

HIKE / BACKPACK LEADER SEMINAR

Mountaineers
Olympia Branch



PRESENTERS

- ▶ Carla Jonientz (Co-Chair, hiking & Backpacking, Chair, Family Hiking)
- ▶ Dee Ann Kline (Chair, Naturalist Committee)
- ▶ Monty Pratt (Chair, Backpacking, Co-Chair, Backpacking Course)
- ▶ Donna Kreuger (Co-Chair, hiking & Backpacking, Chair, Conditioning Hiking)
- ▶ **Dixie Havlak, (Chair, Youth Activities)**

AGENDA

- ▶ How to become a hike/backpack leader
- ▶ Hike leader skills
- ▶ Using the Mountaineers website to schedule, manage and close a hike
- ▶ Hike Leader responsibilities
- ▶ Table top scenarios

WHY BECOME A HIKE LEADER

- ▶ Develop leadership skills
- ▶ Your hike– your way
- ▶ Mountaineers culture
- ▶ Friendships
- ▶ Mentor to others
- ▶ Promote the power of nature

HIKE LEADER CLUB STANDARDS

- ▶ New Hike Leaders approved by Olympia Hiking/Backpacking Committee (see separate handout)
- ▶ 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
 - 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

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

HIKE RATINGS

▶ **Difficulty: Route**

- Casual Up to 4 miles RT with up to 400 ft elev gain
- 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**

- Casual
- 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**

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

USING THE MOUNTAINEERS WEBSITE

- ▶ See separate handout

PLANNING A HIKE

- ▶ 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-HIKE 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-HIKE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

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

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
 - Designate a sweep

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE HIKE

- ▶ 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

PRE-HIKE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION – Backpacking

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

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 HIKE

- ▶ 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

SCENARIOS

BACKPACK LEADERS

FAMILY HIKES

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

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>

QUESTIONS

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THANK YOU!