



HIKERS' BOARD OVERVIEW

Mission

The TCTA Hikers' Board is dedicated to the mission of building, maintaining, and promoting the Transcaucasian Trail.

The Hikers' Board is formed of alumni hikers and volunteers who are passionate about the trail experience and want to actively participate in shaping the TCT's future. It's a way to leverage the experience, enthusiasm, and skills gained along the trail in order to help support the trail's sustainability.

The hikers' board works to raise funds to support priority trail projects; to support the TCT team in identifying and executing key ways to improve the trail experience; to increase awareness of the TCT in its members' social, business, and outdoor networks; and to create a fun and exciting environment where hikers can get involved in the behind-the-scenes of developing a long-distance trail, deepen their understanding of issues related to trails, tourism, and conservation, gain governance experience, and socialize with other hikers who have loved the TCT.

Purpose

Core goals:

- Expand the TCT's audience of hikers and supporters to help ensure the sustainability of the trail - including promoting the TCT within other hiking networks around the world
- Provide valuable feedback, input, and volunteer time dedicated to improving the trail experience for different types of users
- Raise funds to support priority trail projects that will improve the trail experience - benefiting future hikers as well as the communities along the trail



Core benefits:

- Give back to the trail community that you experienced, and ensure that the TCT continues to grow into a positive force for hikers and communities alike
- Work on impactful projects (and have a good time!) with an engaged and passionate group of fellow hikers and trail builders to make hiking a force for good
- Gain nonprofit board experience (great on a resume if that's your thing!) and learn about the inner workings of a nonprofit trail building organization
- Recognition for your work - be listed on the TCT website, annual reports, and social media / web posts for any relevant projects or events
- Opportunities to join the core TCT team and TCTA board for activities as time and interest allow - including TCTA board meetings, outreach events, and scouting activities and trail work in the Caucasus (self-funded).

Activities

There are hundreds of potential ways to support the TCT and make an impact on the trail's development. We encourage hikers' board members to identify and leverage their own individual skills and interests.

Some people love party planning, others want to do programming jobs only (like helping with the website, social media, marketing, and branding/communications), and others want to volunteer on the physical trail. We welcome all of these.

You can do any of these or bring your own ideas, but you definitely don't have to do all of them!

Examples of the primary types of activities we expect Hikers' Board members to participate in include:

- Raise awareness of the TCT through their networks and social media channels
 - Raise awareness through social media, blogs, in-person talks, podcasts, and other media channels.
 - Promote the TCT to other hikers who would enjoy the experience.
- Support current and future TCT hikers
 - Offer advice to prospective hikers in the TCT Slack Channel, virtual events, and any other relevant forums.



- Raise funds to help support the TCT
 - Goals: Raise an individual or group goal amount to support general operating costs + a strategic trail fund (which can be used to support priority projects along the trail that will improve the hiking experience).
 - Proposed goal amount: \$1,000 per person
- Throw a party / host an event / give a talk to bring in new supporters
 - Goals: Each Hikers' Board Member will organize at least one event per year to raise awareness (and/or funds) of the TCT.
 - This could include throwing a party, organizing a regionally-themed dinner or event, giving a public talk about the trail, raising money through a charity race, representing the TCT at other "trail days", and many other formats.
 - You won't be working alone on this, either– we're not fundraising or event experts ourselves (yet) but we will support you in this as much as we can, with resources that have helped us, lessons we've learned along the way, and lots of cheering each other on!
- Provide skilled volunteerism to support the TCT mission & projects
 - Goals: Use each board member's skills to contribute to priorities that will raise awareness of the TCT and improve the trail experience.
 - Some past examples of this type of volunteering include:
 - Jeff Ballard's work to improve the mapping & waypoints of the TCT and get it listed on the [FarOut app](#), which reaches thousands of hikers
 - Harry Kuril's [written guide to the TCT](#) and ideas to create interactive GIS renderings of the TCT
 - Lea Geibel's public talks about her experience on the TCT and the overall project
 - Additional ideas for future volunteer projects:
 - Running the hiker forum and actively participating to support new hikers
 - Writing advice pieces on how to prepare for the TCT



- Writing trail resources for new sections, or contributing other useful information/sections to help us make the trail guides even more useful and relevant for hikers
 - We need to do a big website revamp in the coming years– if you have the skills and interest to help with this, let us know!
 - Volunteering to help manage social media– that could be account management if you’re a social media whiz (we would LOVE to be able to offload some of this), content creation, or something else!
 - Photography, video, and other media work. We’re always looking for people to help tell the TCT story and share different perspectives!
 - Mapping and data organization - a big virtual need that’s only going to get bigger as the trail expands! Some current needs are:
 - Virtual mapping on OSM to improve base maps and add / make corrections to the TCT route
 - Helping manage and improve the CalTopo hiker resources - embedding photos, updating the map with recent hiker comments, etc
 - Connecting the TCT with other individuals, organizations, and businesses that would be interested in supporting the TCT in some way
 - For example: Are you part of other hiking clubs that might be interested in the trail? Do you know anyone at outdoor gear brands or stores? Can you introduce us? :)
 - Help organize an annual TCT Board Hike bringing together hikers’ board members, members of the TCT board, and TCT team. (We want to start this next year! Do you love planning group hikes with cool people coming from all over the world? Maybe this is the job for you!)
- Build the Hikers’ Board
 - The Hikers’ Board itself will be primarily responsible for recruiting, vetting, and onboarding new members (with support from the TCTA team). Help us build this community!



Membership & Structure

Membership Criteria

Members of the hikers' board should have hiked a significant section of the TCT and/or volunteered on the trail.

Hikers' board members are required to have spent substantial time on the trail in order to understand the communities, ecosystems, and trail conditions we're working with and to be able to effectively communicate about the TCT to external audiences.

Thru-hiking experience on the TCT is a plus, but not a requirement.

Board members should be passionate about the trail, interested in the landscapes and the cultures of the Caucasus, and have a genuine desire to support the development of trail tourism that's respectful, eco-friendly, and accessible.

Board members should be willing and excited to promote the trail to new audiences and bring in new friends and supporters of the trail.

Time Commitment

Board Terms

- Proposed terms: 1 year with the option to renew, with new members being added in October-December following the hiking season
- We don't plan to have a term limit - over time, we hope to build the board to be a rich network of TCT hikers who have experienced the trail in many forms over the years.

Meeting frequency

- Proposed meeting frequency: Once per month
 - Board members will be expected to attend ~75% of meetings (but we know that hikers are often traveling around, so we don't expect perfect attendance– the goal is to meet frequently enough to keep momentum going and so that it's not a huge deal if you can't make a meeting or two because you're off-grid in Greenland!)

Expected time commitment

- We anticipate that the time commitment involved will probably range from 1-10 hours a month, with simply attending the monthly meeting on the low end and



more active projects (like organizing an event) on the high end.

- This will probably also vary throughout the year, so you can pick the times of the year to dedicate more time that work for you!

Board member event expectations

- Goal event amount: 1 event per member per year

Annual board member fundraising expectations

- Goal amount to raise or donate: \$1000 per person, which will support general operating and strategic priorities.
- Beyond this, the Hikers' Board can also set a fundraising goal for strategic trail projects, which will be determined through conversations with the local NGOs & hikers' board members to determine which projects will have the most impact on the hiker experience.

How to Apply

Sound like you? We'd love to hear from you!

Email TCTA Executive Director Meagan Neal (meagan@transcaucasiantrail.org) with a short description of your TCT trail experience, what you hope to gain from being on the Hikers' Board, and what you aim to contribute.