



## ***Pack Llama Trail Association, Inc.***

*Dedicated to Preserving and Promoting the Working Llama*

[www.packllama.org](http://www.packllama.org)

# PLTA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## Introduction

Meeting Date:	8/20/2019
Type of Meeting:	Board of Directors Monthly Meeting
Location of Meeting:	Tele-Conference Call
Time Called to Order:	7:01 MST
Time Adjourned:	7:48 MST
Board Members in Attendance:	Tom Seifert, President Lisa Wolf, Secretary Jen Hood, Treasurer Greg Hall, Director at Large
Board Members Absent:	John Fant, Vice President Scott Noga, Director at Large Laura Steere, Director at Large
Other Attendees:	None
Recorder:	Lisa Wolf
Date of last month's meeting:	July 16, 2019
Last month's minutes approved:	As they stand
Next month's meeting date:	Thursday, September 19, 2019 (Changed by consent of members to Thursday September 12, 2019 <i>LW</i> )
Texts included as attachments:	CertifierEscortProposal180228.docx TrialOnRequestProposal19711.docx
Date Approved:	9/12/2019 by the PLTA Board of Directors <i>LW</i>

## **Treasurer's Report:**

Paypal: Account access and contact information is being updated to reflect Jenifer Hood's new position as treasurer.

Bank Account: Jennifer has not yet acquired full access to all accounts. This should be rectified soon. The PLTA is still using US Bank. References to the Bank of Idaho where incorrect.

Monthly Treasurers' report has not yet been completed. It will be posted on the Board's private group site as soon as is possible.



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## **Old Business**

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### **Non-Profit Status**

**Update:** Tom and Sue Seifert have been working on the project. They received from the IRS a letter explaining that the PLTA's request to reinstate non-profit status has been rejected. The reason given is since the PLTA has previously been a 501 non-profit, and it has been over 27 months since the proper paperwork had been filed, we must now submit the 1023 long form. For three years Nancy Hester (president) did not file the proper paperwork, had not told anyone she neglected this duty, and so we are in the predicament of filing using the long form. Thanks to Gina O'Brien for continuing to file the 990 tax forms. Hopefully, this will show the IRS we were trying to do the correct thing. In the next few days we will visit with a non-profit accountant to help us through this project. [The Board was notified of this situation on 7/29/2019]

**Written comments were received from Scott Noga, Director at Large**, in which he voiced concerns that the PLTA rejected the idea of developing a 'new' PLTA as per the advice of the Noga's attorney. He feels pursuing reinstatement under the current name may also open the PLTA to tax liabilities over the last three years. He considers this a risky course of action and would like to see a "working group" assigned to work on the effort.

**Board Discussion:** Members were somewhat confused by Scott's comments. Consensus is that we do need to pursue our non-profit status. By changing the name, as Scott suggests, we lose our identity and many of the things we have accomplished. The cost to change over what has been completed, (name, business cards, medals, etc) would be too costly. The risk of paying back taxes cannot be too great since we are so small. Further consensus was to keep Articles of Incorporation and business entity registered in Idaho because Idaho has the least restrictive approach to our business. If these legal registrations are moved to another state, we may have opened up a new problem.

**Action Taken:** Tom & Sue Seifert, Lisa Wolf, and past treasurer Gina Obrien will continue to work on preparing the 1020 form for submission for reinstatement.

### **Article for Pack Animal Magazine**

**Update:** The article for the Fall edition has been edited and will be published in Pack Animal. In the future, the PLTA will be asked to contribute articles for each quarterly edition. Tom Seifert requested ideas for topics from the Board members, and welcomed them to write articles. All articles will need to be approved by the Board prior to being published. The current article was posted to the Board's group site for review August 6, 2019.

**Discussion:** No discussion ensued

**Action Taken:** None

### **Board Membership**

**Update:** The PLTA Board of Directors is now fully staffed and looking forward to a very fruitful couple of years.

President: Tom Seifert  
Vice President: John Fant  
Secretary: Lisa Wolf  
Treasurer: Jennifer Hood



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Director at Large: Greg Hall  
Director at Large: Laura Steere  
Director at Large: Scott Noga

**Discussion:** Members were thanked for their quick response to the electronic voting process

**Action:** No action was taken.

### **Pack Trial on Request Proposal**

**Update:** The proposal document, TrialOnRequestProposal19711.docx, was posted for review on the Board's group site on July 16, 2019. Board members were asked to review the document and engage in conversation with questions, suggestions for improvements, and concerns.

