



# ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA – OTTAWA SECTION

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE ON DECEMBER 19, 2012

A Meeting of the Executive of the Ottawa ACC Section was held on December 19, 2012. Present at the meeting were the following members of the Executive:

Present	Executive Position	Incumbent
Y	Chair & National Rep	Steven Dods
Y	Past Chair (ex-officio)	Elfrieda Bock
N	Treasurer	Ivan Petrov
Y	Secretary	Janet Campbell
Y	Hiking/Skiing Coordinator	Grant Blanchard
Y	Climbing Coordinator	Terry lipovski
Y	Mountaineering Coordinator	Helen Tsai
Y	Training Coordinator	Adam Phillips
Y	Safety Coordinator	Steven Montgomery
Y	Membership Coordinator	Rob Truswell
Y	Social Coordinator	Connie Dimond
Y	E-Letter Editor	Elfrieda Bock
	Newsletter Editor	OPEN
	Web Editor	OPEN
Y	Access Liason	Stuart Elson
Y	Youth Liason	Katharina Goetze
Y	Quartermaster	Al Dimond

Also present were the following:

David Foster, VP Services ACC National

Hai Pham, Training and Climbing Coordinator on previous Executive

Bill Scott, Safety Coordinator on previous Executive

Louise Proulx, Hiking Committee Member on Previous Executive

### 1) Introductions

Steve Dods called to order the first meeting of the newly elected Ottawa ACC Executive. Steve

asked each member of the Executive to provide other members of the Executive with an overview of their interests and experience with the ACC. Following introductions, Steve asked Elfrieda Bock to take the floor and provide the new Executive with an overview of the Ottawa ACC Section from an operational standpoint.

## **2) Elfrieda Bock, Past Chair, ACC Ottawa Section**

Elfrieda Bock presented an overview of the Alpine Club Ottawa Section. In so doing, Elfrieda advised the Executive that she would be setting up an alias for each member of the Executive and asked that each member take the time to confirm their email addresses. Once done, it would be possible to send email to the group without having to enter individual names. Elfrieda also outlined some of the best practices that had been utilized by the club, including having Club trips approved by the relevant member of the Executive (or their Committee). Following approval the trip would then be placed in the eLetter. Elfrieda noted that any trip description should include what it is, how long it is, whether there is a cost, if participants are expected to share costs, and whether registration was required. Elfrieda indicated that she would continue to post things on the eLetter for the club and that Hai Pham would manage the calendar. Elfrieda noted that the Club did not currently provide general write access to the calendar so as to allow for a sanity check on its contents.

Elfrieda encouraged the Executive to re-iterate the need for group leaders to ensure that the waiver forms are signed and that individuals signing the document are aware of its contents. Adam Philips asked whether the waiver was required for all trips. Elfrieda responded that it was not required for pub night, but a hike and potluck for example, would require a waiver. Elfrieda noted that she had a box of waivers that she was keeping on behalf of the club. Janet Campbell asked how long the waivers were being kept for. Elfrieda responded that there was no time limit on the period of time for which the waivers were kept at the moment and that there was no clear policy at the National level. Elfrieda added that while the ACC Ottawa Executive had asked National whether it would be possible to scan the documents and then send them to National, they had been advised no.

Elfrieda noted that the Club receives its funds from Membership Fees. The Ottawa Section gets a portion of the Membership fees paid by the Ottawa Section Members - \$15 in the case of individuals, and \$20 in the case of families. Other revenue is received typically on a cost recovery basis for courses offered by the Section. In addition, the Club would accept donations. Janet Campbell asked if there had been any investigation into corporate sponsorship. Elfrieda responded that not to date. Elfrieda added that MEC sponsors at the National level and so is not inclined to do so at the Section level as well. Elfrieda further noted that some stores will donate food. Elfrieda noted that the expenses for the Ottawa Section primarily to supplies for first aid training, the cost of training itself, and in the case of events – room rental and food. Elfrieda added that in the event a speaker is organized for an event such as an annual dinner, then the Ottawa Section would pay for the travel expenses for the speaker and an honorarium. Safety information and gear was also purchased by the Club. There are also some

administrative fees for web, postage, and food for some events such as the AGM.

