

Annual Report to the Members of Washington Women Outdoors from the Board of Directors

Founded in 1979 by women and for women, Washington Women Outdoors (WWO) has been empowering women to explore the natural world in and around the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia for nearly 40 years. Volunteer members plan numerous excursions each year where participants learn wilderness hiking, biking, backpacking skills, and even tree-climbing under the leadership of seasoned WWO member volunteers with emergency training. As we head toward our 40th Anniversary of adventure and camaraderie, we reflect on a year marked by transformation and renewal.

WWO Trips

WWO continues to do what we do best: facilitate trips in the outdoors for women! Our offering of trips includes hike and bike trips; water sports such as canoe, kayak, sail and stand-up paddleboard; rock climbing; caving; ski trips; camping; backpacking; and other specialty events that are unique and one-of-a-kind. Where else do women have an opportunity to participate in such unique events as surfing, tree climbing, whitewater rafting, horseback riding, canoe and camping while socializing and connecting with like-minded women? Women aged 20 to 70 participated on over 100 trips this past year. Although WWO is based in the Washington DC area, our participants come from as far away as Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

We're Thankful for WWO Volunteers and WWO Members!

None of these trips would happen without the dedication and skills of our volunteer leaders. We have approximately 30 leaders who are recruited from our membership, and we are always looking for more leaders who can lead interesting, fun, yet safe trips. We have one dedicated office volunteer who works tirelessly to maintain the professionalism of communicating to our members and all trip participants. We have one paid consultant who works very hard to maintain the website and all our social media sites.

We are tremendously grateful for our WWO Members! We would not have the trips and events without the members who join us on adventures. Some of our members have tried activities for the first time this past year and some even achieved a personal best with us. Several made personal best number of miles biked as recently as the Beginner Anacostia Trail Ride this past fall! We want to encourage members to track accomplishments and let us know about them so we can celebrate with you and share your stories!

Since our members are the engine that keeps WWO running, we are reaching out to you to participate in keeping the organization going. We need your help and here's where your skills can be used:

- 1. Coding experience and website content management! Help us create and manage the new WWO website.**
- 2. Planning our 40th Anniversary celebration!**
- 3. Get CPR/AED, First Aid Certification and Leadership Training to become a WWO Leader.**
- 4. Serve as a Committee Chair.**
- 5. Join the Board of Directors.**
- 6. Provide non-profit legal expertise.**
- 7. Let us know about upcoming events in the DC area where WWO could be present to reach women who may not know about our programs and provide assistance with this outreach initiative.**

Advance Planning for Washington Women Outdoors 40th Anniversary Celebration in 2019

One of the special events that WWO has created is an anniversary party every five years. Just like a high school or college reunion, it takes a committee to pull off a great event. Since we want to have a carefully considered and planned event, we are starting the planning process by looking for individuals with talents that will make it special. Do you have the perfect venue in mind? Do you have party-planning experience? Are you the hostess with the mostest? If you have ideas coming out of your ears, WE WANT YOU!

WWO seeks your talent to:

- Design a 40th Anniversary logo,
- Select and order SWAG, commemorative tee shirts and ball caps,
- Throw a party!
 - Find a venue
 - Organize volunteers
 - Plan the menu
 - Cook, bake, order take-out
 - Set-up, clean-up

Send an email to the WWO Office at wwoffice@gmail.com if you would like to serve on the 40th Anniversary Committee.

Everyone should look forward to supporting WWO by coming to the celebration event and wearing with pride our new 40th Anniversary shirt and hat which will be unveiled next year!

New Board Positions

The WWO Board recently created two new Chair positions. The Chair of Membership & Development and Communications positions were created in an effort to cultivate new leadership while increasing the size and diversity of our membership community. By creating a position to include our immediate Past President in Board deliberations, the Board seeks to bolster institutional knowledge among Board members and create continuity.

Financial Matters

Tax-Exempt Status Re-Affirmed! Thanks to the efforts of our Treasurer, we re-affirmed our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. This small victory allows us to continue the legacy of WWO into our 40th Anniversary and beyond!

Operating Funds - What does the WWO Membership Fee pay for?

The Board continues to evaluate trip fees and membership fees, direct expenses, and ongoing annual expenses. With annual expenses of up to \$8,000 (which include bank fees, credit card fees, insurance, postage, publicity, professional fees, corporation fees, wilderness first-aid and leadership training, recertification, website administration, and maintenance), it will take a lot of work to improve efficiency. Our Membership & Development Chair is looking for grant opportunities to help us fulfill our mission and purpose in a broader range. Looking to the future, and as part of our refresh efforts, the Board looks to invest in updating our website, as well as membership and event software. These investments should offer more flexibility in reaching new participants and current members with our programming.

In 2016, the Board drastically reduced mailings in order to minimize our ecological footprint. This effort also reduced expenses associated with postage, printing, copying, supplies, and labor. Over the past five years, WWO has also transferred most ongoing responsibilities from paid staff to volunteers. That means we need your help maintaining affordable trip fees.

These ongoing efforts to conserve assets have paid off. As a result, the WWO operating account maintains an adequate balance, and an interest-earning savings account remains strong. Revenue has continued to increase while expenses remain relatively stable. 3rd Quarter 2017 reflected the highest number of members in many years and our membership continues to grow.

Your Contribution Matters - Another Way to Support WWO

WWO, as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, is approved by the IRS to receive tax-deductible donations. Please consider WWO in your end-of-year tax planning. There is a link on the Membership page of our website for making online donations. Checks, made payable to Washington Women Outdoors, can be mailed to our administrative office. Acknowledgement of donations will be mailed out in letter form, so be sure to include your mailing address.

The online donation link can be found here:

<http://www.washingtonwomenoutdoors.org/Membership.htm>,

The administrative office address for mailing is:

Washington Women Outdoors
19450 Caravan Drive
Germantown, MD 20874

AmazonSmile

If you cannot afford to make a cash donation, sign up for AmazonSmile! It is the easiest way to support WWO! AmazonSmile contributes a percentage of eligible purchases to WWO, providing an important source of passive income. Please add this link to your favorites today: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1190401>

The Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and Support Staff, look forward to another great year!

WWO Board of Directors

President - Rene Filipowski
Acting Vice President – Marilyn Myers
Past President - Kristi Keller
Secretary - Karen Arcamonte
Treasurer - Marilyn Myers
Communications Chair - Beverly Yang
Membership & Development Chair - Monica Parikh

WWO Committee Chairs & Support Staff

Backpacking - Marilyn Myers

Bicycling - Barbara Hoover

Caving - Vacant

Hiking - Lisa Bohnet

Kayaking/Watersports - Kristi Keller

Leadership Training - Paula Cotter

Rock Climbing - Kristi Keller

Skiing - Vacant

Special Events - Ann Muller

Office Administrator - Jenny Utz

Website Administrator - Amy Liss