

LEADING TRIPS

Updated January 2014

Thank you for volunteering to lead for the Trails Club.
Have fun leading!

You are continuing a tradition that stretches back almost 100 years. This handbook is designed to help you plan trips and has suggestions for a safe and successful activity.

You are free to lead any variety of trips you choose including family friendly, dog friendly or membership qualifying trips. A membership trip is at least 4 miles long and includes a visit to one of our lodges during a scheduled lodge event.

Membership trips encourage new people to become club members and are always welcome on our schedule.

Contact the Trips Trustee if you are interested in being a trip leader.

Trip leader Policies

Leaders must be members of the club. A guest can co-lead a club trip with an experienced member.

Outings are approved by the Board through the Outings Chair and the Trips Trustee.

Leaders are encouraged to have current certification in First Aid and CPR. The club will provide this training.

Leaders are not required to pay the trip fee.

For safety, a trip should have a minimum of three persons.

Planning a Trip

Wednesday Morning or Evening Hike leaders

Sign up with the right coordinator or the Trips Trustee for the day(s) you wish to lead. Come to Friendly House at 1737 NW 26th Avenue (on Thurman) on your chosen day.

1. Choose your trip location and type of trip.

There are many great books and websites books that can help you plan. On our club website, www.trailsclub.org, you will find some basic information on hikes in our area. An excellent resource for Oregon and Washington hikes is the Trailskeepers of Oregon website

at portlandhikers.org. The Washington trails Association (WTA) website is an excellent resource for Washington hikes. Doug Lorrain's book "A Foot and A Field" lists every hike within a one hour drive from Portland.

Hikes

Determining the classification of a hike is based on the distance, the elevation and the condition of the route. The trip description should always include distance and elevation gain.

The ABC classification system is a quick way to show the difficulty of a hike.

Class A is the easiest of the hikes. Shorter, less strenuous activity, typically 4 to 8 miles, no more than 1500 feet elevation gain. The trail is good.

Class B is moderate to difficult. Hikes are usually 6 to 12 miles and there is no more than 3000 feet of elevation gain. There may be stream crossings but the trail is mostly good.

Class C hikes are strenuous. Distance is usually over 8 miles and over 3000 feet of elevation gain. There may be much elevation change with possible poor trail conditions.

Winter Sports

A snowshoe or x-country ski will require more exertion, so keep this in mind when rating your trip.

Wilderness Guidelines

U.S. Forest Service regulations limit party size to 12 when a trip enters a designated wilderness area. Dogs count as well. Plan to keep your group size below 12 "beating hearts" in a wilderness area.

Practice "Leave No Trace" principles and carry all trash out with you on any hike or backpack. Do not wash pots or utensils directly in lakes or streams – use a portable water bucket.

Trip promotion

To list a trip in the printed Blazer, the event must be submitted by the 15th of the month before the month in which the event takes place. So a July 20th hike would need to be submitted by June 15th.

A shorter lead time is possible to be listed on the TCO website or on the Trails Club Meetup site. For the TCO site, keep in mind the webmaster may not be able to post the event immediately

Backpacks should be advertised at least a few weeks before the event. Outings need to be listed months and sometimes up to a year in advance. Contact the Outing Coordinator for Outing information.

Advertising one day trips

Newsletter: Write the announcement of the trip and email it to blazer@trailsclub.org before the deadline which is the 15th of the month to be listed the following month.

TCO website: Write the announcement of the trip and email it to blazer@trailsclub.org

Meetup site: If you are already listed as an event organizer on the Meetup, you can post the event yourself, or ask for help from the Meetup Organizer. If you are not listed as an event organizer, please contact the Meetup Organizer or Trips Trustee.

The Trip Description

Every trip description should include:

Distance in miles

Elevation gain in feet

Condition of trail (rocky, is there exposure, poorly maintained, blowdown?)

Round- trip driving distance

Parking pass requirements (Sno park, NW Forest Pass, WA Discovery pass)

Bridge tolls, if any

Is there a limit on party size?

Any hazards or special equipment needed such as water shoes for creek crossings, trek poles or traction devices such as Microspikes or YakTrax.

Meeting place, including the street address if possible.

Leader's name, phone and/or e-mail, unless you are posting a Meetup. It's not necessary and not recommended to include e-mail and phone for Meetup. A member's RSVP is all the leader needs to be able to contact them or to be contacted.

Follow this format for Outing submissions.

Information about announcement requirements for an outing is included in the Outing Policy and Procedures Handbook located on our website. The Outing Coordinator and Trips Trustee can help you with all this.

