

# **HIKE / BACKPACK LEADER SEMINAR**

**Mountaineers  
Olympia Branch**

**Dec 8, 2020 6:30 PM**



# AGENDA

- Introductions/Survey Results
- Why become a leader?
- How to become a hike/backpack leader
- Hike definition and standards
- Steps for planning, conducting closing hikes
- Standards and Policies
- Decision making and difficult situations
- Leadership decision making scenarios
- Questions and Closing

# PRESENTERS

- Dee Ann Kline
- Steve Payne
- Monty Pratt
- Michelle Garcia

# Survey Results

- ▣ 12 people responded to the survey
- ▣ 2 people completed elearning
- ▣ Equal responses for backpack leader, hike leader, renew skills
- ▣ Hike/backpack difficulty: most were in the middle range, with a few easy and a few very difficult.
- ▣ Trailnames:  
*Pringles   Songbird   Sun Gremlin   Hikesalot*  
*Hoover   Wild Ginger   Mac N Cheese   Terminator*

# WHY BECOME A HIKE LEADER

- Develop leadership skills\*
- Your hike- your way\*
- Pay it forward
- Mountaineers culture
- Friendships
- Mentor to others\*
- Promote the power of nature\*
- Olympia Hiking and Backpacking Leader Options:
  - *Day Hikes*
  - *Conditioning Hiking Series (CHS) Hikes*
  - *Family Hikes*
  - *Naturalist Hikes*
  - *Backpacks*

**\* These were your responses from the survey.**

# PROCESS TO BECOME A HIKE (OR BACKPACK) LEADER

- Be a current Mountaineers member, at least 18 years old.
- Attend a hike leaders workshop (two hour session – you're at it!)
- Lead two mentored hikes with a qualified Hike Leader as mentor. For the first hike, be Assistant Leader with the mentor as Leader. For the second hike – choose the trip, handle logistics, and be the Leader with the mentor assisting.
- Demonstrated knowledge of The Mountaineers club culture and processes, as well as enthusiasm for leading hikes (e.g. Graduation from courses, volunteerism, participating in trips).
- Hike Leaders must have competence in the following as appropriate for their trips:
  - Group Leadership
  - Technical Skills
  - Navigation
  - Mountain Safety Skills
  - First Aid
  - Emergency Preparedness
  - Knowledge of Standards and Policies

# PROCESS TO BECOME A HIKE (OR BACKPACK) LEADER

- Backpack Leaders must have the Hike Leader Badge.
- Backpack Leaders must have competence in the following as appropriate for their trips:
  - Backpacking Gear and planning
  - Backpacking food and water planning
  - Camp set up
  - Pacing
  - Conditioning
- Participate in 3 Mountaineers Backpack trips. You are encouraged to sign up as assistant leader for at least one of these trips).
- Successfully co-lead one backpack trip, with one of the existing Olympia Backpack leaders.
- The Committee will review qualifications prospective hike leaders as appropriate and may recommend additional steps such as leading additional mentored hikes (or backpacks) if it appears warranted.

# PROCESS TO BECOME A HIKE (OR BACKPACK) LEADER

- ***New Mountaineers member with mostly outside experience?*** you'll be asked to participate in a few Mountaineers hikes or backpacks before becoming a Mountaineers hike or BP leader.
- ***Want to lead Mountaineers backpacking trips?*** We recommend you lead some Mountaineers hikes first, complete the application with our backpacking background, and then lead a mentored backpack trip.
- ***Already a Mountaineers climb or scramble leader?*** We recommend that you lead your first hike or backpack with a mentor because of the very different pool of people and challenges you may encounter.



# **FAMILY HIKE LEADER**

- 1. Become Youth Qualified**
- 2. Be an Assistant Leader on a Family Hike/Activity**
- 3. Post, Plan, Scout a trip with a Mentored Family Hike Leader (Family Hike or Activity)**
- 4. Lead a Family Hike with a Mentor (Demonstrate basic competency in leadership Skills)**
- 5. Be approved by Mentor & Hiking Committee**

## **Additional qualifications:**

- 1. First Aid training (1sr Aid/CPR certification, Professional Background, MOFA graduate)**
- 2. Navigation Skills Training**
- 3. Understand Covid-19 Guidelines**