#### **Suggestions put forth:**

- a. One Trial must be completed at group Trial.
- b. Photographic evidence must be used to qualify for second or optional trial.
- c. Should this be organized for a specific level, only?
- d. Vote on acceptance or rejection at the September Board meeting

#### **Discussion:**

- Some Board members had reservations about holding trials in isolation. They feel trials should be held as a PLTA community event in which people can visit and learn from others. They contend that such a setting promotes sharing of information. It also provides a better setting for testing the llamas. With larger group, more llamas, there will be more distractions for llamas to deal with during trial.
- Board members also had concerns about the qualifications of stewards. Even with pre-certified courses and obstacles, stewards would need to be better trained than they are now.
- Applying this to Basic and Advanced trials might not be appropriate because the handlers and stewards may be less experienced than at Master and Elite levels.
- However, the purpose of the proposal is to make trials more accessible. Few events are being held, they take a lot of work to host, and many times, people who want to attend can't make the dates. This proposal would help address that issue.

**Action Taken:** Board members were advised to continue the discussion on the Board's electronic group site.

### **Certifier Escort Proposal**

**Update:** Board members were asked via email on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to review the proposal described in the document "CertifierEscortProposal180228.docx". All paperwork must still be completed. Registrations of llamas and PLTA members must be in good standing. The purpose of the proposal is to reduce the amount of work required to layout a course and flag it and its obstacles prior to a trial since, at these distances, such an effort can take days.

#### **Discussion:**

- Questions were entertained as to whether this should apply to Master and Elite levels only as put forth by the proposal or to all trial levels.



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- It was suggested that the proposal should be adjusted so that the Certifier is required to go out and certify length and elevation gain of course and also begin to locate a number of possible obstacles prior to the trial.
- A field test done in this way could be handled like a Challenge course. The certifier could ask handlers to help locate and pick out obstacles. This would be more engaging and prevent the field test from becoming a mindless walk.

**Action Taken:** Board members were advised to continue the discussion on the Board's electronic group site.

## **New Business**

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### **No New Business was presented**

## **Actions Going Forward**

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A "to do" list for board members and volunteers

Person	Assignment	Date for Completion
All Board Members	Read the document and continue on-line discussion regarding "Pack Trial on Request"	September Meeting
All Board Members	Read the document and continue on-line discussion regarding "Certifier Escort"	September Meeting
Tom and Sue Seifert, Gina O'Brien, & Lisa Wolf	Continue preparing IRS documents	None set, but soon.

## **Attachments**

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### **TrialOnRequestProposal19711.docx**

Burns Llama Trailblazers

Burns, Oregon

July 11, 2019

To the PLTA Board members and PLTA Pack Trial Committee,

Burns Llama Trailblazers wishes to propose a new way to hold pack trials. As a working title, we call it "Trial on Request". There are still bugs to be worked out with this idea, but we hope the Board will consider addressing the issue with us.

### **The Issue**

Burns Llama Trailblazers have been hosting PLTA pack trials for over fifteen years. Our early events had as many as fifty participants. More recent events have included up to fourteen trials held over a period of four days. We have



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become very experienced and very cognizant of the effort it takes to host an event. As such we have been constantly looking for ways to be more efficient.

We are aware that many people hesitate to hold pack trail events because of the apparent complexity. We have also been continually frustrated with planning events and having potential participants unable to attend due to scheduling issues. It has become very clear that times and life have changed since the PLTA was formed. We are all extremely busy and usually over scheduled. While the "Big Event" pack trials have their place, something more flexible is called for.

### **Proposal**

We propose adding a simplified version of pack trial events in which a person wanting to certify their animals could contact a certifier and schedule a time for a personal trial.

### **Requirements**

1. All pack trial requirements for the manageability tasks and field test would remain as defined in the PLTA Pack Trial Handbook.
2. As is currently the case, sanctioning the trial no later than two weeks prior would be required for insurance purposes. The concept would work best if the host held a year-long sanctioning permission.
3. We see two ways in which the trials could be conducted:
  - a. The trial would be conducted in the Certifier Escort manner in which a qualified Certifier leads the participant(s) through the field test, or
  - b. The courses and obstacles for field tests are approved by a certifier in advance, and established to be used repeatedly. In this case the trial would be administered and the test administered by a steward with more training than our current stewards usually have and the certifier need not be present, but would be on call (available by phone) to deal with any difficulties.

The later scenario raises questions about steward training and responsibility that need more consideration, but would allow the greatest flexibility.

