

## THOUGHTS ON THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In response to the statements in the Template for Regional Structure that Karen sent (and which generally matches the questions that Thyra posed in her email), here are some thoughts. No answers, just some thoughts and more questions.

### **1. Describe the responsibilities of the RMC in detail, including a description of how the committee will report its findings and recommendations.**

From the structure of the question, “responsibilities” seems to imply that the RMC would have a different role than the current Mid Atlantic fall meeting. It would provide more than an opportunity for ATC and NPS staff and other agencies to recap the previous year’s events, present new initiatives and programs, and explain what will be expected of volunteers in the future. Since the committee is supposed to report findings and recommendations, this implies that the framers of the Template document intended that the members of the RMCs would study, discuss, and debates issues and then provide input to some other group (the TSC?). It sounds to me that the RMC is expected to be an originator of ideas and play a part in setting ATC policies and courses of action. Would the RMC have the power and authority to set regional policy, prioritize regional activities, and decide how to spend regional funds (if any)?

If the RMC has responsibilities, it will have to have members who are somehow designated, delegated, appointed, or elected (but by whom? the maintaining clubs?) and who will take the role seriously and be prepared to spend time studying issues before any meetings. It almost sounds like the RMC could or should have designated subcommittees to handle various aspects of its work.

### **2. Describe attributes to make the RMC useful/supportive to the regional staff, volunteers, and agency partners.**

As a volunteer and member of a maintaining club who has talked to other volunteers, I would suggest that there should be a reason to meet in person – issues to discuss, actions to be decided, policies to be set, information that cannot be dispensed by mail or email.

I don’t know if I could speak for what would be useful/supportive for staff; however, I am a public employee who works in an organization where a board sets policy and priorities. Having that direction provides the guidance we need to focus on essential tasks.

I would hope that this would be a circle. Local volunteers need to tell regional staff and agency partners about the help they need so that staff and agencies can attempt to provide that appropriate support and guide volunteers.

### **3. Describe attributes that would make the RMC difficult to manage.**

A. The Mid Atlantic region as currently constituted includes 13 clubs. The great variation in size and structure of these clubs means that they do not necessarily share the same concerns and have the same needs. On one hand, we range from clubs with thousands of members, paid staff, and endowments to clubs with fewer than 10 (?) members and little money. Some clubs are devoted to the AT (a focus for existing) while for others, the AT is the concern of only a few members. These differences mean that the RMC has to consider 13 divergent interests.

B. If all of the perhaps two dozen various federal and state agencies in the six states that are currently in the region are added in, we have a convention, not a committee. Since for many of these agencies, the AT is not a major part of the agency’s mission, how many agencies will consistently want to send someone, especially if the distance is great. How much interest would a state agency in NY have in affairs in Shenandoah NP?

Would separate state committees provide a more cohesive forum for discussion and decision making? A representative or two from each state committee could then constitute the RMC to synthesize the findings and recommendations of each of these committees and keep the RMC to a manageable size to facilitate discussion and action.

C. Agencies with paid staff would probably prefer weekday meetings, but volunteers with jobs might want weekend meetings.

D. As currently constituted, VA might have to participate in two RMCs. Is this feasible for agency partners in VA?

**4 How often should the RMC meet?**

If much of the work of the RMC were done by subcommittees or state committee, the RMC would not have to meet often, perhaps twice a year. Perhaps, email and phone conference would suffice for some work.

**5. Where should the RMC meet?**

If the region is quite large, a central location might be easiest. But that could mean that the same people would always be responsible for making arrangements. If the location of the meeting was rotated around the region, different clubs might help by making meeting arrangements. This could also be helpful if the group needed to check some conditions along the trail or if the RMC wanted to encourage a regional viewpoint by exposing attendees to different areas.

**6. Should the RMC meetings be open to a broader group including non-voting members?**

Except for executive sessions (if any), I would expect that meetings would be open to anyone who wanted to attend. The meeting agenda could include time for public input.

**7. List organizations that should have a seat(s). How many seats per organization?**

I would expect that each maintaining club would have at least one seat on the RMC.

If there were state committees that served as feeders to the RMC, there could be one or more reps per state, perhaps depending on state mileage.

Is the RMC a component part of the organizational structure of ATC? Would non-ATC members (such as federal or state agencies) be voting members of the organization? Or would they have non-voting, observer or auxiliary seats on the committee?