Elfrieda noted that the approach for training and social events has been that they have been self financing. Elfrieda added however, that some events are subsidized, such as training and safety. A PayPal account has been established to ease the administration of collecting funds for events in cases where payment collection is required. The cost of the associated trip is grossed up to deal with the costs associated with the PayPal account. This has been considered a tremendous success. Adam Philips indicated that he understood that his assumption was that for any course, the Club would require at least half up front and that those funds be cashed the week before. No concerns were expressed with this approach.

Elfrieda informed the Executive that there was a form to submit expenses and that the form was available online. Payment could be provided on a reimbursement basis or be a direct payment to the supplier, depending on the circumstances.

Elfrieda reported that three people typically get access to the Membership Database – the Chair, eLetter editor, and Membership positions on the Executive. If there are any questions whether an individual was a member of the Club, sending an email to the Membership representative was the best way to find out. Steven Montgomery asked whether there was any reason Adam Philips could not get access. Elfrieda responded indicating that ACC National only permitted three people to have access. Elfrieda advised the Executive that she would contact ACC National advise them of the new Ottawa Section Executive. Elfrieda noted that ACC National was looking for a position to be filled for NCC ACC National Training Nominee and that she was recommending that Adam Philips fill the position. Elfrieda reported that the Treasurer and Chair have signing authority on the Ottawa Section's bank account, adding that cheques only require a signature by one person. Arrangements would need to be made to update the bank records.

Grant Blanchard asked about Insurance. David Foster responded that there was Directors and Officers insurance as well as general liability insurance. Moreover, the trip waivers provided additional protection to the Club. Elfrieda noted that if a trip is being conducted in the US, then US citizens cannot participate in the trip due to liability concerns.

### **3) David Foster, VP of Services, ACC National**

David Foster led a discussion surrounding liability issues for the Club. David noted that the climbing ban originated from a very specific set of circumstances. David indicated that the current Executive is under a very different situation. The previous Executive was divided on whether climbing leaders were safe or not safe. It was discussed at length over a period of many months with no consensus. David added that the previous Executive found themselves without any tools to advance the discussion – no formal vetting process, no guidelines to resolve the question. In the absence of consensus, they chose to suspend climbing until they could deal with the situation. That involved creating the Standards of Practice and setting up training. David further added that he felt that if there

was a take away from the whole period, it was that as an Executive if there is a fundamental question of safety that comes up, you need to deal with it and you can't delay for 6 months. David noted that the concern at National was that the Ottawa ACC Executive could not in fact decide whether they had a problem to deal with or not. David indicated that he believed that the situation was now different for the new Executive – there are now tools, and there is an understanding in the Club that something is needed. David added that it was his belief, and one that Peter Muir (the National ACC Chair) shares, that the new Executive can now move ahead with climbing without concern.

David indicated that the liability issues for the Ottawa Section were no different than any other Section, and that there were a number of protections. David added that the ACC is an amateur outfit and that as a result it isn't held to the professional standards level – the Club just need to be reasonable in what it did. David further commented that the prudent measures that the Ottawa ACC Executive was considering tonight are the kind of things that are reasonable, adding that promoting safety is a work in progress and is never a job that is "done". David added that beyond that the ACC has the waiver system, noting that it is particularly important to new members that they understand it when they sign it. Beyond that the Ottawa Section is protected by a good insurance policy that is designed to defend the Club and its members if there is action taken against them. David noted that it was his belief, and Peter Muir's (ACC National Chair) that the liability exposure that the Ottawa Section faces is the same as every other Section across the nation. Steven Montgomery asked if ACC National had set any standard on the vetting of leaders. David replied that they had not, that that was something for the local Section to define to their comfort level.