# FAMILY HIKE LEADER

## OLYMPIA YOUTH & FAMILY ACTIVITIES



## YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mini Mountaineers

Pathfinders

Explorers

Summer Camps

## PROGRAMS for MOUNTAINEER FAMILIES

Family Hikes & Urban Adventures

Family Climb Nights

Family Themed Picnics

Family Stewardship Opportunities

Family Camping & Backpacking

## YOUTH OUTREACH

*Collaborations to connect Youth to the Outdoors...*

Nature Play at HOCM

Every Kid in a Park Workshop

South Sound Green Workshop

City of Shelton Outdoor Skills Series

YWCA Outdoor Adventure Series

Hikes & Stewardship with CLT

# WHAT IS A MOUNTAINEERS “HIKE”

- ▣ Club-sponsored walking trips > 2 miles (any committee sponsoring a hike - Naturalists, Photography, etc.)
- ▣ Restricted to trails/roads (maintained or unmaintained) with some exceptions:
  - Snow OK unless potential for uncontrolled slide
  - Off-trail OK unless unreasonably hazardous terrain
  - Depends on the skills of each particular group
- ▣ Party size:
  - Minimum party size is 3.
  - Maximum party size is ~~12 (agency rules)~~, **8 (current covid limit)** unless other party limits apply.
  - Backpack party size depends on size of backcountry camping site.
  - New leaders are encouraged to limit party size to 8 or less.
- ▣ If posted on the website and led within these rules, the Mountaineers provides you with liability protection (given that you are not negligent).

# HIKE RATINGS

## ▣ **Difficulty: Route**

- Easy ( E) Up to 8 mi RT with  $\leq$  1,200 ft elev gain
- Moderate (M) Up to 12 mi RT or 1,200-2,500 ft elev gain
- Strenuous (S) Up to 14 mi RT or 2,500-3,500 ft elev gain
- Very Strenuous (VS) Over 14 mi RT or over 3,500 ft elev gain

## ▣ **PACE: How the Leader Plans to Cover the Route**

- For Beginners Average pace <1 mph- no technical challenges or specific skills required.
- Slow/Leisurely Less than 1.5 mph (average with rest stops)
- Moderate 1.5-2.0 mph average
- Fast > 2 MPH average
- Conditioner Generally means fast with few stops

## ▣ **Backpacking**

- Increased pack weight will increase route difficulty and result in a slower pace.

# PLANNING A HIKE OR BACKPACK

- ❑ Know the Kinds of Hikes you Like to Lead
- ❑ Consider Combining Shorter Trails in the Same Vicinity
- ❑ Consider the Season of the Year
- ❑ Have you Been on This Hike or Know Someone who has?
- ❑ Post a Hike as Early as You Like, but Only Open it for Registration 3-4 Weeks Prior to the Hike
- ❑ Add Co-Leader or Assistant Leader (may add prior to registration opening date)
- ❑ Have a Back Up Plan

# PRE-TRIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

- Keep an Eye on the Roster
- OK to screen Participants (e-mail/call)
- Ensure you Have Good Contact Information
- If your Trip Requires Certain Skills and/or Conditioning, Ask Detailed Questions to Ensure That They are Capable
  - [Leader permission](#)
- Week of the Hike: Check Conditions

# PRE-TRIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION - HIKE

When Registration Closes, Send out Hello Hikers Email.

- Meeting instructions: time to meet and time to leave
- Address of meeting sites
- Your car description, license plate and cell phone
- Carpool information
- Required pass
- Directions to trailhead
- Any updated weather or trail conditions
- Reminder to bring money for carpooling and any plans for stopping after the hike

# PRE-TRIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION - ADDITIONAL BACKPACK

- Approximate daily schedule (start and end times)
- Daily elevation gain, mileage, locations of water & Camps
- Water Planning details
- Meal planning details
- Route Alternatives



# LEADER PREPARATION

- Download the Participant Roster with emergency numbers
- Check Your 10 Essentials
- Make Copies of Directions to Trailhead
- Make Copies of the Map
- Gas Up
- Check Website Before Leaving House
- Make Sure your Cell Phone is Charged and On

# RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE MEETING SITE

- Arrive Early
- Check Cell Phone Regularly
- Greeting/roll call
- Attempt to Contact late participants
- Review Critical Information
- Allow Hikers to Select a Car to Ride in
- Note a Contact Person and Cell Number for Each Car. Make Sure all Cars Have Your Cell Phone. Give Information to Vehicle Navigator ( if you are driving).

# RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE TRAILHEAD

## ▣ **Group Introduction**

## ▣ **Trail Information**

- Pace
- Group Safety reminders
- Review map
- When will breaks occur
- If not going to the end of the trail, establish turn around time
- Ask for first aid leader and ask hikers to inform first aid leader of medical conditions that could impact the hike
- Remind drivers to post passes
- Remind hikers of social distancing and facemask protocol
- Designate a sweep

# RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE TRAIL

- ❑ Manage Time and Stay on Break Schedule
- ❑ Encourage Hydration and Snacking
- ❑ Get to Know People
- ❑ Continually Assess Condition of Hikers
- ❑ Manage the Pace for Safety, Morale and Fun of Everyone
- ❑ Provide Guidance for Getting around Obstacles
- ❑ Rationale for Splitting a Group
- ❑ Don't be Afraid to Make an Unpopular call if YOU Believe it is for the Safety of the Group or Individuals
- ❑ Problem behaviors

# RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE CAMPSITE (BACKPACKING)

- Oversee Low Impact recreation, camp set up, food prep & storage, cleanup practices
- Find toilet area, reminder to sanitize
- Gear review discussions
- Encourage group involvement
- Establish wake up times
- In mornings, review route, water management, other checkpoints.
- Thorough sweep of area prior to departing

# RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER THE TRIP

- Ensure Everyone Has Returned to the Trailhead
- Ensure All Vehicles Start Before Leaving
- Close the Hike and Complete Online Trip Report Within One Week
- If Necessary, Fill out Incident Report. Comments can be added regarding specific participant. Participants may report concern to hike leader or Hiking Chairs
- Send Email to Hikers- Thanking Them for Joining You and Attach any Photos
- Read Participant Feedback

# USING THE MOUNTAINEERS WEBSITE

- Instructor will demonstrate how a leader can post a hike on the Mountaineers website.

# LEADER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

## Youth Volunteer Training

<https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/olympia-branch/committees/olympia-youth-outreach-committee/course-templates/youth-volunteer-training-olympia/youth-volunteer-training-olympia-2020>

## Essentials of Outdoor Leadership - Olympia - 2021

[https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/olympia-branch/committees/olympia-leadership-committee/course-templates/essentials-of-outdoor-leadership-olympia/copy\\_of\\_essentials-of-outdoor-leadership-olympia-2020](https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/olympia-branch/committees/olympia-leadership-committee/course-templates/essentials-of-outdoor-leadership-olympia/copy_of_essentials-of-outdoor-leadership-olympia-2020)

## Basic First Aid for Hike and Backpack Leaders- VIRTUAL - Online Classroom

<https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/olympia-branch/committees/olympia-hiking-backpacking-committee/seminars-clinics/basic-first-aid-for-hike-and-backpack-leaders-virtual-online-classroom>



# STANDARDS AND POLICIES

- Emergencies
- Club COVID-19 Standards
- Liability
- Carpooling
- Low Impact Recreation
- Incident Reporting
- Problem Behavior
- Lost Hiker
- Privacy
- Age Considerations

*These subjects are covered in the Leader Resources page and the e-learning class “Becoming A Mountaineers Leader”.*

# MAKING DECISIONS

- ❑ Some decisions must be made quickly and/or cannot be democratic (safety, harassment, illegal behavior)
- ❑ When there really is flexibility for group engagement in a decision, it can bring the group together and add ownership!
- ❑ Start with brainstorming options – leader can summarize the options, then take a non-binding vote
- ❑ Give participants a chance to discuss and advocate for their positions
- ❑ Then take a final vote and ask everyone to support it

# DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT PARTICIPANT AND/OR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Don't put it off!
- De-escalate - don't be aggressive or confrontational
- Deal in private – don't humiliate someone in front of others
- Explain what you observe and why it concerns you – how could it impact the trip and/or the group – what changes need to happen
- Seek to understand their concerns/point of view – active listening
- Ask them to help you resolve the situation

# DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT PARTICIPANT AND/OR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Stay calm and manage your emotional state
- If you can accommodate safely, do so
- If their behavior puts the enjoyment or safety of any other group member at risk, then you need to act to stop that behavior.
- Emotional safety and physical safety are important!
- Harassment, objectionable language, inappropriate conversations or touching are unacceptable on a Mountaineers activity.

# SCENARIOS

See separate handout.

# LEADER RESOURCES

## Olympia Hiking & Backpacking Committee

- Mountaineers.org/Olympia
- Branch Committee:
  - <https://www.mountaineers.org/locations-lodges/olympia-branch/committees/olympia-hiking-backpacking-committee>
- Mountaineers Resources:
  - <https://www.mountaineers.org/volunteer/leader-resources/leader-resources>
  - <https://www.mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center>
  - <https://www.mountaineers.org/about/vision-leadership/board-of-directors/committees/elearning/course-templates/leadership-the-mountaineers/becoming-a-mountaineers-leader-the-mountaineers-2018>
  - <https://www.mountaineers.org/about/vision-leadership/board-of-directors/committees/elearning/course-templates/test-your-low-impact-recreation-skills-elearning-course/test-your-low-impact-recreation-skills-elearning-course>

QUESTIONS

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THANK YOU!

