

# Backpacking Participants Packet

This packet is for of Trails Club backpacking trip participants. It includes useful information for backpackers as well as all the forms needed to participate in a Trails Club backpack trip.

The first part of the packet is information will be extremely useful to you as a planning aid. Read these articles carefully. Use whatever is relevant to you and your situation. Talk to your leader if you have questions.

The following information documents are included:

- **Before Going with the Group** (2 pages) - A general guide for participating on Trails Club events.
- **Backpack Trip Rating Guide** (1 page) - A description of the trip rating system used on Trails Club backpacks.
- **Backpacking Tips** (2 pages) – Tips for new backpackers.

The Second part contains the following forms:

- **Application for Backpack** (1 page) - The Application for Backpack needs to be filled out sent to the trip leader. This registers you for the trip.
- **Emergency Contact Information** (1 page) - Complete and carry the emergency Contact Information form with you. It shows information that may be needed in case of a medical emergency.
- **Participant Feedback** (1 page) - At the end of the trip mail in the completed Participant Feedback form to the Trails Club PO box.

You only need to print the last 3 pages of the packet (pg 7-9) to print all the forms.

## **TRAILS CLUB OF OREGON ACTIVITIES JOINING THE GROUP**

Welcome to the Trails Club's activity program. Trails Club members share a passion for the outdoors and are pleased to have you join them. These guidelines will help your hiking, bicycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, backpacking, kayaking and multi-day outing experience fun and safe. Also it will alert you to your responsibilities as a participant on an activity sponsored by The Trails Club of Oregon, and alert you to your responsibilities to your companions. If you have any questions ask your leader for an explanation. In addition to following the guidelines, you should be mindful that there are certain inherent risks for injury or harm involved in any activity including club-sponsored activities. Each participant in club sponsored activities must understand, agree with, and sign a consent form releasing the club, board members, and individual members from liability.

### **APPRECIATE OUR LEADERS!**

Leadership requires organizational skills, the willingness to accept responsibility, commitment, and the ability to make a decision. As the group size increases, the work required of the leader increases. The leader's priority is the safety of the party and to get everyone back to the trailhead in good health. Reaching the intended destination must take a back seat to the first goal. The Trails Club is not a big group and the members who volunteer their time are very important. Assist us with developing and retaining our leaders. Be nice to them and follow their directions. Thank them for leading you, allowing you to experience a new area, and helping you to have a good time.

### **WHICH LEVEL OF ACTIVITY TO JOIN**

Be in adequate physical condition for the activity you are attempting and select trips that match your abilities. Harsh or unusual conditions may greatly increase the exertion and skill required. Contact the leader if you have any questions about the trip. Many activities will have a rating when listed in the club newsletter. **Paying attention to the level of activity may be the difference between a great day for you and an uncomfortable day.**

#### **HIKE**

**A** hikes are the easiest and are usually an easy to moderate pace with good trails. These hikes will be 4 to 8 miles and no more than 1500 feet elevation gain.

**B** hikes are moderately paced and are usually 6 to 12 miles in length with up to 3000 feet of elevation gain.

**C** hikes are long, possibly difficult, and have a strong pace. They are usually over 8 miles with over 3000 feet of elevation gain. Sometimes the trail itself is in poor condition. Boots are recommended for B/C hikes.

#### **BICYCLE**

**A** rides are from 20 to 30 miles without hills.

**B** rides are from 20 to 40 miles with small hills.

**C** rides are longer and have more hills.

#### **SNOWSHOE AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKI**

These events all use a variation of the hikers **A**, **B** and **C** classification with **A** being the easiest trips.

#### **BACKPACK**

**A** trips may include beginning or 1st-time backpackers. Typically two days and one night in length. Less than 1000 feet elevation gain per day. Daily mileage in single digits. Trails in generally good condition.

**B** trips should have strong hikers and have some backpack experience. Multi-night trips. Elevation gain of up to 2000 feet per day. Daily mileage may reach double digits. Trails may range from good to rugged condition.

**C** trips should have strong hikers with considerable backpack experience. Multi-night trips. Elevation gain may exceed 2000 feet per day. Daily mileage may reach double digits. Trails may range from good to rugged condition. May include off-trail or cross-country travel.

#### **KAYAK**

Check with the leader for distance and difficulty.

#### **MULTI-DAY OUTING**

These activities may include some hikes, bike rides, snowshoes, x-c skies, backpacks or kayaks depending on the leader's plans.

#### **BRING THE RIGHT STUFF**

Please, no alcohol. Pets are allowed on designated trips only. Good equipment for the specific activity is required for all events.