#### **4) Bill Scott and Hai Pham**

Bill Scott and Hai Pham spoke to the safety concerns that had been identified by the previous Ottawa ACC Section Executive and the efforts to address those concerns. In so doing, Bill highlighted that in the last 10 years there had been 4 very serious accidents, all of which could have been deadly. Bill added that the Ottawa Section had seen a lot of growth from new members, with current membership at over 500. As a result, the Section was seeing a high demand for beginner and novice climbing and hiking trips. While the interest in these trips had increased, the number of experienced climbing leaders had declined in recent years for a variety of reasons. Members had been approaching those in the Executive seeking guidance on what was expected. There were young people expressing interest in becoming trip leaders but there was no formal "plan" to get them there. There was also a lack of vetting process for proposed trip leaders or climbing trips. A concern had also been raised that there was no process by which to deal with a problem leader. Based on these concerns a plan of action was developed and published by the previous Executive. In the short term, the focus was on the top rope program, with a mid-term desire to address all Section activities. A Standard of Practice was developed to meet the short term goal. In the mid-term, the recommendation is that the Executive define draft guidelines for other Section activities including Mountaineering and Scrambling, Backcountry Skiing, and Nordic Skiing. Some of this work is already underway.

The process by which the Standard of Practice was developed was open. Four notices were placed in the eLetter to advertise a meeting to discuss the issue. Also, attempts were made to get input from a variety of people and to represent different people's perspectives. Feedback was incorporated and versions revised. Approximately a four to one ratio of the climbing people that voted on the document favoured the proposal. ACC National was consulted for legal guidance and asked whether the proposal increased or reduced legal liability for the Section. The answer was that it lessened the risk of liability. In addition, ACC National was asked whether proscriptive language should be used and at their suggestion, such language was removed. Input from two professional guides in the area was also sought. Both guides were very supportive. The material was also circulated to the ACC National Safety Committee. Four members of that committee in addition to Hai Pham supported the proposal. Four other Sections have also expressed their support. The previous Executive examined the issue in great detail and unanimously supported the report and guidelines.

Hai Pham took the floor to provide additional background on the development of the Standards of Practice. Hai indicated that the intent of the document was to provide a succinct guide for trip leaders to understand what is expected of them. The purpose was also to help the Executive in that it helps you vent potential leaders, and trip proposals, and helps you deal with issues if they arise. If a problem does arise on a trip, it gives you an objective basis for dealing with the issue. It also helps members and novices because it gives them confidence in the system. Hai recommended that the reference to "Standard of Practice" in the title of the document be changed to "Guidelines". Hai reiterated that he felt there was strong support for the Section to have reasonable guidelines, especially as expressed at the climbing meeting.

Terry lipovski commented that he admired the way the Guidelines had been developed through consultation. Terry added that the Guidelines line up well with the mission of the Alpine Club. Steven Montgomery commented that he didn't believe that people were opposed to the document but rather concerned about the associated costs it implied.

#### Motions under Consideration

The Executive then began a rather tortured discussion of related motions under consideration. The motions in their totality are as follows:

- 4.1 be flexible in application of training requirements until all current and prospective climbing leaders have had a reasonable opportunity to take the climbing and AWFA courses,
- 4.2 adopt the recent 2-day Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher course as a technical baseline training requirement to bring all section climbing trip leaders to a common understanding of best practices,
- 4.3 in accordance with the demand, conduct one or more Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher courses in 2013, starting in the spring,
- 4.4 adopt "AWFA-qualified" (as defined in the SOP) as the standard of Advanced Wilderness

First Aid (AWFA) training applicable for all high risk and remote section activities, to include fifth class climbing (top rope, sport, trad, multi-pitch), Nordic backcountry skiing, alpine backcountry skiing, mountaineering, scrambling and backcountry hiking or snowshoeing,

4.5 adopt a reduced standard of 16 hours of first aid training for low risk, front-country activities close to urban areas, such as cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on groomed trails and easy hiking on officially-maintained trails

