Marys Peak Group Executive Committee Meeting
July 28, 2020 via Zoom

ExCom: Julie Arrington (Chair), Mike Neeley-Brown (Vice-Chair), Robert White (Treasurer), Karl McCreary, Dave Eckert (Program Chair), Jules Moritz--left meeting at 7:30, Melanie Feder (Membership)

Present: Leslie Hogan (secretary), Robert Verhoogen (outings)--left meeting at 6:45

I. Greetings

II. Minutes (Leslie Hogan)
   Email votes:
   A. The minutes from the April 28, 2020 ExCom meeting were approved on May 15. The vote was 6 in favor. Karl did not vote.
   B. Motion made by Mike Neeley-Brown to accept Dave Eckert's "Virtual Champinefu Lecture Series" Proposal, June 2020". Dave Eckert seconded. This is a vote to move forward to develop the project with David Harrelson. This would be a digital presentation. No funding is committed at this time. Passed on 6/22/20 unanimously.
   C. Dave Eckert moved that the Marys Peak Group appropriate up to $3,000 to fund the filming, audio enhancement and editing of video of six Kalapuya-named creeks on Marys Peak to be included in a Story Map and Webinar as part of the Champinefu Lecture Series. This edited footage will be further enhanced and used by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde to build the Story Map that will ultimately be placed upon their website for perpetual public viewing. This project will be in partnership with The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, U.S. Forest Service, City of Corvallis, OSU Spring Creek Project and the Marys Peak Alliance of AFRANA (Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas). Second: Robert White. Approved unanimously on 7/4/2020

III. Treasurer's report (Robert White)
Robert outlined the report from copies of the report he sent via email.
**Motion** to approve: Dave made the motion and Mike the second. The motion carried.

IV. Hiking program (Robert Verhoogen, Jules Moritz)
   A. Nationally’s latest policy is that no group hikes should be led prior to Sept. 1. Nationally there is also the question about racism in environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, a fact Sierra Club has stepped out front to address. Robert asked if we need to reach out to people of color to get them to participate in MPG’s organization and enjoyment of the outdoors. Julie suggested putting MPG’s notices in different/other media that might attract a wider scope of hikers. David suggested that when making that outreach to groups, MPG needs to be in the position of asking “what can we do with you?”
B. Once MPG re-starts its hiking activities, Mike brought up the need to clarify the expectations around carpool drivers being reimbursed for gas. Participants in carpools should be made to understand that contributing gas money is voluntary. MPG does not wish to exclude hikers due to inability to pay for gas.

C. MPG is transitioning the Outings chair. Robert Verhoogen, who at the end of July retires after seven years as chair, is being replaced by co-chairs Jules Moritz and Milena Simeonova. Ex Com applauded Robert’s dedicated and, as an admirer noted, “phenomenal” work as Outings Chair and later as Co-Chair, Peak View editor and hike leader. Julie noted that everything Robert did was critical to what MPG does and is. (Robert was helped by Ken Fitschen as outings co-leader and by Robert White who filled in for RV when he was out of town and could not publish the Peak View.) Julie further thanked Milena and Jules for taking over as co-chairs and to Ken for continuing to help. Outings Chair is a big job and MPG has been enormously fortunate over the years in having chairs who have taken the job very seriously.

D. With the question, “Is the MPG leadership site, Campfire, letting people access OLT 101 training?” Robert W. noted that the site is being reorganized and is difficult to access.

V. Membership (Melanie)

Melanie sent out welcome letters to 44 new members who joined MPG in April, 52 in May and 61 in June.

She reported that members who were not so familiar with how to navigate Facebook and instead go to the MPG website for club information have found very little about activities on MPG there. She was wondering what information we could put on the website. Suggestions came fast:

1. David will write up a report on the Story Maps that are being developed with the Grand Ronde.

2. Information on Bill Sullivan’s on-line talks can go on.

3. Dave also suggested that hike leaders take turns writing up a paragraph on favorite hikes they have taken to be posted on-line, one per month. (Melanie agreed to send Leslie the contact information of hiking leaders. Leslie will ask the leaders to each send a brief description
of a favorite hike which Irene can then run one-at-a-time, once per month, over the next few months.)