### **Advantages**

The point of this idea is to simplify trails by allowing them to take place without staging a huge event. This would encourage more people to host trials. Holding trials on request would also make them more available and encourage people to participate. The high standards the PLTA demands of its owners and llamas remain, but more options will be opened up for both participants and hosts.

If certified courses and obstacles for field tests were established in locations across the country, it would make access to pack trials much simpler. Currently PLTA trials are held in only a few locations. The travel time and expense makes them unavailable to many people who would otherwise participate.

### **What We Need Now**

We have held numerous discussions among ourselves and our event participants to troubleshoot the concept and have put it before Scott Noga and Tom Seifert for feedback. Both Scott and Tom have been encouraging. We look to the rest of the Board for insight into ways to improve the concept, or provide a better solution to the issues.

Since Burns Llama Trailblazers have a year-long sanctioning permit in place already, and since we have certifiers on staff and field test courses well established, we would like permission to test the idea.

Please let us know what you think, we have people who could not attend our scheduled trials waiting in the wings to certify their llamas.



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Excited to hear your ideas,

Respectfully,  
Lisa Wolf  
Anne Sheeter  
Becky Cunningham

### **CertifierEscortProposal180228.docx**

February 25, 2018

To the PLTA Board members and PLTA Pack Trial Committee,

In the course of our discussions, as individual PLTA members, we are always looking for ways to improve and enhance the PLTA. Please consider the new idea described here for identifying pack trial courses and obstacles. We are anxious to hear your opinion. Feedback received within the next 10 days (by March 10, 2018) is most useful.

#### **Background**

PLTA pack trials were originally set up using dog and horse trials as a model. There were two formats. One (referred to as 'Stationary Steward') required having a different steward staffing each obstacle and evaluating llamas as they and their handler negotiated the course unescorted. The other (known as 'Roving Steward') assigned groups of participants to a steward who escorted them through the course and evaluated each member of the group on the obstacles as the obstacles were encountered.

We have found over the years that it is very difficult to find adequate staff for a pack trial. Hence, the Stationary Steward scenario has seldom if ever been used. We have also noted that on longer courses in particular, flagging the course and marking obstacles can take days.

#### **Proposal**

We propose replacing the Stationary Steward format with a ***Certifier Escort*** model. In this case a certifier would accompany the steward and the group, or possibly do double duty as steward and certifier. The certifier would identify obstacles 'on the fly', thus reducing the pretrial effort of identification and marking. The course would be mapped ahead of time, but not necessarily flagged. The Certifier Escort would be applied only to the Master and Elite trials.

#### **Requirements**

In a Certifier Escort scenario all elevation, distance, and obstacle requirements as well as other pack trial rules and procedures would remain unchanged. In practice, if the event has with multiple trials going on at the same time, the certifier would have to be available by phone or other means to deal with any administrative or emergency issues. Having a second certifier present for this purpose would be advisable. The format we have discussed so far requires the following:

1. Mileage and elevation gain will remain the same, unless otherwise altered according to PLTA guidelines.
2. The certifier will certify course length and elevation gain. This can be done by using a pre-existing course or developing a new course prior to the actual Trial.
3. A pre-trial walk through by the Certifier is strongly recommended but not required. Obstacles would not be pre-marked.



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4. PLTA obstacle guidelines will be adhered to. As in current practice, the certifier would have the final say as to design of the course and obstacles.
5. A special set of forms would be created to allow the steward and certifier to record obstacle information on the go.
6. If the group is supervised by a steward with the certifier accompanying them, the certifier will be allowed to lead their own llama through the course and have its performance evaluated and scored. If the certifier is doing double duty as both course certifier and steward, this will not be the case.

### **Application**

This model is not intended to change the responsibilities of a certifier or steward. The high standards the PLTA demands of its owners and llamas remain, but more options will be opened up for event planners with limited time to set the intricacies of a specific course. The scenario removes burden from the trial marshal and places it on the certifier who would need to be very familiar with the landscape and potential obstacles.

### **What We Need Now**

When your ideas and concerns are accumulated and we see something workable, we would like to use the BLT Trial in May as a test case where bugs could be worked out. Your input is vital and most useful in the form of comments and discussion. What pros or cons do you see with the Certifier Escort concept? Would it improve the efficiency of running pack trials or open a can of worms we have yet to notice? Can we improve on it in some way? Please let us know what you think.

Excited to hear your ideas,

Lisa Wolf,            PLTA president  
Tom Seifert,        PLTA secretary