4.6 make a one-time enhanced budget allocation for the scheduled April 2013 AWFA course to provide for a total of 18 students (12 leaders plus 6 "active participants"),

4.7 officially approve and implement the SOP as the basis for reinstating the section Top Rope climbing program in time for the 2012-2013 ice climbing season,

4.8 continue development of other SOPs covering the remaining section activities,

4.9 develop an ACC Ottawa Trip Leaders' Manual, which would include the various SOPs, with broad input from section trip leaders, and

4.10 after a period of one year of usage, review the Trip Leaders' Manual and all SOPs, and revise them as necessary based on experience.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of 4.1 – “be flexible in application of training requirements until all current and prospective climbing leaders have had a reasonable opportunity to take the climbing and AWFA courses”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, be flexible in the application of the guidelines.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.2 – “adopt the recent 2-day Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher course as a technical baseline training requirement to bring all section climbing trip leaders to a common understanding of best practices”. Adam Philips noted that the course only addressed top roping. Steven Montgomery commented that the course is a stepping stone and it wasn’t going to be the only course offered. Al Diamond commented that he did the course and found it enlightening adding that he believed it can and should go forward. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, adopt the recent 2-day Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher course as an initial technical baseline training requirement to bring all section climbing trip leaders to a common understanding of best practices.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.3 – “in accordance with the demand, conduct one or more Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher courses in 2013, starting in the spring”. Following discussion, the Executive approved the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, in accordance with the demand, conduct one or more Top Rope Climbing Leader Refresher courses in 2013, starting in the spring

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.4 – “adopt "AWFA-qualified" (as defined in the SOP) as the standard of Advanced Wilderness First Aid (AWFA) training applicable for all high risk and remote section activities, to include fifth class climbing (top rope, sport, trad, multi-pitch), Nordic backcountry skiing, alpine backcountry skiing, mountaineering, scrambling and backcountry hiking or snowshoeing”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolutions:

**RESOLVED**, adopt "AWFA-qualified" (as defined in the SOP) as the standard of Advanced Wilderness First Aid (AWFA) training applicable for all high risk and remote section activities.

**RESOLVED**, AWFA-qualifications are only required for trips that are in excess of approximately an hour beyond the trailhead.

Hai Pham excused himself from the meeting, indicating that he would be maintaining the website and indicating that if the Executive wanted the minutes of the meetings posted to let him know. There was a general consensus that posting the minutes of Executive meetings was a good thing to do. Hai also indicated he would be happy to attend any Executive meeting if needed.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.5 – “adopt a reduced standard of 16 hours of first aid training for low risk, front-country activities close to urban areas, such as cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on groomed trails and easy hiking on officially-maintained trails”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, adopt a reduced standard of 16 hours of first aid training for low risk, front-country activities close to urban areas.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.6 – “make a one-time enhanced budget allocation for the scheduled April 2013 AWFA course to provide for a total of 18 students (12 leaders plus 6 "active participants")”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, make a one-time enhanced budget allocation for the scheduled April 2013 AWFA course to provide for a total of 18 students (12 leaders plus 6 "active participants").

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.7 – “officially approve and implement the SOP as the basis for reinstating the section Top Rope climbing program in time for the 2012-2013 ice climbing season”. Steve Dods commented that he didn’t think the Executive was ready to pass this motion. He added that he thought it was a useful document and one that he would use himself. Steve expressed concerns that the document could be used against the Club and trip leader in the case of litigation. Steve argued that to the extent the document opened a trip leader up to liability it wasn’t fair. Steve also expressed concerns that the document would be intimidating to someone new who was running a trip. For those reasons, Steve indicated that he wanted to vote down the document at tonight’s meeting. David Foster commented that he would be happy to speak to ACC national about the

possibility of consulting with external counsel. Janet Campbell asked for clarification, noting that she had thought that counsel had already been consulted with respect to the document. Bill Scott responded that ACC National was consulted with on two points of clarification and that in that case it was the ACC National Chair who is also a lawyer that was consulted. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, a vote on the resolution before the Executive is deferred until such time as ACC National legal guidance can be sought.

