



Pack Llama Trail Association, Inc.

Dedicated to Preserving and Promoting the Working Llama

packllama.org

PLTA Board Meeting Notes for December 2018 Meeting

Meeting held December 18, 2018

Board members in attendance: Tom Seifert, Susan Gawarecki, Niki Kuklenski, Roy Williams

Absent: John Fant

Meeting called to order 7:02 mst

Conversation topics:

1. December letter to membership and their response

Tom: I have received zero returns on the questions posed to our membership. Has anyone heard anything from anyone? No one has heard from membership and the questions posed to them. Do we send out quarterly reports to people?

Tom: I have 4 new memberships and to those people I sent: "Welcoming Letter," and four different handouts on the PLTA that I pulled off the packllama.org site. Also sent them PLTA business cards with their PLTA numbers attached.

2. Treasury Position

Tom: Unfortunately, John was unable to attend because of his work situation, but I will e-mail and personally call him regarding that position. It will be his wife's decision and I said it would be a good idea to call Gina and talk to her about the position, work and time involved so Phyllis doesn't come into this position with no idea of what it entails. Talked to John, he said he would talk to Phyllis and get back to me regarding their decision.

3. Does everyone have access to Yahoo conversation site?

Everyone has access except Roy Williams and Susan said she would get with Roy and get him up and running with that site and what it has to offer.

4. Website Conversation:

If we change the website, do we allow advertisements, what type of ads, what do we charge?

Susan: Like the idea that we can possibly lace ads on the site.

Tom: Do we go to businesses such as Quality Llama Products or Richard Galloway and ask for ad money?

Niki: We need to come up with parameters, they need to be packing related (used equipment). We need to focus on packers and what people are looking for. PLTA used to be the site people would look to when they were in the market for llamas, and we need to return to that. We need to be able to show people how we have evaluated packers and what they can do.

Roy: It would be nice to focus on that, but I was just on the packllama.org site and it was somewhat difficult to find the specific levels of trials and what is required for each. I found stuff on the Challenge Program,



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Mileage program and Carting, but we need to focus on Pack Trials. I really like the idea of the Packer's Primer, possibly do that on Friday with the Trials on Saturday and Sunday. It seems to me the biggest thing is not enough Trials.

Tom: Let me throw in a few things, here. First of all, the Challenge: This was designed more as a fun exercise, practice routine for people to go out and socialize. It was especially big back east. Is that right, Susan?

Susan: Oh yes. We don't have a big packing community, but people like to get out and, in a group, do something in the woods. It is low bar to get into as far as setting up and people enjoy it both with llamas and alpacas.

Roy: How many challenges are there in a year?

Tom: In the past, there has been a Challenge for each of the Trials. Last year, however, since my boys were walking in an elite Trial, I did not put them through the Challenge. Other people went out who had been at the Basic or Advanced level. Most of the time, the Challenge takes place later in the day, after a Trial.

Roy: I get it that in other parts of the country the Challenge could be a larger draw, but out here, I would like to see more Trials.

Susan: With the Mileage and Challenge Program, we were attempting to draw in some different groups, some younger people. One thing I think the PLTA should advocate for, and that is for llamas to have access to public lands and not be shut out of the back-country. There has been some issues in National Parks, and I have written numerous articles to the powers to be about access and the stories about keeping llamas out because of some disease.

Tom: It is as if the PLTA is a dual organization. One for the more hardened packers out west, and back east, because you don't have elevation gain and probably won't test to the Elite level, it is more a social gathering and out door experience.

Niki: I think that is important to delineate those packers who are working out west and those back east where people are going out for a good time. If that is working and it helps us keep going, great.

Susan: If we can develop a strong base of packers, maybe people back east will stop breeding these long, silky, surrey style llamas. They look more like alpacas than llamas.

