



Trail Blazer

Vol. 99 No. 3

[TrailsClub.org](https://trailsclub.org)

March 2026

Membership Renewal Last Call

Trails Club of Oregon dues were due on January 1. If you haven't renewed yet, it's not too late - but please note that a \$5 late fee now applies.

You can conveniently pay your dues online at: <https://trailsclub.org/renew>

Stay current to keep enjoying all the benefits of club membership and help support our hiking and lodge programs for the year ahead!

Help Shape the Trails Club's 2026 Adventures!

We're planning another great year of hikes, outings, and lodge activities - and we'd love your input! Please take a few minutes to fill out our short survey to help us design trips and events that match members' interests.

Whether you're a longtime leader, thinking about leading your first trip, or just want to assist on an outing, we'd love to hear from you. Your ideas and energy keep our club thriving.

Tell us what kinds of adventures, social gatherings, or lodge projects you'd like to see this year - your suggestions help shape the calendar.

Click the link below to participate - we appreciate your time and creativity! <https://form.jotform.com/260283850444053>

TCO Trails Report (Feb-15-2026)

USFS Multnomah Falls Trails

The latest USFS trails closures can be found at:

<https://fs.usda.gov/r06/columbiarivergorge>

- Larch Mountain Trail (#441) is currently OPEN and clear of obstacles approaching the High Water Trail.
- Wahkeena Trail #420 is currently OPEN.
- Franklin Ridge trail #427 is currently OPEN but has many trees down and across the trail.
- The 0.5 mile connector trail between Multnomah Lodge and Wahkeena Trailhead is currently OPEN.

Multnomah Basin Trails

- The High Water Trail is currently clear of obstacles.
- The Cougar Rock trail has at least one treefall that is easy to navigate around. The bridge crossing on the Cougar Rock trail has a hole in the middle that will be repaired in the spring.
- The Elevator Shaft user path has at least 6 trees down, but it is reported to be passable for advanced hikers with navigation.
- The 0.5 mile Multnomah Basin Cutoff Trail is currently clear of obstacles.
- The Ornament Trail is currently clear of obstacles.
- The 0.7 mile connector trail between Nesika Lodge and Franklin ridge was reported clear of obstacles as of Feb-15-2026.

Note that conditions can change quickly on these trails.

Please report any change in Multnomah Basin trail conditions to

Memorial Endowment Fund

The Memorial Endowment Fund was established in 1985 to honor deceased Trails Club members through donations made in their memory. These gifts are permanently invested, with only the earnings used to support hiking, climbing, skiing, camping, and other outdoor activities. Over the years, fund earnings have helped support recognition awards, safety trainings, club publications, and other outdoor-focused initiatives. Donations must be clearly designated “in memory of” a member to be added to the Endowment. The fund is overseen by a volunteer Memorial Endowment Committee and invested separately from general club accounts. Although it has not been widely used in recent years, the Fund remains a lasting way to celebrate members’ legacies while supporting the club’s mission. If you are interested in donating to the fund or serving on the Memorial Endowment Committee, please contact the TCO Board at board@trailsclub.org

March Events

Check the [Trails Club of Oregon website calendar](#) for up-to-date event listings.
Click on the Details Icon for a link to the event.

See the [trip reports](#) on the TCO website to see what you have missed!



Details

Tyee is Open w/Trackers

Feb 27 - Mar 1, Fri-Sun

Leader: Lori Leach



Details

TCO Trip leaders Planning Meeting (online)

Mar 3, Tues

On Zoom



Details

Tyee is Open!