4. Julie asked if Dave would write up a bit about the film being completed titled *A Marys Peak Field Trip*.

5. David also would like to explore the possibility of doing a narrated PowerPoint about the Arboretum which is becoming quite the showcase now. It could be placed as a link on the Peak View, followed by permanent housing on our website. We could also do the same for some of the other arboreta (not Garfield School). We could also eventually do the same on other projects we have done. This will be over an extended period of time.

   All these postings would give some information on our website while MPG remains under Covid quarantine restrictions.

VI. Chapter report (Julie)

   Give/Get for Group representatives has been abolished, saving MPG $600 per year.  Chapter Chair Drew Kerr was very helpful in this matter.  MPG instead has pledged to have two fund-raisers from which we split the profits 50:50 with Chapter. This shows MPG’s commitment to Chapter activities and gives us a chance to get better acquainted. Many Rivers does a pint night at a local pub. In light of the coronavirus, MPG might just donate $100 this year.

   Each of the Three Oregon Groups will also be getting $800 from Chapter in September.

   The Chapter conservation committee is talking with members to learn our concerns and priorities. It is reforming the committee. We can have a representative on it if we so choose.

   Chapter political committee has reformed. At Large Members are Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Virginia Tarango, Logan Giles, Rhett Lawrence and Veronica Poklemba. Group Reps are Gretchen Valido and Ryan Kounovsky.

VII. MPG elections

   A. Nominations committee: Melanie Feder, Mike Neeley-Brown. The committee needs one more member who is not on ExCom. The nominations committee should approve the potential candidates before contacting them.

   B. Julie asked for suggestions for nominations to serve on the committee or to run for ExCom. Karl suggested Armond Schoppy. Julie will contact him.

   C. Elections committee: Mike Neeley-Brown, Marcia Shapiro, Leslie Hogan

   These are questions the election committee needs to look into: should we use Mailchimp? Can the company that prints our ballots also verify addresses for us? Does National have a way to do the electronic ballots?

   D. Writing an announcement for PV is the responsibility of the nominating committee

   E. Schedule and deadlines working toward the election:

      September 22: Deadline to present the slate of candidates to ExCom. (MPG bylaws stipulate that this must happen five weeks before the ballots are mailed.)

      October 27: Deadline to send ballots to members. (MPG has to allow four weeks for the return of ballots and a week to get the ballots to the members.)

      November 3: Ballots must be received by this date.
December 1: Voting ends. The elections must be held in the fourth quarter of the year.

VIII. Interactions with College of Forestry (Julie)
   A. Send letter to forestry dean--Julie will do this.
   B. Letter from Anthony Davis--Julie will write in response to this request for an endorsement. The window of opportunity to comply was too tight.

IX. Peak View postings
   Dave Eckert recommends that we reinstitute some of the features of The Benchmark into the Peak View with articles and other media to promote the programs, activities and philosophy of the MPG Sierra Club. Such additions could be more “ad hoc” whenever they are available rather than regular features. Dave recommends that there be some form of review or vetting of potential features by members of the ExCom to insure they are appropriate. Robert White and Karl volunteer to help with vetting of such articles and images. Dave further recommends at first to only extend the invitation to submit “internally” to outing leaders, ExCom members, administrative function and committee members as we begin this process so that in the absence of hikes, events and programs, there is something for people to look forward to in the Peak View. Karl will kick us off by combing through archives. Dave suggests archival information on Marys Peak can be found through the GT.