# Backup Slides



# HIKE LEADER CLUB STANDARDS

- Competent in 7 Key Elements
  - Group Leadership
  - Technical Skills
  - Navigation
  - Mountain Safety Skills
  - First Aid
  - Emergency Preparedness
  - Knowledge of Standards and Policies

# GROUP LEADERSHIP

- Planning and organization
- Communication skills
- Mountaineers Culture
- Sound judgement / decision making
- Group well-being and success
- Teaches/Coaches / learns from others

# TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Has experience and physical abilities commensurate with the trip
- Low Impact Recreation Skills
  - <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/Being-an-Outdoor-Ambassador-and-Learning-Low-Impact-Recreation-Skills>
- Practices good trail etiquette
- Knowledge and use of 10 Essentials

# NAVIGATION (Staying Found)

- ▣ **Effectively navigates trail routes with map and compass and any other appropriate Tools**
  - **Altimeter**
  - **On line apps (CalTopo, Gaia)**
  - **Watch**
  - **GPS/InReach/Spot**
  
- ▣ **Check Map Often- Even if you Think You Know The Trail**

# MOUNTAIN SAFETY SKILLS

- Objective Hazard Recognition and Identification of Risk
- Hazard/Risk Mitigation and Management
- Personal Responsibilities/trip plan

# FIRST AID

- ▣ Able to Handle Common First Aid Situations Likely to be Experienced on a Hike
  - Bee stings
  - “Not feeling well”
  - Falls, scrapes, cuts
  - Lack of conditioning
  - Dehydration/heat issues
  - Blisters
  - Low blood sugar
  
- ▣ **MOFA and Hiking Committees Looking at a First Aid for Hike Leaders course**

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Know Seven Steps of Emergency Response
- Manage Unintended Outcomes
- Know How to Summon Help

# KNOWLEDGE OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

- ▣ Familiar with standards and procedures
  - Club COVID-19 Standards
  - Liability
  - Hike Ratings
  - Carpooling
  - Familiar with Trip Requirements, Party Size, Required Trail Passes and other Land Management Agency Regulations as applicable
  - Postings and Closings
  - Knows Incident Reporting Expectations



# CARPOOLING

- Probably the Biggest Organizational Headache
- Liability risks Mean Leaders Cannot Assign Carpools or Mandate a Reimbursement Rate to Drivers. You can Suggest a Common Reimbursement rate of  $.24/\text{mile}$  divided by number of passengers or Leave it up to Drivers.
- Leaders CAN Facilitate Carpooling by Sharing Contact Information.

# TRIP REQUIREMENTS, PARTY SIZE AND TRAIL PASSES

- A club sponsored walking trip is > 2miles on trails or roads
- Party Size
  - Minimum of 3 ( safety)
  - Maximum of 12 unless lower limits apply for land area.
  - New Leaders – recommend 8 or fewer
  - Backpacking – Size of campsite will dictate
  - Recommend new leaders limit group to 8 or fewer, including leaders
- Passes Depend on Agency Managing the Land
  - Northwest Forest Pass (Federal- excluding national parks)
  - Discover Pass ( State)
  - Interagency Senior Pass (Northwest Forest plus national parks)
  - America the Beautiful Pass (Northwest Forest plus national parks)
  - Snow Park- groomed and ungroomed
  - Some areas are free
  - You can earn a free pass
  - <http://www.wta.org/hiking-info/passes/what-pass-do-i-need-faq>

# AGE CONSIDERATIONS

- Any Leader who Wants to Lead Hikes with Participants under 18 ( even with their parents on the trip) Must be a Qualified Youth Leader
  - Youth qualified shows on your Mountaineers Profile
- < 14 Must be Accompanied by a Parent
- 14-18 Must have Written Parental Consent and Allowed on at the Trip Leader's Discretion

# LIABILITY

- Mountaineers Leaders are Protected from Legal and Monetary Liability in the Unlikely Event that Something Bad Happens on a Trip
  - Must be a Mountaineers Member or Registered Guest
  - Cannot sign up for a hike if waiver is expired
- Letting a Person Split or Turn Back on their own is Dangerous and a Risk