



Maine Chapter

Chapter Leadership Guidelines

Approved by Maine Chapter Executive Committee March 13, 2008

Introduction

Currently, the Maine Chapter Bylaws allow the Chapter to have standing committees at the discretion of the Executive Committee. It does not require specific committees, however in recent years, the Maine Chapter has had the following committees:

- Outings
- Trails
- Conservation
- Family Resources
- Paddling
- Young Members
- Meetings and Education
- Newsletter
- Membership
- Public Relations

There has been confusion in the recent past about whether each committee has its own leader standards or whether trips can be led by groups not officially recognized as a chapter committee. The Outings Committee has traditionally managed most outdoors Chapter activities. To help clarify Chapter policy and to help facilitate growth of various interests in the Chapter, the Outings Committee proposed the following committee structure and leadership guidelines to the Maine Chapter Executive Committee in March 2008.

The Outings Committee was in the process of reviewing its own leadership guidelines. The Outings Committee recommended that the Chapter, as a whole, adopts a base level guideline for leadership status such that any other Chapter committee must adhere to this minimum standard. Some committees appeared to have no standards, or did not adhere to any such standard for leadership. The Outings Committee did not wish to impart its own standards on all committees but sincerely wished there was at least a minimum standard in place for the entire Chapter. The Outings Committee offered these guidelines as an outline for the entire Chapter. Individual committees would of course reserve the right to adopt stricter standards but would be held to the base Chapter guidelines.

Further, the Outings Committee had been the de facto maintainer of the Chapter leadership list in recent years. This lends some confusion when a committee appoints a new leader but does not communicate with the Outings Committee. Because the Outings Committee traditionally organizes the most number of trips, it also has been the de facto maintainer of trip listings in various Chapter and club-wide media. With the new club online trips listing system, the Outings Committee has become the conduit between almost all leaders and publishing their trips. Because the Outings Committee does not get involved in the business of other Committees, the Outings Chairs are not always qualified to approve or disapprove a trip listed by another



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committee. Most of the time the status quo works fine but at times there are several problems including: leaders' trips not getting listed on time, non-leaders trying to list trips, leaders of other committees being questioned by Outings Chairs and leaders of other committees not being properly recognized by the Chapter at the annual meeting awards ceremony. The Outings Committee believes that clarifying the relationship of committees to the Chapter, adopting Chapter-level leadership guidelines and adopting Chapter-wide reporting requirements (i.e. submission of waivers after a trip) will alleviate this past confusion and allow for a Chapter framework to add other committees in the future.

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Guidelines for Maine Chapter Trips

All trips, outings, and excursions hosted by the Maine Chapter must be sponsored by one or more Maine Chapter standing committees. Additionally, every trip must have at least one approved leader from the sponsoring committee. The Leaders must be approved by the sponsoring committee for the specific type of activity being led. On occasions when a trip is offered that requires an outside professional or expert to lead, an approved Maine Chapter Leader must also serve as leader. For instance, if a mountaineering trip requires the use of a guide, a qualified Maine Chapter Leader must be part of the leadership team for the trip. In such cases the outside professional and the Maine Chapter leader will serve as joint leaders. Committee chairs make all final decisions about approving trips sponsored by that committee.

Guidelines for Becoming a Leader

Initially, anyone over the age of 18, wishing to lead trips for the Maine Chapter of the AMC can co-lead trips with an approved Maine Chapter Leader. The co-leader should have skills and experience to allow them to play a supporting role and to compliment the skills and abilities of the leader of a trip. Those interested in being a co-leader must simply express their interest to the chair(s) of any standing committee. For leadership purposes, standing committee refers to any Maine Chapter committee in good standing that was 1) established by the Executive Committee, 2) maintains appropriate committee leadership (i.e. Chair) and 3) routinely organizes and sponsors activities for AMC members.