Mar 5-8, Thu-Sun

Leader: Eric Eisinger



Details

Board Meeting

Mar 10, Tues

On Zoom



Details

Newberry Ski Weekend March 13-15, 2026

Mar 13-15, Fri-Sun

Leader: Tom Thrall



Details

Tyee is Open

Mar 13-15, Fri-Sun

Leader: Eric Eisinger



Details

Leave No Trace presentation/Cedar Mill Library

Mar 19, Tues

Dolores Niebergall



Details

Tyee is Open

Mar 20-22, Fri-Sun

Leader: Eric Eisinger



Details

Deschutes River Backpack; Macks Canyon to Mouth of Deschutes River

Mar 27-29, Fri-Sun

Leader: Linda Conrad



Details

Tyee is Open

Mar 27-29, Fri-Sun

Leader: Eric Eisinger



Details

Tyee is Open

Apr 3-5, Fri-Sun

Leader: Eric Eisinger



Welcome

Resignations:
Rachel Cherry,
Abraham Chung,
Emiko Chung,
Rachel Sigman

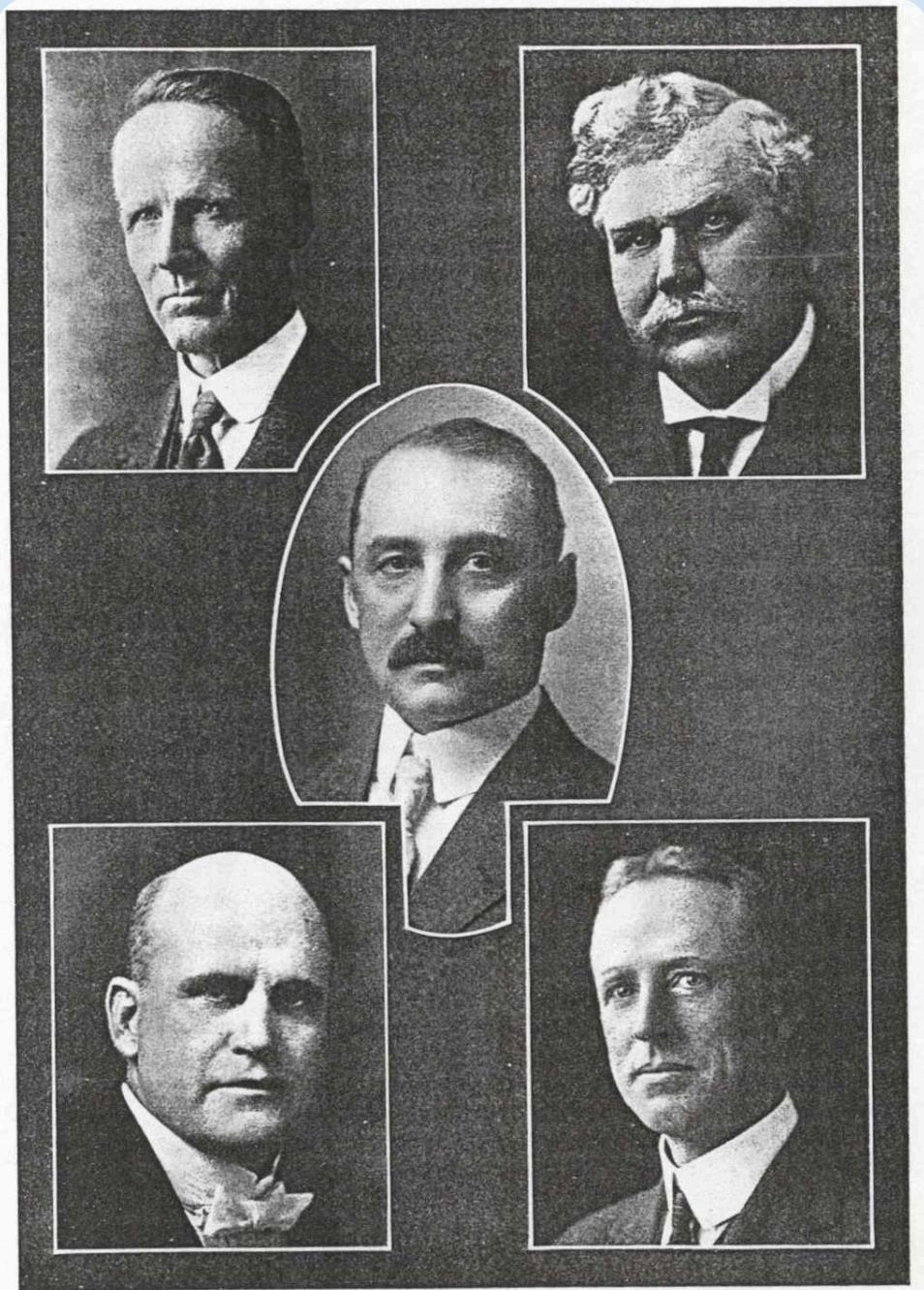
New Members:

Mark McKelvey – Sponsored by Ron Gladden and Dave Letcher
Anne Deis – Jr Member - Sponsored by Paul Cutter and Lori Leach

Trails Club History

Submitted by Linda Conrad - TCO Historian

Between the years of 1912 and 1915 many remarkable advances to transportation and mobility in the Columbia Gorge occurred. This was accomplished for the most part by the following four men.



"Soldiers of the Common Good." (See Mr. Riley's article.) Upper left—Simon Benson. Upper right—Samuel Hill. Middle—John B. Yeon, County Roadmaster. Lower left—Samuel C. Lancaster, Highway Engineer. Lower right—Amos S. Benson.

Simon Benson - Samuel Hill

John B. Yeon (County Roadmaster)

Samuel C. Lancaster (Highway Engineer) - Amos S. Benson

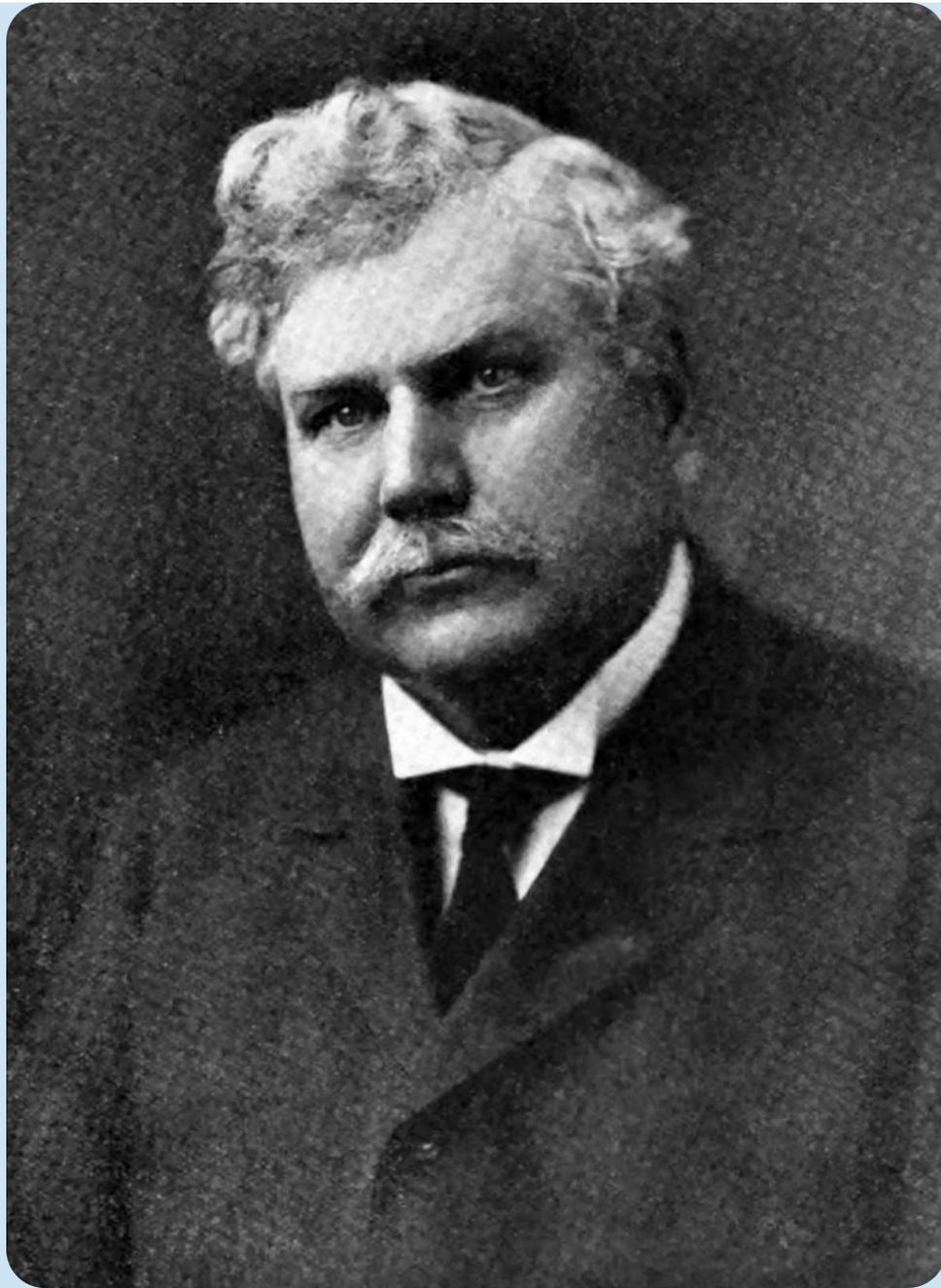
Photos from Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain



Sam Hill and others on the Columbia Gorge Highway



Columbia Gorge Highway



Samuel Hill: May 13, 1857 to February 26, 1931. Samuel Hill was an American businessman, lawyer, railroad executive and advocate of good roads. He held two things of great importance; the rugged splendor of the Pacific NW and the Creation of paved roads, one of which was the southern Columbia Gorge Highway.



Simon Benson: September 9, 1851 to August 5, 1942. Simon Benson: Norwegian born American businessman and philanthropist who was active in the city of Portland. He was a technical innovator and an investment pacesetter. He used small logging railroads rather than ox teams to move logs to water. He developed compact steam donkey engines to winch logs to his railroad. He built 3 hundred yard log rafts to ease transportation of logs down rivers and on the ocean. In the early 1910s he owned 1000 acres around Multnomah Falls and Wahkeena Falls which he donated to the city of Portland in 1915. Simon Benson also facilitated the transfer of the property of the falls to the city of Portland in 1915. The US Forest Service attained the land in 1939.

Amos S. Benson: November 5, 1877 to April 15, 1944. He was Simon Benson's son and a Northwest lumberman.



Samuel Lancaster: Was born in 1864 and died March 4, 1941. He survived paralytic polio. He was an American engineer and landscape architect. He designed and constructed the Columbia River Highway in 1912 from Portland to Cascade Locks and finished it in 1915. He was hired by Samuel Hill to build the Oregon Columbia Gorge Highway.

He was instrumental in building the 7 mile Larch Mountain Trail which was completed in 1915 with money from the Progressive Business Men's Club of Portland. The main members of this club were Julius L. Meier (1874-1937), Aaron (Bud) Meier Frank (1891-1968) (partner and nephew of Julius L. Meier), and Henry Pittock (1835-1919) English born American pioneer publisher, newspaper editor and wood and paper magnate. Pittock was an avid outdoorsman. Simon Benson and Amos Benson contributed \$3000 of the \$8000 to build the trail. The Trails Club of Oregon was founded on Larch Mountain on October 3, 1915 at the dedication of the Larch Mountain Trail. Samuel Lancaster was elected the first President of the Trails Club of Oregon.

The Benson Bridge: The foot bridge started out as a log structure in 1885 above the creek in the same place as the current Benson bridge. The building of the bridge was proposed by Samuel Lancaster when out for a walk at Multnomah Falls. It was spoken that it would be nice to have a solid footbridge across the lower falls. Simon Benson asked what the cost would be. Lancaster calculated it out writing the sum on an envelope. Simon Benson wrote the check on the spot for the bridge.

The Bridge was started in 1914 and finished in 1915 with dedication in 1916. The bridge was designed by KP Biller, an engineer who worked for the Pacific Bridge Company of Portland OR. He worked under the watchful eye of the Oregon State Highway Department. Robert Ringer was the subcontractor. Ringer's name was placed on the bridge in the 1914 insignia with Amos Benson's permission.



