity here and that may have contributed to its not being able to attract enough people to serve on the Mohawk Hudson chapter's Board. Martha Waldman said she has been involved in various roles coordinating the last five End-to-End events and considers herself retired from such roles. She added that THC is a volunteer organization with enough volunteers to run the event.

In the end, the group agreed THC should keep the End-to-End event, even though many process questions remain.

Next general membership meeting: Sunday, November 6.