X. Facebook policy (Julie)
   A. Dave Eckert supports posting only activities on Peak View and the MPG website that are MPG or Sierra Club sponsored/co-sponsored or officially supported by a vote of the ExCom. Otherwise, he says, we are falling down a rabbithole of requests and dicey decisions. Also, such added postings would also require undue time commitments from the Facebook administrator. MPG needs to be careful in promoting Chapter, National or other SC group programs for the same reasons.

   B. After discussion, the ExCom agreed it was appropriate to ask MPG members to post photos of hikes they have taken in the past with MPG. Julie and Irene administer MPG’s Facebook page so hikers could send their photos to Julie to vet and Irene or Julie to post after vetting. The invitation to submit would come on Facebook.

   **MOTION:** MPG supports having only activities on Facebook that are MPG or Sierra Club-sponsored/co-sponsored or officially supported by a vote of the ExCom. In addition, MPG ExCom will solicit through Facebook submissions for posting on Facebook of photos from previous MPG hikes with brief comments about the photo. Julie moved and Robert made the second. The motion passed.

   C. Julie asked if MPG wants to post the following information on Facebook as a way of giving the site some content: VIRTUAL YOSEMITE- The Sierra Club’s Yosemite Conservation Center will offer several virtual programs beginning in August. The topics will include Yosemite Photography and Landmarks, Yosemite’s Night Sky, and more. The programs will be presented by some of the regular summer presenters, who are unable to offer live programs this year since the building is closed due to COVID-19. Learn more and sign up for announcements here.
XI. Elakha Project (Julie)

This is the project to return the sea otter to Oregon. Julie has listened to two podcasts that Dr. Roberta Hall sent her discussing aspects of the Elakha Project. If a podcast could be found that describes the project well, MPG could post it in the Peak View and on our Facebook page as a replacement for the lecture that we had to cancel in May. Julie has one more lecture to listen to.

XII. Champinefu project update (Dave) - The inter-agency/organization production crew has mostly finished the filming of the Kalapuya Creeks for the Story Map. It has one more trip to make, which will probably be next week. After that, it will be a very dry forest with angry yellow jackets. The places filmed behind the closed security gates of the Corvallis Watershed have been stunningly beautiful with the forest floor matted with sorrel, salal, ferns, Oregon grape and other wonderful species. Two members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde have helped the team explore the sites and have provided documentation in addition to that filmed by the cinematographer. While the filming is funded by the MPG, the filming events are managed by the Marys Peak Alliance and therefore no SC national guidelines have been violated. Matt Kellam, the cinematographer, will process and edit the video he has taken and then send it to the Grand Ronde. They will then sort, further edit and compose the Story Map in their studio at the Chachalu Museum at the Grand Ronde, so that the voice is exclusively from the Grand Ronde. The film will be ready for an October Webinar followed by placement on their website. We can link to it from our webpage. The team will have a separate Story Map for November presented in the same manner. The host for the webinars is yet to be determined.

XII. Conservation update (Dave)

A. Update on The film that the Marys Peak Alliance and the Forest Service are making, A Marys Peak Field Trip. The film is an hour long. It is in final production and will hopefully be released on the web in August.

B. Update on Dunawi Creek Regeneration Project at Bald Hill Natural Area - The engineers have performed the survey for the culvert replacement and will develop a design plan from that survey. The design will then need to go through a local and state review plan for the requisite permits. Hopefully, construction will begin next summer. Regarding planting, over $8,000 worth of native wetland and riparian plants have been ordered. The MPG has funded $500 for those plants. The MPG order will fund 131 native wetland plants: 10 Western Crabapple trees (up to 40' tall), 25 Pacific Willow (up to 30’ tall) and 96 common rush (up to 6’ tall). These will be planted and paid for in November.

C. Update on Lamprey Creek Riparian Project at MLK, Jr. Park - This late spring, we developed a new maintenance process. We offered opportunities for volunteers to “adopt” one of the 5 annual planting areas (from 2015-2019). Five volunteers have stepped forward and have been weeding, mulching and watering their site on a weekly basis. They sometimes recruit family members or friends to help them. These volunteers were recruited through the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Water Action Team. This process therefore does not break any National
guidelines for the pandemic. Plants have been ordered (paid by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition) to replace those plants that have not survived. They will be planted in November.

