

Donald H. White

I'm Don White and I'm a candidate for PATC President. I've heard Members voice problems with their perceptions of increasing bureaucracy and disconnection with the Club . My intent is to resolve those and other related issues as we find them.

Who Am I?

I'm 68 years old and reside near Richmond, VA. I served in the U.S. Navy as a Russian cryptolinguist and led cryptologic direct support teams aboard 15 submarines and surface ships. I qualified in submarines before many of you were born (I guess) and I was selected for and promoted to Chief Petty Officer. I am a life member and webmaster of the [U.S. Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association](#). I know Sea Stories from Fairy Tales.

Why Am I A Candidate for President?

I will support each Member and our programs and projects run by our Members as best I can.



What is PATC?

The PATC is a corporation organized under the Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act. We have 7,000 dues-paying Members who together form our non-profit corporation. Every member is a Member first; those who have the ability and desire additionally volunteer their active participation in PATC activities. I believe close to 2,000 members are active with committees,

Council, office support, trails, cabins, or shelter (hut) maintenance, or trail corridor management.

Issues

Executive Committee

Increasingly, the large and unwieldy Council has deferred to the Executive Committee, a much smaller body of officers with corporate-level responsibilities, to decide on issues that Council subsequently rubber-stamps. That doesn't comply with our Constitution.

Resolution: Executive Committee meetings are the responsibility of the President. I intend to revert the EXCOM to its original purpose – identify corporate-level matters, such as local legal, ATC, and NPS matters affecting PATC for consideration by Council. EXCOM would not restrict Council. In other words, EXCOM will no longer be a legislative body.

Council

Some years ago, we expanded the number of officer roles on Council in the hope that would encourage greater participation by more Members. It did not achieve the intention – to attract more Members to serve. However, it so expanded Council that it is difficult to effectively review and make decisions on issues. Additionally, I believe that the requirement to physically attend meetings at our headquarters discourages participation by Members.

Resolution: First, we will amend the Bylaws if needed so that all meetings – Council, Committee, or ad-hoc – will be conducted virtually. This doesn't prevent anyone from meeting in person.

Second, I will work to amend our Constitution so that we differentiate between Corporate Officers and Operational Directors.

- The Corporate Officers would include the: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Supervisor of Trails, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary.
- The Operational Directors would be appointed and include: Membership, Development, Lands, Trail Corridor, Facilities, Conservation, Marketing, Communications, and Outreach.
- Elected Chapter and Section Presidents will continue to represent their PATC Members on Council.
- Current Standing Committees and other Appointed Officers will be organized under the responsible Corporate Officer or Operational Director and will not sit on Council. These individuals may be called to Council as requested to represent matters under their purview.

Club officer have confronted the issue in the past, mainly by tweaking the Bylaws and creating and amending a "*Guide to the Duties and Responsibilities of PATC Officers*", which are guidelines only and originally published in 2009. It's time to make substantive changes.

Chapters & Sections

It seems to me that we often treat our Chapters and Sections as if they are stepchildren whose actual roles in PATC are undefined and unimportant. Well, that's not right. These people are

Members who live far from Vienna, VA. That doesn't lessen their value and contributions one bit.

Resolution: No Constitutional or ByLaws amendment can address this. There must be more personal connection with the Members in our Chapters and Sections. One thing to do is to participate, when invited, in Chapter and Section gatherings or meetings, remotely or, when possible, physically. Ask questions and listen to the responses made. Identify issues and address them promptly and effectively. These Members are part of our Family and the health and growth of our Chapters and Sections is critically important to the PATC. Where they work and contribute, they are the PATC.

Annual Meeting or Rubber Chicken Dinner?

Can Members sit with officers and discuss the Club or any of our programs or projects? Networking and milling about are the only venues available for Members to really participate in discussions about Club business.

Resolution: Move the Annual Meeting to an all-day affair held in a suitable facility outside of Vienna, VA such as a national or state park offering a program that includes:

- Games & hikes for children
- Hikes & presentations for adults
- Roundtable forums with Club officers and invited representatives from other organizations
- A self-catered (pot-luck) or semi-professionally catered banquet

Of course there will be for Members, depending on the Member's use of the facility. However, those fees should not be used to raise funds for the Club. Members can, if they wish, not stay overnight and not eat at the banquet, so that they are not charged a fee.

Government Partnerships

PATC has signed Cooperative Agreements with many federal and state government agencies. Increasingly, and particularly with the National Park Service, the implementations of those agreements feels less and less "cooperative".

There's no question that the government agency managing a park is in charge of that park. However, the PATC is neither a government agency nor a government contractor. Our Members are not employees of either the park agency nor PATC.

PATC, through the Supervisor of Trails, assigns PATC Members who volunteer, through the SoT, to maintain sections of trails that PATC, through our cooperative agreement with the park, has agreed to maintain.

Today, the SNP requires PATC trail maintainers to notify either or both of the NPS "supervisors" of each worktrip the maintainer intends to conduct so that the "supervisor" can meet the maintainer and approve the "plan".

If a maintainer, crew leader, or district manager needs to setup a trail crew to handle any items on any trail section and, if that PATC Member wants to invite the public to participate, well, that's a problem Why? Because the crew leader must provide to the NPS "supervisor" all personally-identifiable information solicited in the 301(A) form to the NPS "supervisor" at least one week in advance so that a one-day only no-fee permit can be picked up by the person.

There seems to be a suspicion that some bad people say they're entering the SNP to work on a PATC worktrip when they actually don't want to pay the fee. I've not wittingly observed this, but perhaps it's true.

Resolution: We must work with our government partners to significantly reduce the level of bureaucracy, actual and perceived, experienced by our Members.

I promise to faithfully and completely represent PATC Members and membership to our government partners and to push back when and where needed. The President and the Club officers must be strong advocates for the PATC.

The Website

In 2017, I learned that PATC paid \$600.00 per month to host our website because of the choice the Club had made to use a specific proprietary Content Management System. A single, mandatory upgrade to that CMS cost us what had been budgeted for all Information Technology expenses for the entire year.

Fellas, there are better ways to do this. It's not simply a budgetary matter – continued use of the proprietary platform restricts us in how we can structure and present our web content. If you feel that our website presents your Club and your efforts well to the public and best serves you as a Member, then I encourage you to vote for someone else.

Question: Do you know that PATC, with REI, built and maintains a website dedicated to the [Tuscarora Trail](#)? Can you find a link to it on our Club website?

Resolution: I intend to make changes so that we, the PATC, own our data and best present the Club to the public. I have some experience with this – take a look at the website about the [PATC in the South District of Shenandoah National Park](#).

What's Next?

There are many things I'm concerned about regarding the PATC, including:

- Conservation
- Recruitment
- Member Benefits
- Communications & Public Affairs
- Development (funding)
- Outreach

My PATC Background

I joined PATC in 1990, working with Elizabeth Johnson, Charlie Irvin and the North Chapter. I am both a Life & an Honorary Life member. I have served as: Public Affairs Committee chair, Supervisor of Trails, Firestone Tract Manager, leader of two trail crews – Cadillac & Acme Treadway Company, President, A.T. District Manager, and A.T. section co-maintainer.

I was elected President in 2016 and I resigned in Spring 2017. What do I say about that?

I made a mistake.

Why have I opened my candidacy again?

Because I learn from my mistakes...to make bigger and better mistakes.
I am committed to this and shall not resign. Again.

