

Travel SIG notes for April 18, 2024

7 attendees, In alphabetical order based on memory:

Bill Adkison
Andy Goris (near the end)
Michael Hohol
Jack Lipscomb
Kristi Norman
Rich Roberts
Albert Wang

Rick Dunnahoo talked about his experience in planning trips. Some of his comments here:

He is based in southern Colorado (Alamosa) and has planned photography trips since at least 2012 and used to plan trips for the Loveland Photographic Society (LPS). He had gotten into that role because his daughter was a member of LPS and there was no camera club in his area. Many trips have been in the southwest/Four Corners area, but the furthest trip was to St. Augustine, Florida in 2016. Trips have also been organized to Grand Teton National Park.

Rick does not have the photographic trips as an actual business, and does not plan to after he retires from his day job; and he only offers trips to friends and vetted new participants for several reasons. One is that a business would probably be required to get photographic permits for many areas, whereas a collection of friends would not. Another is that a business would likely be need to carry insurance, although he is considering that liability waivers of some sort might be a good idea. Finally, operating as a business would most likely require him to take all comers, including those who might be difficult or disruptive. This happened with one or two people when he had organized trips for LPS. However he admits that the trips are costly to him personally, and has suggested on recent trips that participants consider a gratuity.

He estimates that around 40 hours of research goes into planning his trips, although some may rely on his own prior knowledge. He believes that trips should be longer (several days to a week) so there are more photographic opportunities and thus more value. For events where timing is more important, like bird migration, flower blooming, or fall color, he gets some information from Facebook pages dedicated to these topics. However, trips with these as the focus are planned well in advance so that participants can have an easier time getting hotel rooms or campsites. Adjustments may need to be made based on the local situation, such as if some of the events occur earlier, later, or in slightly different

areas than originally projected. A recent example of where plans had to be adjusted was the October 2023 annular eclipse, where the group moved to a different site because of potential crowding issues and possible inability to access (gates locked once the original area was too heavily occupied).

His next trip this year is to Navajo lands, but this trip is full with around 20 people going already. This trip required purchasing permits from the Navajo.

Photo sharing is not done formally but mostly occurs on his private group Facebook page. There had been one attempt on an earlier trip to show photos on the last day of a trip, but this required someone to bring a projector and for people to try to process “in the field”.

Several questions were asked but there was a more extensive discussion between Rick and Kristi Norman about Crested Butte. Kristi also noted that especially women travelers would feel safer traveling with a group. Rick added that traveling with a group offers safety advantages in general, such as deterring adverse animal encounters and having others be able to get help if someone becomes injured.