Guide to Managing a Meetup Group – For AMC Volunteer Communities

This document was created by the Chapters Committee in collaboration with AMC staff to help AMC Chapters best manage their Meetup groups by establishing best practices for the creation and management of Meetup groups. Adhering to these best practices will help distinguish AMC Meetup groups from their competition and help them serve as excellent conduits to Chapter membership and increased event participation.

AMC Chapters and their committees have been using Meetup since 2010, with varied levels of success. In many cases, it has been a highly successful strategy for the recruitment of participants and future members and leaders of the AMC. Chapters also recognize that there are challenges associated with listing events on Meetup—lack of awareness of AMC mission, low conversion from Meetup membership to AMC membership, etc.

Why is this important? Meetup has proven to be an excellent way to market Chapter offerings to a wide range of new people of diverse backgrounds. Expanding the size, breadth, and strength of the AMC Community is part of AMC's mission of connecting people to the outdoors and is key to the continued growth and vitality of our local Chapters. When used well, Meetup helps Chapters reach many more people than we may have been able to reach otherwise.

A few best practices for managing a Meetup group:
1. Follow guidelines (below) for how best to set up a Meetup group
2. Make sure that the "basics" and "about" sections of your Meetup group explain what your local group is all about as well as introduce people to the AMC as a larger organization.
3. Designate a Meetup organizer/point person to support leaders who use Meetup.
4. Make it optional for leaders to list their events in Meetup.
5. Ensure that leaders who list events on Meetup understand and follow best practices.
6. As much as possible, consolidate your volunteer community's Meetup presence—the fewer groups the better. Larger, more active groups receive much more visibility on Meetup and in search engines, and they also help expose Meetup members to all AMC has to offer.

Guide to Creating an AMC Meetup Group:
Group Basics:
- ***Meetup group name*** – Name the group according to this convention: "AMC [Chapter/committee name]" – for example, AMC Berkshire Chapter
- ***What are members called?*** Choose what your members are called, e.g. "Outdoor Enthusiasts," "Hikers," "Young Members," etc.
- ***Meetup group photo*** – The photo should be an official AMC logo.
- ***Meetup group location*** – If your geographic region is large or you'd like people in different cities/areas to see your Meetup group based on their location, you can move your Meetup group location every once in a while (every quarter, for example).
- ***Meetup group description*** – This should be informative, welcoming, and set the tone for what this group is all about, including what differentiates it from other groups (larger organizational mission, quality of leadership, etc.).
  - The description on the Delaware Valley Chapter Meetup group is a good example: http://www.meetup.com/Appalachian-Mountain-Club-Delaware-Valley-Chapter/

Need Help? http://www.meetup.com/help/article/1746040/

Your Members:
- Determine requirements for joining the group – keep in mind that reducing barriers to join may help to attract more Meetup members.

Topics:
- Review your meetup group's topics to ensure they align with your activities and to maximize your group's visibility across Meetup.

Content Visibility:
- **Content visibility** should be set to "full." This way, potential members can see all of the group's content before joining and assess if they are a good fit for your group.

Manage Your Venues
- For trips that are show-and-go and don't require screening, create accurate location listings.

Member Roles
- Carefully plan administrator roles by granting the right amount of access to those who will need it. Be sure to remove admin access to volunteers who no longer participate in AMC/Meetup. Leaders should be assigned as **assistant or event organizers**, allowing them to post events and answer participant questions.
- ***Who can create new pages?*** It's recommended to restrict this setting to: "only the organizer and co-organizers."

Sponsors
- Include a link to your Chapter's website or membership join form to connect the Meetup efforts with your broader chapter efforts.
- ***Donations:*** AMC's Development Department employs professional fundraisers and grant writers who work to raise money for the club's operations as well as for specific projects. Volunteer club units should not raise funds or receive grants from outside sources. If opportunities for fundraising or receipt of grants do arise, volunteer club units must consult with AMC's Development staff to create a plan of action whereby we make the most of the club's opportunities and expertise.
- ***Member Info:*** In the past, outdoor stores have asked Chapters to list them as sponsors and then asked for an email list to offer discounts. This is not permitted under Member Info policies—**AMC member info is confidential** and contact information must not be shared.

Appearance
- Add a banner image that represents what your group is all about – either within the specific activity/focus of your group, or your broader chapter. [Delaware Valley uses their AMC Chapter logo lockup](#).

Email Members
- Email Meetup members 1-2 times per year to encourage them to join AMC.
- Sparingly leverage Meetup to inform people on Chapter/AMC news (conservation action).

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