

NORTHWEST TREK FUN CLUB

RALLY GUIDELINES

Adopted by Executive Board
1/16/2016

Introduction

Many people work together to organize successful and FUN rallies. This guide provides procedures and processes that have been used successfully by NWTFC members. NWTFC has adopted the following planning goal:

A goal of NWTFC is to have at least three rallies a year (one of which may be a pre-rally to an FMCA event). The objective is to spread rallies among spring, summer, and fall and distribute rallies among the various geographic areas served by NWTFC. An annual rally calendar is to be established and published by March each year.

Rallies take months to plan and get announced, so make your move now! It's never too early to get it on the calendar. Asking for help to plan and do a good adventurous rally is a good way to involve other NWTFC friends and you can make new friends while planning and doing the work of making a rally fun for all.

Date and Site Selection

Dates for a proposed rally must be reviewed and approved by the Club Rally Coordinator to reduce potential for overlapping rallies and to spread rallies out geographically. The Wagon Master typically visits the proposed site and negotiates a group rate per coach; obtains the park's cancellation/refund policy and insurance certificate requirement, if any; and reserves a tentative number of spaces. The Wagon Master should also ascertain whether there is a penalty charged if fewer participants register than anticipated. If general business meetings or potlucks are planned, an appropriate facility must be reserved. All rallies must be approved by the Rally Coordinator before commitments are made.

A survey of NWTFC members indicated an openness to various camping venues: boondocking, private campgrounds, USFS campgrounds, state parks, casinos, and even county parks. NWTFC members are open to lots of possibilities. Rally cost is a concern, so it is best to keep costs reasonable.

Rally Announcement

The following format is useful for drafting the rally announcement:

Wagon Masters Names and contact information

Dates

Place

Directions

Important Links, if any

General Description of rally

Registration Info and Cut-off Date

Cost

Upon Arrival Instructions

Agenda--may be listed in the announcement or sent in a separate communication

RV Park Cancellation/Refund Policy

The Wagon Master sends this announcement to the Rally Coordinator who, upon approval, forwards it to the Club Secretary for distribution to membership, the webmaster for posting to website (NWTFC and Trek Tracks), and to the newsletter editor for publication in the club newsletter.

The Club Secretary will distribute rally information to the FMCA for publication in "Association Calendar," unless the Executive Board or the Rally Coordinator decides it would not be advantageous to publish information about a specific rally (i.e. a pre-rally coordinated with volunteer duties). Such notice may include factors that may limit attendance by non-NWTFC FMCA members or the general public. The Secretary will distribute information on NWTFC rallies to other Safari/Monaco chapters and groups.

Rally Budget and Expenditures

Each rally is to have a budget of anticipated income and expenses. On the basis on this budget, the wagon master establishes a rally fee that is charged to rally attendees. Normally, each rally is to be self-funded (exceptions must be authorized by the executive board). As a goal, the rally budget should anticipate a break-even budget with rally income covering expenses.

If insufficient rally income is received, additional funds (up to \$50) needed to cover rally costs may be paid by the Treasurer and reported to the Executive Board. Any additional funds (above \$50) needed to cover rally costs are to be approved by the Executive Board.

In some cases there may be surplus rally income (excess income after expenses have been paid) once the final accounting for the rally has been completed. If the amount of surplus income for any rally exceeds \$100, that surplus income amount is to be refunded to the rally attendees by means of a refund. If the surplus income amount is \$100 or less, the excess income is to be added to the club treasury as surplus income, unless the Executive Board decides otherwise.

A financial report is to be made at the completion of each rally by the Wagon Master within 14 days of the rally end date. This report will be retained by the Treasurer, and reported to the membership at the next business meeting. The report should include all funds received, all expenses incurred, plus any surplus income distributed as refunds to attendees or retained by the club treasury. A suggested rally budget/expense worksheet is available as part of the Wagon Master resources.

Rally Fees

Rally attendees will be directed to remit their checks to the Wagon Master, **payable to NWTFC**. All rally fees shall be forwarded to the treasurer, along with any vendor invoices.

RV Park Reservations

Rally attendees are generally responsible for contacting the RV park for reservations (transferring them from NWTFC to their name), paying for them or canceling them if unable to attend. In cases where an RV park requires upfront reservation of sites, the Wagon Master should reserve an adequate number of sites for the rally. Reservations by the Wagon Master should be held until 15 days prior to the start of the event and then released back to the RV park. Rally attendees should keep the Wagon Master informed of reservations and/or cancellations.

Rally attendees are generally responsible for payment of RV park camping fees directly to the campground. In some cases, the RV park/campground may insist that camping reservations/fees be collected by the club and payment made directly by the club to the park. Where there is a need to make an advance payment as a reservation to reserve camping spots or meeting spaces at an RV park/campground, wagon master may request an advance payment of such deposit payments. Rally Coordinator may recommend advance of club funds to the Executive Board. Upon approval by the

Executive Board, the treasurer may make payment directly to the RV park/campground for such site reservation fees. Such advance payments must be covered by rally fees. A NWTFC expense advance form is to be used to document such expenditures.

Wagon Master Advances

Depending on the nature of the rally, additional fees may be required to cover items such as catering, event reservations, or Wagon Master expenses. In the event associated vendors or RV parks offer incentives to the Wagon Master or to the Club, it shall be at the Wagon Master's discretion to accept or reject them.