Photo: Craig Gwydir - Augspurger Mtn



Photo: Craig Gwydir - Augspurger Mtn



Photo: Craig Gwydir - Augspurger Mtn



Photo: Sheryl Wagner - Winter Games



Photo: Sheryl Wagner - Winter Games



Photo: Sheryl Wagner - Winter Games



Photo: Sheryl Wagner - Winter Games

Board Meeting

Trails Club of Oregon Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Feb. 10, 2026 Time: 7:00-9:00 PM Location: zoom

Attendees:

President:	Bev Drottar
Vice President:	Eric Zimmerman
Treasurer:	Sydney Jackson
Secretary:	Rebecca Knudeson

Publications: Joel Reitz
Membership: Lori Leach
Tye Trustee: Eric "Zinger" Eisinger
Nesika Trustee: Pete Recksiek
Trips Trustee: Craig Gwydir
Outdoor Ed/Outreach Trustee: Sebastian Powers-Leach
Other member: Chris Monti, advice on investment fund

REGULAR BUSINESS

January minutes were approved unanimously on 1/15/26 by email prior to the Blazer publication.

The Trackers Earth's request to use Tye on 2/28-3/1/26 was unanimously approved by email on 1/27/26.

Treasurer Report, Sydney

Beginning Balance:	\$7,541.40
Checks and Payment:	1,530.89
Deposits and Credits:	5298.60
Cleared Balance:	11,309.11

Complete reports can be found by the Board in Dropbox.

Sydney is mostly set up and ready to function as our treasurer. She still needs the password for the Fidelity account.

Vice President, Eric Z

Nothing to report

Membership Report, Lori

The dues are continuing to come in, so the membership info is changing daily. Our former Post Office hasn't consistently forwarded mail to our new PO, slowing the dues receipts.

Resignations:

Rachel Cherry,
Abraham Chung,
Emiko Chung,
Rachel Sigman,
Johanna Wagner

Membership Readings all approved unanimously:

Mark McKelvey – Sponsored by Ron Gladden and Dave Letcher

Anne Deis – Jr Member - Sponsored by Paul Cutter and Lori Leach

Membership Summary: total 267

8 Golden, 2 Junior, 34 Life, 4 Life/Golden, 7 Provisional, 1 Provisional Jr, 211 Regular

Provisional unpaid and without application:

Kurt David,
Howard Davis,
Zachary Krahmer,

Rick Lathrop,
Julie Norrander,
Kathy Ottesen,
Jason Springston

Publications Report, Joel

Joel updated the trip leaders/event hosts payment link on the forms page to allow any amount. We do not charge the stripe recovery fee on this link.

Nesika Report, Pete

The Forest Service cut several hazard trees along the basin road and have plans to repair the water dips from the green gate down to the Multnomah Creek Bridge. Dave Letcher transplanted 27 Douglas firs from the basin road to the lodge property, no closer than 50 feet from the main lodge. He also installed 2 new tires on the trailer. (One tire had a slow leak, and the trailer needed clearance.) A large hole on the Monster Trail was also repaired. The Forest Service will continue to take down hazard trees and intends to install water dips on the Basin Road during the week of 2/9 to 2/13/2026.

Tyee Report, Eric Zinger

Tyee lodge has been mostly quiet so far this winter. Lori got a second group booking for February. Sheryl had a couple posted weekends with her friends and members. Zinger never even made it to the lodge in January. He'll install a box for cash donations this Friday and will look forward to lots of members coming up to enjoy the snow. Looks like it's finally going to start coming in! In the middle of March Zinger will host a Sierra Club group for a day.

Trips Report, Craig

There were 3 day hikes during the month of January. The TCO Stormy Trails committee found the following Basin trails all clear on Feb 6, 2026: High Water, Basin Cutoff, Ornament, and Cougar Rock. Elevator Shaft has a large snag across the stone path with a makeshift detour in place on the upper boulder field. Six limbed snags on the east/flat portion of the path were easy to step over. The Nesika/Franklin Connector path has 3 limbed snags on the path that are relatively easy to navigate. As of Feb 6, 2026, there was no snow in the Multnomah Basin and the Larch Mountain trail was clear of obstacles up to Nesika Lodge.