For a co-leader to become a Leader, the co-leader must complete the following process through one or more Maine Chapter standing committees (see definition above). Applicants must successfully complete the following three (3) requirements:

1. Co-lead at least three (3) approved activities at the target level of activity they plan on leading. The co-leads have to be by at least two different approved Maine Chapter leaders.
2. They then need to complete one (1) "mentor" trip. A mentor trip is an outing where the candidate for leader status takes on the role of "leader" and is overseen by an approved Maine Chapter leader. The leader is on the trip as an observer. The idea is to allow the candidate for leader status to coordinate all aspects of the trip including planning the trip, screening participants, acquiring permits etc. Role plays may be included at the discretion of the observer.



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3. All leaders must have successfully completed Wilderness First Aid (WFA) training, at a minimum. The Chapter organizes and highly subsidizes a SOLO WFA course each spring so every leader should be able to maintain certification.

It is also strongly **encouraged** that a leader participates in a leader training session which may be provided by the Maine Chapter or by another AMC unit.

The chair(s) of the sponsoring committee of the Maine Chapter of the AMC will approve co-leaders to become Leaders. The sponsoring committee reserves the right to refuse Leader status to anyone who does not complete the above guidelines to acceptable levels and may require additional practical experience. The sponsoring committee may also waive any or all requirements based on an individual's experience and / or training, particularly if the new leader already had leader status in another AMC chapter.

Guidelines for Trip Participants

Trip participants need to be aware that when they participate in an AMC activity they are part of a group that is working to achieve a common goal, such as hiking to the top of a mountain and back. In order for this to work everyone in the group must work together as a group. Both positive and negative behavior and actions affect the entire group.

Trip participants are responsible for themselves. The leaders are there to assist and guide the group. Each participant must take full responsibility for their own preparedness physically, materially and mentally. Each participant is responsible for their own safety. Each participant must also be aware that if one member of the group is unable to continue on a hike, or makes others uncomfortable, the safety and enjoyment of the entire group is compromised.

It is the responsibility of each trip participant to disclose to the leader any information that may affect the group dynamic. Trip participants should also make the leader aware of any special skills or knowledge that could be of use. Knowledge of first aid, flora, fauna, geology, etc. can make a trip more enjoyable for the group.

Committee Leadership Guidelines

Each committee is expected to develop and pass its own leadership standards that at least meet, and may exceed, the Chapter leader guidelines stated above. For instance, the paddling committee may require that the three co-leads and mentor trips must be paddling trips to qualify for paddling committee leadership. Another example is that the Trails Committee may require that Trails leaders co-lead trailwork trips for leadership status. Standing committees must have a written leadership standard, which may be as simple as stating that the committee adheres to the Chapter Leadership Guidelines.

If the Maine Chapter does not have an existing leader qualified to lead a specific type of trip, the sponsoring committee may seek external training to facilitate the co-leader becoming a Leader. For instance, if a co-leader wishes to become a leader for whitewater paddling trips and the Paddling Committee does not feel confident in training a whitewater leader, the committee may substitute outside training for one or more of the co-leads and mentor trips.



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For several of the following purposes, the Outings Committee shall serve as the umbrella committee. A list needs to be maintained that keeps track of leaders for each committee. Rather than create a separate leadership committee, the Outings Committee will serve as the maintainer of records for committees that have leaders (i.e. some committees, such as Newsletter, do not run trips and so they would not likely have “leaders”). Additionally, the Outings Committee will serve as the default manager of all trips listings for Chapter and AMC-wide media. If an individual committee wishes to manage its own trips listings and has the capacity to do so (i.e. has active membership and leadership), it may take over its own trips listing management. The Outings Committee, however, will continue to manage these processes for any committee that is not able to, or does not wish to do it itself. **Committee chairs must approve all trips sponsored by their committees, whether they will be listed and managed by the Outings Committee or not.**

The Outings Committee will manage leadership recognition each year with current lists of leaders from each committee. It is worth reiterating here, that all Chapter trips must have an AMC waiver completed. If a trip waiver is not submitted to the committee chair, or the Outings Committee chair(s), then the trip is not official and will not receive credit towards leader recognition. If waivers are submitted to the sponsoring committee, it is the responsibility of that committee’s chair to submit all waivers to the Outings Committee chair(s) in a timely fashion. Committee chairs are also responsible for updating leader information with the Outings Committee chair(s), since the Outings Committee will maintain the official leader list.