If the Wagon Master anticipates unique situations where he/she will be handling extraordinary expense arrangements, a portion of these funds can be advanced. The treasurer may advance money up to \$200 to Wagon Master for Rally Coordinator-approved out-of-pocket expenses. A NWTFC expense advance form is to be used to document such expenditures. Receipts must be provided to the treasurer before an additional advance may be made, and these expenses must be covered by rally fees in order to be reimbursed.

Wagon Master Campsite

Sometimes a campground will offer the wagon master's campsite at no cost if the rally includes a certain number of coaches. If that is not the case, NWTFC will pay an amount equal to one campsite per rally for the Wagon Master(s) from the club treasury. If more than one couple or unit serves as Wagon Master, the amount may be applied to one campsite or split between the Wagon Master campsites.

In many cases it is important for the Wagon Master to be on site prior to the arrival of rally attendees to prepare for the rally, set-up the campsite, purchase food, etc. This is especially important when the rally site is remote or distant from the Wagon Master's home. NWTFC will pay for one additional night of pre-rally camping for the Wagon Master from the club treasury.

Post Rally Report

Wagon Master will prepare a brief write-up of the rally and forward it, along with pictures, to the Club secretary for inclusion in various publications and to the Webmaster to post on the website under "Good Times".

Wrap Up

It is helpful for the Wagon Master to identify pitfalls, if any, in the rally planning and submit them to the Rally Coordinator for potential inclusion in the Helpful Hints section below.

Rally Planning Steps

Here is a suggested order for rally planning. Keep in mind that this is your rally – other wagon masters may do it differently – and that's OK.

1. Decide on dates and place. Rallies shall be planned for a minimum of three nights of camping. Including a weekend makes it easier for folks who are not yet retired. No maximum rally length is established.
2. Inform the Rally Coordinator of your rally date and location. Dates for a proposed rally must be reviewed and approved by the Rally Coordinator to space rallies throughout the season and to spread the rallies throughout the geographic area served by NWTFC. All rallies must be approved by the Rally Coordinator before commitments are made.
3. Work through the rally schedule.

Example

Day 1 - arrival time, dinner meal - example heavy hors d'oeuvres, finger foods, potluck, mixer/intro game

Day 2 - breakfast, activity, evening potluck

Day 3 - breakfast, free-time, dinner out

Day 4 - breakfast and leave

An RV related workshop or special program, entertainment, or presentation adds to the rally. Generally a club business meeting is held during each rally. An organized tour or sightseeing event may be included. A list of area activities or attractions can provide ideas for a free day of activity.

It is easy to fill 3 nights and 4 days. Remember – not every moment needs to be planned. Elaborate or expensive activities need not be part of the schedule. Lots of free time is good for socializing and exploring new areas.

Use the NWTFC Planning sheet to help fill in the blanks.

4. Run your plan by a Rally Mentor for suggestions if you want some feedback.
5. Work on rally budget using budget preparation / expense worksheet / Excel spreadsheet. Feel free to run the projected rally budget by a Rally Mentor.

The rally fee will generally include costs for meals at the campsite, activities, entertainment, etc. Allow a small undesignated amount in the rally budget to cover miscellaneous, unanticipated expenses. A special meal or group outing at a restaurant may be covered under the rally fee or rally attendees may order off the menu and pay for their own meals. Camping arrangements may be made directly by rally attendees and fees paid directly to the campground. Or, the campground may prefer that camping fees be collected through the rally fee, and a single payment be made by NWTFC to the campground.

Most coaches in the club include two people attending a rally, however there are singles who travel with their coach. Therefore it is best to offer a customary rally fee to cover the camping fee and two people, and also a reduced fee for single attendees.. The cost for meals and activities would reflect only one person participating in the rally.

6. Secure arrangements with campground, restaurant, tour/activity folks.
7. Prepare a rally announcement and forward it to the Rally Coordinator. The Rally Coordinator will send it to the Club Secretary for distribution to membership and related publications, the webmaster for posting to website (NWTFC and Trek Tracks), and to the newsletter editor for publication in the club newsletter.

The secretary will also send rally information to the FMCA for posting in the Association Calendar of the FMCA magazine. Let the secretary know if there are site limitations or special factors that should be printed in the magazine or would indicate that the rally should not be posted in the FMCA magazine. Remember, if the rally is listed in the FMCA rally calendar, any FMCA member may attend.

8. At this point most of the work is done.

9. Receive registrations, forward checks to club treasurer. Or, registrations and checks sent directly to treasurer and treasurer forwards registration forms to wagon master.
10. Treasurer will pay bills as necessary and/or reimburse you for expenses for costs you incurred.

Remember – a payment voucher should be completed for each fund expenditure. The payment voucher can be simple, but must include reason for disbursement, approving authority, payee, amount. Receipts for disbursements should be attached to all payment vouchers. If a receipt is not available, a statement as to the circumstances should be attached.

And don't panic – Rally Mentors and other seasoned wagon masters are eager to help make your rally a success.

Above all - have fun while you are doing it!

Helpful Hints

Comments from former Wagon Masters:

1. Define “heavy hors d’oeuvres” as opposed to “potluck.” Perhaps finger foods would better define heavy hors d’oeuvres.
2. When establishing a time for breakfast, 8:30-10:00 is too long a period to hold food. Shorten the time frame to one hour.
3. If the room capacity for meals and business meetings is X, limit the number of rally participants to <X to avoid standing room only situations.