

Notice to All Members of the Cleveland Hiking Club

Like you, I am trying to maintain social isolation by largely remaining at home, doing my part to flatten the curve. Surviving in this “new normal” will take a shift in mindset, which is tough.

Someone described the Covid-19 pandemic as a case of “getting sick together” or “staying well together.” Our choices affect everyone around us. There is no “individual risk” or “individual wellness.” We are connected to one another.

I shared many of the emails I received over the past few days with the board as we made this difficult decision in a special board meeting. But in the end, it was not that difficult. Thinking about others as we make choices as a club is the only way to safety for ourselves, our hiking friends and the people we care about.

To that end, we have decided that the CHC will suspend hiking, effective immediately, until April 30, 2020, at which point we will consider our options. Hike reports will not be accepted for any hike effective with hikes scheduled for March 21, 2020 until the suspension is lifted. Of course, no member will be able to receive mileage credit during this period of suspension.

Even if public health officials allow some businesses to re-open in a few weeks or make changes that allow us to resume hiking together, it appears that we may have additional periods of social distancing and isolation in the coming months and possibly for the next 18 months. Consequently, we have appointed a committee to develop some safe alternatives to group hiking. We will focus our efforts on developing alternatives that will allow us to hike, *alone or with one other member*, earn mileage credit, and stay connected to each other (from a safe distance), while being good citizens. We will let you know about those options soon.

Here is some good news. Directories were mailed today. So, while we are working on possible options, think about giving one of your hiking friends a call just to talk, or to take a walk at a safe social distance (6 feet).

At times like this, some people may be disappointed. We may be upset with folks who think rules are for everyone else, the splash and dash hand washers, a “close talker,” or a naysayer. We may be annoyed out of frustration, if nothing else.

But we can't give up on each other, because we are all we have. As my grandmother often said, “this too will pass.” In the meantime, wash your hands and keep your distance. Be kind, spread calm, and above all, be hopeful.

March 20, 2020