Please email tripschair@trailsclub.org if you are interested in assisting with trail work, including trail scouting, restoration and maintenance.

Call for help: If you are interested in learning about adventures on the Multnomah Plateau and willing to help co-lead hikes and/or join a TCO trips planning committee, please join our "TCO HikeLeaders Meeting" this month, or send questions to tripschair@trailsclub.org.

Outdoor Ed and Outreach, Sebastian

We had our first committee meeting on Sunday, January 25th in-person. Thanks to all who could attend! We had a productive meeting where we shared some general ideas and established some achievable short-term goals. Our initial plans include connecting with groups to partner with, finding and facilitating future tabling/outreach events, and creating outreach material (i.e. slideshows, member-led talks, tabling materials). As committee chair, Sebastian hopes to grow the committee and work to make steady progress toward our goals without stretching ourselves too thin or not fully following through on projects. Starting small and focusing on a concentrated list of tasks will help us succeed!

We will be meeting monthly (often on Zoom, sometimes in-person). If anyone is interested in joining the OEO Committee or learning more, please email oeochair@trailsclub.org.

OLD BUSINESS

Progress on 501(c)3 status

StartChurch expects our IRS application to be ready in the next few weeks. We think they have everything they need.

Lodge Day Use Fees

Zinger will put a locked box for day use contributions at Tyee this week. We need to make sure all hosts are aware of the change. We aren't charging a day use fee any more. Instead, we will have the boxes at the lodges for donations from day only visits.

Hosts and Cooks fee collection at the lodges

We discussed how we can streamline reimbursement for cooks, so that they aren't waiting weeks for a refund. We need clear instructions for hosts and cooks. We may have some discrepancies in the online forms. Joel will work on developing some clear instructions with accompanying forms for the next board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Sportsman Show

Trackers Earth will have a booth at the Expo Center and has invited the Club to share information there. Lori has provided informational flyers for the event. Anyone who signs up for Club membership during the show will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 REI gift card or a one-night lodge stay for two. Maybe it will generate some interest in the Club.

Columbia Threadneedle account

This account is our Memorial Endowment Fund, started in 1985 to hold donations made in honor of recently deceased members. The Club has guidelines on the use of this account. In recent years, we have had trouble accessing it. Chris Monti explained ways we could remedy this problem. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to have Chris transfer the Columbia Threadneedle account into a Fidelity Account that is separate from our other Fidelity account. This transfer would not create a tax liability.

We will follow up with Chris after we get 501c3 status to consider our investments in light of the changed status.

We reviewed the guidelines for expenditures from the Memorial Fund. Sebastian will write a brief explanation of the Memorial Fund to remind/inform members about it.

Adjourned at 9:07

Next meeting, March 10 , zoom

Submitted by Rebecca Knudeson, Secretary

Board of Directors



President
**Beverly
Drottar**

[President
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:President@TrailsClub.org)



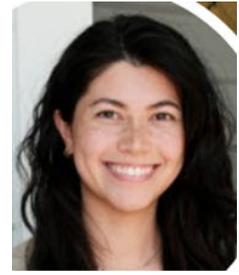
Vice President
**Eric
Zimmerman**

[VicePres
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:VicePres@TrailsClub.org)



Secretary
**Rebecca
Knudeson**

[Secretary
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:Secretary@TrailsClub.org)



Treasurer
**Sydney
Jackson**

[Treasurer
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:Treasurer@TrailsClub.org)



Nesika
**Pete
Recksiek**

[NesikaChair
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:NesikaChair@TrailsClub.org)



Tyee
**Eric
Eisinger**

[TyeeChair
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:TyeeChair@TrailsClub.org)



Membership
**Lori
Leach**

[MembershipChair
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:MembershipChair@TrailsClub.org)



Publications
**Joel
Reitz**

[PublicationChair
@TrailsClub.org](mailto:PublicationChair@TrailsClub.org)



