

# **HISTORY and ORGANIZATION OF WTCC**

*Where we've come from and how we've operated*

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Wilderness Trek started as the dream of a youth minister named Bob Wood. During the summer of 1975 Mr. Wood took a group of 21 ninth grade boys, two girls and a few parents for a week-long backpacking trip to the mountains near Gunnison, Colorado

Starting in 1978, youth ministers from other churches began combining their groups with the Hillcrest group. One of these was Edd Eason, youth minister for the Richardson East Church of Christ. By 1980 almost a dozen churches were asking Mr. Wood to take their groups on what had come to be known as Trek. The cost of Trek was approximately \$125 per person.

By 1980 over 500 teens and adults had been on Mr. Wood's "treks". Up until that time Wood had operated Wilderness Trek as an extension of his youth ministry at the Hillcrest Church of Christ. In 1984, Mr. Wood approached a group of youth ministers and Christian businessmen, who had supported Trek, with the idea of forming a non-profit organization, led by a board of directors. The purpose of the board was to remove the organizational burden from Mr. Wood, provide for Trek's spiritual direction and insure the ministry of Wilderness Trek for future generations.

On October 23, 1985, James Gilbert, Edd Eason, David Hines, Marty Chamberlin, Rick Bingham and Dick Fredrick meet at the Lubbock Civic Center (Lubbock, TX) and drafted the Charter and Articles of Organization for WTCC. In September of 1986 WTCC was granted its 501 (c) (3) designation by Internal Revenue Service.

## **HOW WILDERNESS TREK HAS BEEN ORGANIZED IN THE PAST**

Since its official beginning WTCC has been a non-profit organization led by a volunteer board of directors. Since that time it has paid a contractor (an individual or a for-profit company) for outfitting services such as equipment rental, Forestry Service permits, base camp services and meals. From 1986 until 1991 WTCC used Woods & Trails as its only outfitter. In 1992 and 1993 WTCC used two outfitters: Woods & Trails and Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. From 1993 until present WTCC has used Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. as its only outfitter. The owners of W.E.I., Tommy & Kristi Query, have been invaluable partners in the growth and expansion of WTCC's ministry. Until the fall of 2003 the Camp has accomplished activities such as recruiting, marketing, scheduling, fund raising and theme development/implementation through volunteer efforts of the Board and/or a paid contractor.

## **WTCC's CURRENT ORGANIZATION**

On October 1, 2003, WTCC hired its first full time executive director. The Executive Director is currently tasked with the responsibility of marketing, fundraising and the daily operation of the Camp's programs. Seven board members currently serve on the WTCC Board. There are three executive officers (President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer).

The Board is currently sub-divided into two committees: Vision/Reorganization and Planning/Operations. Three board members serve on each committee. The WTCC President serves on both committees. In recent years the board has met at least twice a year (fall and spring). In the fall of 2004, the WTCC ratified by resolution Restated Articles of

Incorporation. The "Restated Articles" corrected out-of-date information in the original Articles and established a clear up to date public record of WTCC's current status as an organization. These restated articles were filed with the Texas Secretary of State on September 21, 2004.

### **THE FUTURE OF WTCC**

In the spring of 2005 Wilderness Expeditions, Inc. ("WE"), WTCC's current outfitting contractor approached the WTCC Board and offered the WTCC Board the opportunity to: (1) Purchase the assets of WE and operate solely on its own; or (2) Renegotiate its contract with WE. The Board decided to renegotiate a five year agreement with WE and determined that it would embark on a re-organization process that would ensure the future and stability of WTCC while operating under the historical model.

The Board believes that the new agreement with WE will allow adequate transition time for WTCC to seek maximum input from Stake Holders and to accomplish the numerous tasks which must occur for WTCC to re-organize. In this process the Board and WE are working together to further the ministry and exploring together how best to ensure the future of the ministry. The Board is actively considering various business models and operation scenarios in this process. However, exactly how to operate the ministry going forward, has not yet been determined. The current committee structure of WTCC is designed to ensure the current operation of WTCC while moving forward with possible changes. From Board discussions and Committee meetings the first step in this process is to gain public input and to evaluate the current Mission and Vision of WTCC.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE HISTORY OF WILDERNESS TREK CHRISTIAN CAMP**

Wilderness Trek began out of a need expressed by Church of Christ youth ministers for an adventure camping activity that was spiritually focused, safe and affordable. Over the past 30 years Church of Christ congregations have accounted for 95% of Wilderness Trek's participants. In the late 1990's the first non-Church of Christ groups began participating in Trek. Since that time more than 50 non-Church-of-Christ groups have participated in Wilderness Trek, mostly Bible Church congregations, Methodist churches and Independent Christian churches. The introduction of these new groups has had little effect on how Wilderness Trek is conducted.

Since its beginning WTCC has paid a contractor (an individual or a for-profit company) for outfitting services such as equipment rental, Forestry Service permits, staff services, base camp services and meals. Originally Bob Wood provided all outfitting services at a cost of \$125 per person. The cost of Trek at the time was \$125 per person. By 1992 the Outfitter's fee had risen to \$160 with the cost of Trek reaching \$205 per person. Twenty-five dollars of the extra \$45 was paid to the Trek recruiter, James "Gibby" Gilbert. Ten dollars was passed on to Bob Wood per an agreement worked out between Mr. Wood and the WTCC Board to compensate him for all his years of service. The remaining \$ 10 was retained by the Board for the cost of T-shirts and journals. The arrangement with Bob Wood continued until a buy-out agreement was made with him in 1999.

In recent years WTCC has continued to contract for outfitting services because of the need to maintain an arrangement with the USDA Forestry Service that would make available the maximum number of user days possible. Currently 70% of all Wilderness Trek proceeds go

to the Wilderness Trek's outfitter, *Wilderness Expeditions, Inc.* Twenty – 25% of Trek's income goes to pay the Executive Director and fund the annual budget. Less than 10% goes to fund board expenses (i.e. D&O insurance and board meeting expenses).

Since Trek's beginning it has always been the responsibility of the Outfitter to hire, train and supervise the summer staff. There have been over 650 young Christian men and women who have served as summer staff over the past 30 years. Most of these have been from Christian colleges and universities. All have been baptized believers, mostly from the Churches of Christ. Technically, staff members are employees of the Outfitter, an arrangement required by the USDA Forestry Service for the type of permit currently held by the Outfitter. These staff members have been the heart and soul of *Wilderness Trek Christian Camp*. To those who participate, they are the "face(s)" of Wilderness Trek. *Wilderness Expeditions, Inc.* has done an excellent job of selecting, training and supervising them over the past 15 years.

Until the fall of 2003 the Camp accomplished activities such as recruiting, marketing, scheduling, fund raising and theme development/implementation through the volunteer efforts of Board and/or through the services of a paid contractor (recruiting agent). In the fall of 2003 WTCC hired Edd Eason as Executive Director to oversee the marketing, fund raising and operations activities of Wilderness Trek. Since then WTCC has operated with an annual budget.