

Policy on Advancing People from the Wait List and Other Matters

*The vast majority of people who get on the hikes for this Meetup are first-come, first-serve, i.e. whoever signs up first gets on the hike. When the hike fills up to the limit I set, additional RSVPs go onto the wait list. The wait list is often first-come first serve, but I do reserve a few spots on each hike for people I manually select to advance from the wait list. Please bear in mind that as the *Hiker Leader & Organizer* of this Meetup, I spend a HUGE amount of time organizing and leading these hikes, so no-one should complain if I select a handful of people for each hike that I would like to go for whatever reason I chose. However, I mostly select individuals who have helped me with the hikes in some way recently, including:*

1. Volunteering to help on the Trail Work Days I organize, including helping with the food for these events.
2. Volunteering to be the rear leader on hikes.
3. Sponsoring this Meetup (I use all proceeds for expenses, including Meetup fees and paying for lunch at Trail Work Days)
4. Helping me in any other way.

As veterans of this group know, but newcomers probably do not, my hikes fill up extremely fast, so I often give a few slots to people who've never been on my hikes before.

On some of my hikes, significantly more of one gender than another will be signed up, so I'll advance disproportionately more of the other gender from the wait list to make it more even.

No-Shows

If you've been a no-show on past hikes, especially on a regular basis, I am less likely to advance you from the wait list. While some no-shows are legitimate and unavoidable, the number of no shows on each hike is far in excess of what one would reasonably expect (most Meetup groups have the same problem). Some Meetup groups will kick you out of the group after a certain number of no-shows, and one in particular will fine you for unexcused no-shows (and kick you out of the group if you don't pay). I have no such policy, although I will say that you are less likely to be advanced from the wait list if you've been an unexplained no-show in the past.

I realize that, especially for after work hikes, things come up at the last minute (e.g. the boss asks you to do something at the last minute, a project with a deadline takes longer than expected, meetings run overtime, the repairman comes late, etc.). If something comes up, I ask that you go to the website and change your RSVP to No, or email me or call me (I send out an email the day before each hike that includes my cell#).

I realize that many people cannot access the Meetup site from work (e.g. the office firewall blocks access, or you simply do not have internet access while at work), so you cannot change your RSVP to No when something comes up. So I expect a certain number of uncontrollable no-shows on each hike, but the actual number of no-shows is far higher than is reasonable. *Unless you email or call me as to why you didn't show, I have no way of knowing whether you had a legitimate excuse or just blew off the hike*

and didn't care. So, if you let me know why you didn't show, I won't hold it against you, but otherwise if you've been a no-show on hikes in the past, you are less likely to be advanced from the wait list.

Last Minute Cancellations and Wait List

Not only are the number of no-shows for each hike quite large, but the number of last-minute cancellations is large. If you're on the roster and cannot make a hike at the last minute, I ask that you change your RSVP to No, or email or call me as to why you couldn't make it. While I do not like it when people cancel at the last minute, I generally do not penalize anyone for a small number of last-minute cancellations. However, *if I notice that someone regularly cancels at the last minute, I am less likely to advance that person from the wait list.*

When I first started this Meetup, I left the wait list on automatic right up until the hike started (i.e. when someone cancelled, the next person on the wait list was automatically advanced). The problem with this is that when someone cancels, say, an hour before the hike, and then someone is advanced from the wait list, the person advanced either doesn't see the email in time or just isn't prepared to hike on such short notice, and ends up being a no-show. Therefore, I set it up now so that, *generally the day before the hike, I close the wait list so that no-one is automatically advanced from the wait list anymore.* Unless I know you're available, I will not advance you from the wait list on the day of the hike.

Because of this, I overbook my hikes, and when people cancel after I've closed the wait list, it simply brings the number of people on the hike down to a more reasonable level. Therefore, you may see that something like 65 people are on the roster for my hikes—I never have anywhere near that many show up. I target roughly about 30 people to show up on my hikes, but the actual number is hard to control because of the large and unpredictable number of last-minute cancellations and no-shows. Also, *when you cancel at the last minute, don't bother saying "I gave up my slot so someone else could go".* For cancellations on the day of the hike, it doesn't work that way.

Dinners After the Hikes

As you can see, trying to get the right amount of people to show up on a hike is complicated. It's even more complicated because I always arrange an optional dinner after the hike, and I tell the restaurant to expect a certain number of people to show up. Often, the number that show at the restaurant is significantly different than what I told them (sometimes too high, often too few), and it creates problems for the restaurant. It's just another issue I have to deal with.

By the way, if you want to go to the dinner after the hike even if you're not on the roster for the hike, that is usually not a problem, but please email me first to make sure it is OK.

Why the # People on Hikes is Limited

I limit the number of people on each hike for at least the following reasons:

1. Park rules limit the number of hikers on a hike, and we follow all park rules
2. There is limited parking at the trailhead

3. We share the trails with other users, including other hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, etc. and having a large group makes it difficult when we encounter others
4. Having a large group is cumbersome and often slows down the hike.

For the above reasons, I ask that *if you are not on the roster for the hike, do not show up (i.e., if you're on the wait list, don't come!)* I do try to manage the number of people that show up on a hike, and if people feel like they can just show up without being on the roster, it will get out of control. If I find you are on a hike you are not registered for, I will politely ask you to not do it again.

When Do I Schedule and Post Hike Listings?

I schedule most after work hikes on Mondays through Thursdays of each week, with an infrequent hike on Friday evening. On rare occasions, I schedule an event on the weekend (e.g. a Trail Work Day), but since this is an after work Meetup, I avoid weekends. I try to spread the scheduling out over the weekdays somewhat evenly so that people with different schedules can make the hikes. I also look at other factors in picking dates such as conflicting events (e.g. I avoid scheduling hikes near Red Rocks Amphitheater when an event is held there), other hikes scheduled that evening, restaurant availability after the hike, when the sun sets, when there is a full moon, and of course my own personal schedule.

Since people who work in front of computers during the day, or people with smartphones, tend to grab all the spots quickly when I list hikes during the workday, I try to post hikes (and send email notifications for them) at different times of the day and different days of the week to give various people the opportunity to RSVP before the hike fills up.

Final Comments

Fundamentally, many more people would like to go on my hikes than I can ever accommodate. I am just a volunteer, and the hikes I already organize and lead are very time-consuming—I simply do not have the time to organize and lead more hikes. Everyone should be grateful for the hikes I do lead, as I do not have to volunteer to do anything. In the past, I considered arranging for additional hike leaders, but no-one volunteered to lead on a regular basis, and in any event, it would still mean more work for me, and I don't have more time to volunteer. Also, other Meetup groups lead after work hikes that you can sign up for.

It is nice for me to run a Meetup group that is very popular, but a major drawback is that many people complain about how difficult it is to get on my hikes. Regrettably, some people get nasty when I pass them over on the wait list to select someone else. All I can say is, I spend such a large amount of time and effort to run this group, and I am just a volunteer (I make no money on this whatsoever), so I should have the right to select a handful of people for each hike that I would like to join me, for whatever reason I chose, without anyone complaining at all. Sometimes, I think people take getting on my hikes far too seriously—it's not the end of the world if you can't get on an after work hike. That I even need to write a piece like this explaining my policy is a bit much. So, one last thing—*people who are friendly and thankful to me are more likely to be advanced from the wait list than people who are not!* 😊