

# Pathways to Naturalist Trip Leader

Our [Clubwide Naturalist Standards](#) list 8 Key Elements

1. Group Leadership
2. Knowledge of natural history, geology, and ecology & being a naturalist leader
3. Technical Skills
4. Navigation
5. Mountain Safety Skills
6. First Aid and Emergency Preparedness
7. Knowledge of Standards and Policies
8. Mentoring

The Naturalist Standards link above describes criteria that might reflect competency in each of these. Check it out for details.

This document is intended to help someone wishing to become a Naturalist Trip Leader for the Seattle Branch to think through what skills they already have, and how they might get the remaining skills and demonstrate the required level of proficiency. **We will help you with this!**

People wishing to become Naturalist Trip Leaders might fall under a few broad categories with some sub-levels.

- A. No leader badge from any Committee at the Mountaineers
  - a. All 8 key elements would need to be demonstrated or documented
- B. Leadership Badge for hiking, backpacking, photography, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or climbing at the Mountaineers.
  - a. Based on their recent activities, one could claim that they have met Group Leadership, Technical Skills, Mountain Safety Skills, and Knowledge of Standards and Policies.
  - b. They may also possess badges through the Mountaineers or knowledge and documentation from other groups that demonstrate Navigation or First Aid and Emergency Preparedness.
  - c. Leading a naturalist trip is different from leading any of these other groups. The focus on teaching, establishing trust, and group success might be a little different, and a person might benefit from doing hikes with the naturalists and thinking about how the groups are different. This could be as simple as doing some hikes and then doing a mentored hike with the Seattle Naturalists
- C. Naturalist leader for other groups like Audubon, King County Parks, Seattle Parks, National Park Service, and National Forest Service. A teacher of natural sciences at a University, College, high school, education center, or other organization focused on the outside world. Or they may possess a degree in one of our key areas of interest.

- a. Their professional skills or education might cover the Knowledge of Natural History, geology, ecology, and nature. It may be that a few hikes with the Seattle Naturalist group and a mentored hike is all that is needed to meet Key Element #2

#### Steps for meeting the requirements for becoming a Naturalist Trip Leader

1. Submit an [Application](#) to the Seattle Naturalist Committee (mseattlenaturalist@gmail.com). One of us will respond to arrange a brief interview to discuss your application and answer the many questions you may have on how to proceed.
2. Meeting Key Elements # 1, #3, #5, #7
  - a. Be familiar with the [Clubwide Naturalist Standards approved by the Mountaineers](#). and
  - b. Take and pass appropriate Leadership Training Courses offered by the Mountaineers. These change over time. Some current possibilities are:
    - i. For general Leadership
      1. [Foundations for Leadership eLearning Course 2022](#)
      2. [Foundations for Instruction eLearning Course 2022](#)
    - ii. More specifically for backcountry trips
      1. a Hike/Backpack Leader training course
3. Meeting Key Element # 2
  - a. Show knowledge of one or more of the natural world topics
    - i. Pass the INW course, or
    - ii. Have a degree in one of the topics or have led field trips in them, or their professional or vocational career has been focused on one of these., or
    - iii. Assisted in leading several Naturalist trips where they have demonstrated knowledge and the ability to help others learn
    - iv. Instructed at Naturalist field trips or workshops
  - b. The Seattle Naturalist Committee may offer a [Naturalist Leadership Training Course](#). This is a combination of classroom, field trips, and google classroom components as well as scenarios and training exercises.
4. Meeting Key Element #4 Navigation
  - a. Take and pass an appropriate Mountaineers Navigation Course for either wilderness or on-trail navigation. Current approved offerings are:
    - i. Wilderness Navigation (any branch)
    - ii. Foothills “Staying Found”
    - iii. On Trail Seattle Course (pending)
5. Meeting Key Element #6 First Aid and Emergency Preparedness,
  - a. Pass a Wilderness First Aid Course, currently being offered by several branches of the Mountaineers
6. Meeting Key Element #8

- a. Do at least two hikes with the Seattle Naturalist Group to see how they are run, with at least two different leaders.
- b. Do a Mentored Hike with an established Seattle Naturalist Leader.
- c. Have your Mentor submit the [mentor hike form](#) to the Seattle Naturalists Committee (mseattlenaturalist@gmail.com).

If this seems daunting, persevere! You'll have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss alternatives.