Steve Dods initiated a discussion of motion 4.8 – “continue development of other SOPs covering the remaining section activities”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, continue development of other Guidelines covering the remaining section activities.”

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of motion 4.9 – “develop an ACC Ottawa Trip Leaders' Manual, which would include the various SOPs, with broad input from section trip leaders”. Following discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, develop an ACC Ottawa Trip Leaders' Manual, which would include the various Guidelines, with broad input from section trip leaders.

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of 4.10 – “after a period of one year of usage, review the Trip Leaders' Manual and all SOPs, and revise them as necessary based on experience.” Following discussion, the Executive passed the following:

**RESOLVED**, continuously review the Trip Leaders' Manual and all Guidelines, and revise them as necessary based on experience.

Bill Scott indicated that both he and Hai Pham were willing to continue working on the training guidelines under the guidance of the new Executive.

#### **5) Grandfather Certain Well-Known Already Long-Serving Climbing Trip Leaders**

Steve Dods introduced a discussion of a proposed resolution to "Grandfather Certain Well-Known Already Long-Serving Climbing Trip Leaders". Steve provided the following background: The climbing leaders of our club are going through a transition right now. Apparently the climbing leader group used to be an "old boy's club". Membership extended by way of "getting to know you... getting to like you..." Looks like we're not that way any more. We've gotten too big for that. On the other hand, the executive should permit the Climbing Coordinator to extend exemptions to certain "good old boys" (and girls) who have been around so long and have such sterling reputations that it doesn't make sense to forbid them from leading trips. Therefore we consider a trip leader to be approved on a 'grandfather'



principle, based on their recognised experience.

Elfrieda Bock expressed concern regarding proposal. Elfrieda further indicated that part of the exercise that the previous executive had initiated had been because people were concerned about some people who had developed habits over the years that were considered problematic. Adam Philips indicated that if courses were being run inexpensively, he saw no reason for such an exemption. Terry lipovski commented that he saw no particular reason for the motion in light of the flexibility provided in the resolution related to motion 4.1. Janet Campbell agreed. A vote was held on the motion and the Executive voted the motion down.

#### **6) Professionally Qualified Guides Leading Ottawa ACC Trips**

Related to the foregoing motion, the Executive clarified its position on having professionally qualified guides lead Ottawa ACC trips by passing the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, professionally qualified guides can lead Ottawa ACC trips.

#### **7) Lift the Ban on Climbing, Effective Immediately**

Steve Dods introduced a discussion on the lifting of the climbing ban. In so doing Steve asserted that the Ottawa ACC Executive had no choice but to lift the ban arguing that the ban or suspension of climbing by the former Ottawa ACC Executive was a violation of the ACC's Constitution and Bylaws. Dave Foster, asserted that the actions of the ACC Ottawa Executive was not in violation of the ACC Constitution, and that ACC National had in fact voted in favour of the Ottawa ACC Sections decision to suspend climbing. Following the discussion, the Executive passed the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, the climbing ban is lifted, effective immediately.

#### **8) General Discussion**

Adam Philips highlighted his desire to create additional Guidelines for Climbing. In particular, Adam highlighted a desire to create training programs for Sport, Trad, and Top Rope Level Leaders. Adam added that he thought there should be a clear path a newbie to the sport could follow in order to progressively grow their skill set. Adam sought and received the support from the Executive to proceed in developing these training programs.

Katharina Goetze asked about training programs for youth. Adam responded that typically the training coordinator doesn't actually do the training but they work with others to organize it. Adam indicated that he would be happy to work with Katharina on initiatives for youth, but that she would

need to run it. Adam also highlighted an interest in developing a mentoring program.

**9) Adjourn**

At 11:27pm, the meeting was adjourned.

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This being a true and accurate record of the proceedings of this Meeting of the Executive of the ACC Ottawa Section held on December 19, 2012, is attested to and signed by me below.

/s/ Janet Campbell  
Secretary of Meeting