D. Update on the School Native Arboretums, including Garifled School.

Garfield School- All but two of the native trees we planted in January 2016 have been destroyed and removed by the School District so they can install a parking lot. The School Facility Department has announced that they have a “strong plan” to find an alternative plan to plant replacement native trees on the property, but they have not shared what that plan is. David made a follow-up report that the two remaining trees have now been uprooted or effectively destroyed.

Crescent Valley High School - The Youth Volunteer Corp has been maintaining the site, assisted by some adults. The arboretum is now ten years old and is maturing into a real “place” including some of the best specimens of a variety of native species in Benton County. The addition of the trail signs in the Kalapuya language has made a big difference.

XIII. Julie commented on National’s op-ed on past racism in the Sierra Club which has made national news.

XIV. Oregon Coast Trail update (Melanie)

The following are some of the key ideas discussed in how Sierra Club (SC) can assist in the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) project. Melanie reported on a conversation she had with Jesse Dolin, Oregon Coast Destination Coordinator. Melanie focused on displays or kiosks as a starting point for MPG participation in projects associated with the OT. In order "to tell the story that needs to be told," there are two areas on which Melanie believes MPG can focus using displays:

*Amanda Trail
Briefly, the Amanda Trail is a Yachat’s trail dedicated to the memory of Amanda, a blind Coos native woman who suffered injustices during the reservation years in the 1860s. She was forced to walk barefoot along this trail while her feet bled. MPG would work with local tribe representatives to create the story that “needs to be told.” Perhaps a film telling Amanda’s story can be made with the tribes.

*Uncle Lou on Hwy 34 in Waldport
Uncle Lou was an African American slave who saved his money and bought his freedom. He settled in Waldport and became successful and built Waldport’s first school. A placard describing the life of Uncle Lou along the OCT would be of interest to us. We would work with the Waldport Museum historian to find out more of the story to create valuable information to all who pass by and include it in other places such as the visitor center. The project was given a rough estimate of $500 per display. Dave felt this figure was lower than what materials, labor and permits might come in at.

Background history to OCT: the State Parks was approached about creating OCT, yet they do not have the capacity to maintain the trails. That is where the OCT groups such as the Trail
Keepers of Oregon among others have stepped up to create the OCT. They have funded over $100,000 to make it possible to get volunteer work crews to maintain these areas as well as obtaining land use permits, lawyers, specs, etc.

Dave, knowing the challenges in even a limited project like this, believes MPG should take on just one project at a time. He recommends the Amanda Trail be that initial project. He stated that MPG should participate in the creation of displays about indigenous and African-American individuals only if the respective displays are conceived, developed and designed by respective local indigenous and African-American cultural organizations. If this is not possible, then he recommends MPG support displays that specifically relate to the mission of the Sierra Club. The content and design of the Amanda Trail should exclusively be the domain of the Siletz. Dave, who has contacts with the Siletz, will make the first approach and then communicate the outcome with Melanie. MPG would work on the machinations of clearing the bureaucratic hurdles and the mundane logistics. Next, the determination must be made about the property it would go on. Private property does not require permitting, for example. In short, the most important step would be to determine if the Siletz will come fully on board with the Amanda Trail display. Of second import is to find out who owns the portion of the Amanda Trail where the display could go.

MPG and OCT
Other ideas mentioned by Melanie, but not discussed in regard to MPG’s participation in development along the OCT are as follows:
* extend the trails from Marys Peak and the Alsea River to OCT
* provide warning signs around nesting areas
* display information about Yaquina (?) Lighthouse and its location over a native burial ground
* facilitate providing a native history about the Heceta lighthouse

Motion to adjourn:
Dave made the first and Mike the second. The motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 8:25.

Next meeting TBA.