Trip Forms

Trip signup forms can be found and printed out from the website under Trip leader Forms on this page:

http://www.trailsclub.org/members/forms_index.html

Trip Packet for Outings

Information about the paperwork needed for outings is included in the Outing Policy and Procedures Handbook. The Outing Coordinator and Trips Trustee are available to help you.

Scouting and Preparation

Things will go smoother for you if you are familiar with the location and the trail. Scout the trip in advance, if possible. Know the access roads and trails. Make note of car parking areas, restrooms, condition of the route, sources of water, appropriate spots for breaks, a good lunch stop, and possible danger spots along the way.

If you are not familiar with the trail, include that fact in your trip description. Explain this is “an exploratory trip” for you as well.

Backpack leaders may not be able to physically scout the route but may study maps and guidebooks to get needed information.

Obtain any necessary permits and maps.

Be aware if wilderness restrictions apply.

Check on the weather conditions expected on the trip. Closer to the actual activity you will need to know current conditions for the roads, trails, weather.

If you are unable to lead the trip, it is your responsibility to find a substitute leader or send someone to the meeting place to inform people. The Trips Trustee will help.

At the Meeting Place

Arrive 15 minutes early in order to assess your group.

Complete the top of the Trip Log and sign in on the first line. Ask everyone to sign in on the form that is being passed around.

Explain that trip leaders are not professional guides. Everyone on the trip has the responsibility to ensure the safety of others as well as doing what they can to make the trip fun for all.

Review necessary essentials with the group and assess each individual's supply.

All participants should carry The 10 essentials.

- 1) **Extra clothing** that can be layered and wicks moisture away. Hat, gloves, socks and appropriate foot wear. Cotton is a very poor insulator. In cold and wet weather, everyone should wear synthetic, wool or silk garments.
- 2) **Water** in a non-breakable bottle or hydration pack.
- 3) **Food** for the trip and extra food for emergencies.
- 4) **Protection:** Insect repellent, sun block, lip balm, sun glasses and wide brimmed hat even on overcast days or snowy days.
- 5) **Light:** flashlight/head lamp, extra batteries and bulb
- 6) **First Aid Kit**, MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESCUE REQUEST card with a pen in a zip lock bag.
- 7) A **whistle**. (Many packs now come with a whistle built into the chest strap.)
- 8) **Navigation:** Map and compass, even if carrying a GPS or Smartphone with GPS software.
- 9) **Fire** starter, matches in waterproof container or lighter.
- 10) **Repair** kit: Knife or multi-tool, duct tape, safety pins. Toilet paper and zip-lock bag to carry our used paper is nice to have.
- 11) Shelter bivy sack or small Mylar space blanket, large trash bags. Insulating pad

Take aside any person you believe does not have the physical stamina or is not equipped for the trip's class level. Offer them a copy of BEFORE GOING WITH THE GROUP and ask them to join us another time.

Ask if anyone has a medical condition and discuss this privately with the person before leaving the meeting place. Assess if the individual has the necessary medication or equipment to deal with the condition; i.e. asthma inhaler, insulin and sugar, sting treatment kit, etc.

Difficult situations are much less likely to occur if you do not allow unprepared persons to join the group. Once you have started the trip, you will have to deal with any problems that their lack of preparation creates.

Reiterate the trip plan and the conditions that will be encountered. Let them know when you expect to return to the meeting place.

Provide each participant with the EMERGENCY CONTACT AND MEDICAL INFORMATION card if they do not already have one and ask that they keep the form on their person or in their backpacks with their first aid kit.

Be certain that every participant has signed the Trip Log. It is our liability waiver/ sign up sheet. Persons under 18 must have the signature of a parent or guardian to participate in a trip. Remember to carry this form with you on the trip in case someone's emergency contact number is needed.

Collect the trip fees. Club members and persons affiliated with Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs pay \$1.00 for each day of an activity. Guests pay \$2.00 for each day.

Trip fees do not apply on Outings and Backpacks.

Have everyone introduce themselves.

Arrange car pools if needed and announce the policy of 10 cents per mile donation to drivers with a cap of 30 cents per car. This is a voluntary donation and nobody will be turned away for inability to pay.

Count the participants and vehicles going on the trip. Be certain the drivers know how to reach the trip's starting point and have them follow you if they are uncertain. Keep track of the cars behind you. Written directions for drivers are recommended.

If participants have cell phones, ask that drivers and participants exchange cell phone numbers.

At the trailhead

- Instruct participants not to leave their keys, wallets or anything of value in the vehicles.
- Drivers need to place parking permits in the front window
- Remind hikers to always wait at trail junctions if they get ahead of the group.

At the end of the hike or backpack

- Thank everybody for coming!
- Be sure everybody's car starts before leaving a remote trailhead.