

The Founding of Louisiana Hiking Club

As the "founding father" of the Louisiana Hiking Club, I've been asked on many occasions when the club officially began. Until now I've only been able to give a wide window of time because no one kept any notes in the early days. I knew it was before I retired in Jan 1998, but wasn't sure how much before.

In the beginning, I envisioned a small club of backpackers loosely organized to plan trips and enjoy each others company. I started by posting an ad on the Backpacker Magazine web site asking if anyone in the Baton Rouge area was interested in starting a club. For better then six months no one replied. Then Elisa Tubbs contacted me by telephone about my ad. I told her to forget the idea as apparently no one in Louisiana was interested in a club. She persisted and I agreed to meet with her, her husband Keith and Nina Baxley at la Madeleine's restaurant across from the Backpacker store in Baton Rouge. At that meeting we decided to get all of our backpacking friends together for another meeting and discuss the possibilities of a club. About a week or two later we all met at the newly opened Manship YMCA in Baton Rouge. Some of the people present for the first official meeting were: myself, Elisa, Keith, Nina, Mike Murphy, Dave Snyder, Hulin Robert and a few others, totaling about ten people.

This morning I realized that the first meeting had to have been held after the Manship YMCA opened (Daaaa !!!!!). I called the Y and found out they opened for business on June 29, 1997. I retired January 2, 1998. So, it's apparent the first "official" meeting of the club was at the YMCA in July 1997. The rest is history.

I can't speak for anyone else, but the club has exceeded any visions I had. I only take credit for the idea of having a club. The membership over the last ten years have made the club what it is today, the premier hiking club in Louisiana.

by Adrian Fortier
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