Tom: I just want to go back to help Roy on this, as far as number of days, and Niki can attest to this; it is one day of travel just to get to the Trials. If Sue and I were coming up to Washington, and we had an advanced Llama, we would need 3 days of Trials for that Llama to get his certificate, or I have to wait until the next Trial to get him certified. Does that make sense? So, keep that in mind when setting up a Trial; who is coming and at what level will they be testing their llamas.

Niki: Roy and I have been talking about having a Trial up here, but we are not certifiers, and probably should be. I talked to Scott Noga, and he said he would be interested in coming up. I have just been talking to people and what do they want and think about the PLTA.

Tom: Both Scott and I have been certifiers and if we could set this up, we could certainly go through some training and get you certified.

Niki: Could we do all levels? In the past, it was all set up on Blancherd Mountain to have Trials, and I think many of the trails are still available.

Tom: The toughest and most time consuming is to set up the mileage and elevation with obstacles not that difficult. You follow the guidelines obstacle list and you'll have it. First year is toughest, and once you have the basics set, it isn't that bad. The biggest change is not finding difficult obstacles that your llamas damn near fail, it is finding combinations of obstacles that make everyone focus.

Niki: What time of year is best for you?

Tom: Ann Sheeter sent me a sanctioning application for the first week of May – so that would be out.



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Niki: Our best time would be in April, maybe earlier in March, depending on snow and weather. June is out.

Roy: Your part of the equation, what is best for you? Early Spring much better than late Spring.

Tom: If Sue and I are able to make it up – we would love to make it.

Niki: Ok, let's talk about how to move the PLTA forward. If we need to divide the list of members up and call them, I can do that. I just don't think people will fill out the questionnaire.

Tom: I will send everyone the llama listing and membership listing. You will see I have left people on who did not pay in 2018 and those are the ones we need to talk to.

Niki: Let's divide up the list, figure out what questions to ask, even if we use those right off the survey.

Tom: Everyone will also get llama listing, let's check your llamas and get any mistakes taken care of or if we have left something off, get it fixed.

Niki: Also, let's talk about website costs and maintenance. I think what Lisa paid was quite a bit and I don't know exactly the finances of the PLTA, we just need to watch our pennies.

Susan: You're right, unfortunately, you are at the mercy of anyone who has the ability to work on one.

Niki: That is one reason to push for this new website, because any of us could go in and fix a mistake or add information. I just found a mistake on my website and during lunch I was able to go in and fix it. Lisa did a great job, but it is too much for one person to handle. With the current site, I just find it difficult to find what I need, quickly. Right now, it is not a busy time so I am willing to set up the skeleton of the program and then we will all have a password to get in and work on it or add things. I am not trying to force things and will go with the majority.

Susan: I am okay with it.

Tom: John expressed he is okay with Weebly. My biggest concern is that I don't work on a website. If it is user friendly and I can quickly put in the certificate or membership payments and do certificates, great. If I can do it by popping info in, it will spread the workload out between Board members, everyone will be contributing.

Niki: We can put pictures on, even videos, but that is something down the road. If we are interested, let's get it going because I spend more time with it because it is my down-time.

Tom: Our biggest issue now is to find someone to take that Treasurer's position. I will get in touch with John – I have talked with Gina and she said she would definitely help the new Treasurer out. Gina said she would forward all membership info to me so I can keep current.

Niki: If we do change the website, we need to help Lisa out because she has done so much and I don't want her to walk away dejected or feeling hurt. I am grateful for what Lisa and everyone has done to keep the PLTA alive and now we need to move forward and emphasize good packing llamas. So, how will we pay for this and get it going?

Tom: I know the bank account has about \$5000 in it, but only certain people can write checks or pay bills. I will talk to Gina about that. Susan, do you have anything else to discuss?

Susan: No, I have nothing else.

Roy: I have a few questions bouncing around in my head, but I will go through the Yahoo site for that.

Niki: Do we own the domain name for the packllama.org site?

Tom: I am not sure of that because it was through Scott Noga. You might have to discuss that with him.

Other than that, thank you everyone and see you third week in January. Happy Holidays.



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