Outdoor Education
and Outreach



Trips
**Craig
Gwydir**

**Sebastian
Powers-
Leach**

[TripsChair](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



[OEOChair](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



Standing Committees



Social

Jeff Churchill

[Social](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



Leave No Trace

**Dolores
Niebergall**

[LeaveNoTrace](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



History

Linda Conrad

[History](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



Conservation

Dave Letcher

[Conservation](#)
[@TrailsClub.org](#)



Your Advertisement Here

Ads from TCO members for mutual benefit can be placed in the Trail Blazer



If you would like to place an ad send your input to: Blazer@TrailsClub.org

Reminders

For activities such as bicycle, snowshoe, and XC skiing check with the leaders for the difficulty level. Good equipment for the specific activity is required for all events. For hikes, snowshoes:

- **Class A** - Shorter, less strenuous activity, typically 4 to 8 miles, less than 1500 feet elevation gain.
- **Class B** - Moderate to difficult, typically 6 to 12 miles, up to 3000 feet of elevation gain.
- **Class C** - Long and difficult, strong experienced participants only, typically over 8 miles, and over 3000 feet of elevation gain. Boots are recommended for B/C hikes.

Harsh conditions may increase the exertion and skill required; be prepared. Contact the trip leader if you have any questions and to let him or her know that you will be attending. Bring the 10 Essentials and please, no alcohol. Pets allowed on designated trips only.

Stay with the group and follow the leader. The leader is responsible for the group's safety. The leader determines which route is taken. The leader has authority to determine if a participant is prepared for the activity. Group safety must come first.

Fees

There is no charge to Trails Club members for day activities; non-members pay \$2. Please contribute to any carpooling expenses at the rate of \$.20 per mile. With multiple riders the driver can collect up to \$.50 per mile shared by all the riders. Other fees may apply.

If you have RSVP'd for an activity at a lodge involving food expense and are unable to participate, you are obligated to do one of the following: Cancel before the food is purchased, find someone to take your place, or pay for your share of the food.

TRAIL BLAZER

Published monthly by the

Trails Club of Oregon

P.O. Box 19891

Portland, OR 97208-0891

Organized 1915

Incorporated 1923

Member of the Federation of Western Outdoors Clubs (FWOC)

Electronic subscription is included with membership.

Send address changes and club correspondence to:

Membership@TrailsClub.org or the address above.

The purpose of the Trails Club is to foster and stimulate interest in hiking, climbing, skiing, camping and other similar outdoor activities and to promote activities of a social nature for the benefit of its members.

The Club's interests and concerns are conservation of natural beauty and resources of the country.

All Club activities are affected by the voluntary participation of the members.

Membership requirements include an approved outdoor activity, a scheduled lodge visit, recommendations by two members within a one-year period, approval by the Board of Trustees, and payment of \$50 in dues and a \$15 entrance fee.

Board Meetings

Usually second Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm, over Zoom.

See the calendar on the [TCO website](#) for the link if you wish to attend.

Contact the President prior to a meeting if you have an issue to bring to the board.

Trails Club of Oregon & Meetup Websites

Our website (TrailsClub.org) is the official site for club events and information.

There is also a [Trails Club Meetup site](#) that allows event planners to organize TCO events online, and publicize these events to a wider audience ([Meetup.com/Trails-Club-of-Oregon/events/](https://www.meetup.com/Trails-Club-of-Oregon/events/)).

However, all events posted on the TCO Meetup site should be added to our TCO website as well.

While we try to get every event in the Trail Blazer and on the Trails Club website (www.trailsclub.org), some events, especially those planned on short notice, may not appear in The Blazer.

Use the Calendar menu item for a listing of events.

Registration on the website is not required to view the events.

Also: All may use the Payment menu item on our website to pay your membership dues.

You can pay for all members in a household in one transaction.

Send write-ups to: Blazer@TrailsClub.org

Submissions are due by the fifteenth of the month prior to publication.

Trail Blazer Editor: Joel Reitz

Send pictures, new events, corrections and anything else for the

Trails Club of Oregon website to: webmaster@TrailsClub.org