Be aware of the danger of **hypothermia** (subnormal temperature of the body) caused by exposure to cold, wetness and wind. Hypothermia is not just a winter hazard; most cases happen when the air

temperature is between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Bring clothes that can be added in layers according to your body temperature. Cotton, including blue jeans, is not warm when wet. Clothing that wicks moisture away from the skin is best. Remember that it is usually cooler at higher altitudes and it may be windy. All hikers should carry the **TEN PLUS ESSENTIALS**. These are the things that you would need to survive spending an unexpected night on the trail. For starters, **all participants should wear appropriate footwear and clothing; carry lunch, water, rain gear, warm sweater or jacket, and the following items:**

**Insulation** – extra clothing that can be layered and wicks moisture away including a hat and gloves.

**Navigation** – map and compass, know how to use them.

**Sun Protection** – sun block, sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat, even on overcast days and when in the mountains.

**Illumination** – flashlight or head lamp with extra batteries.

**First Aid Supplies** – for emergencies. Also your completed "Emergency Contact & Medical Information Form," paper and a pen in a zip-lock bag.

**Fire** – matches and fire starter.

**Repair kit** – including a knife. Duct tape is very helpful.

**Nutrition** – extra food.

**Hydration** – extra water. (filter or purification tablets)

**Shelter** – space blanket, large trash bags plus a piece of insulation or form.

**Whistle and mirror** – to signal for help.

**Insect repellent** – to keep the bugs and ticks away.

**Toilet paper** – a zip lock bag to carry out used paper.

Be familiar with your equipment and keep it in good condition. If you are not adequately prepared, the leader has the right to leave you at the meeting place. The leader is concerned with your safety, as well as that of the entire group.

#### **AT THE MEETING PLACE**

If you have signed up for an activity beforehand, let the leader know as soon as possible if you must cancel. Arrive at the meeting area ten to fifteen minutes before the announced departure time. The leader will handle sign in, collection of trip fees (\$1 per day for members; \$2 per day for Guests), and carpooling so that the group can leave at the time posted in the Trail Blazer and website. If you are late, the group may leave without you.

#### **ON THE ACTIVITY**

Stay with the group, between the leader and the person the leader appoints to bring up the end. Follow the leader's instructions regarding going ahead or behind or leaving the group. Let someone know if you step away for a bathroom break. Leave your pack on the trail to indicate where you left the trail. Don't litter and pick up any litter you see. Carry out used toilet paper in a zip lock bag. Smoking is not permitted on hikes. Please restrict your smoking to the parking lot. Help maintain a natural balanced ecosystem by not feeding birds or animals. If you get lost, stay where you are. Do not panic. Stay warm and hydrated. Use your whistle (three blasts = emergency) and mirror to signal your location.

#### **BACK AT THE CARS**

When you get back don't drive away until the entire group has returned. Carpool passengers are asked to share the cost of driving. Check with the leader to find out the current suggested donation. Bridge tolls are also paid for collectively. Bring small bills as drivers are not expected to make change. Carpool passengers are responsible for helping the driver stay away and alert on the trip home. Taking a nap might be hard to resist, but if you are sleepy, the driver might be too.

#### **ENJOYMENT**

Trails Club hikes are designed to give participants safe and fun outdoor experiences. We are not intent on setting speed or distance records. Rather, we promote awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of our beautiful Pacific Northwest.

5/31/2011

## Backpack rating

It would be nice if there was a definitive, standard rating system for backpack trips. A system that covered all the factors, and which worked for everyone. But unfortunately there ain't no such system.

So here is a basic rating system. It is based on participant experience, # of days on the trail, elevation gain, daily mileage, and trail conditions. Following it are some factors that may affect the rating. It assumes that a participant is an outdoor enthusiast in reasonably decent physical condition.

***A: Participants may include beginning or 1<sup>st</sup>-time backpackers. Trip of short duration, typically 2-days / 1-night or geared for beginners. Moderate elevation gain, less than 1,000' per day. Daily mileage in single digits. Trails in generally good condition.***

***B: Participants should be strong hikers and have some backpack experience. Multi-night trips. Elevation gain of up to 2,000' per day. Daily mileage may reach double digits. Trails may range from good to rugged condition.***

***C: Participants should be strong hikers with considerable backpack experience. Multi-night trips. Elevation gain may exceed 2,000' per day. Daily mileage may reach double digits. Trails may range from good to rugged condition. May include off-trail or cross-country travel.***

The above provides a general guideline for the trip rating. The leader should consider other factors which can significantly alter the basic trip rating. Bottom line: It is ultimately up to the trip leader to determine the trip rating based on all the information that he or she has available.

### **Factors which can affect the trip rating: notice how many you can not directly control**

- number of days on the trail: more days = more food & gear to carry, heavier packs, rougher trip
- number of rest days: add to duration of trip, but also provide a break from trail rigors
- age of participants: generally younger means more resilient
- base elevation: even level travel is more taxing at elevation
- condition of trails: any deviation from trails in good condition can slow the pace and add to the difficulty; slick from moisture, small pebbles on steep downhill, early season ruts from horses on wet trails; tree blow-down; stream crossings; rocky trails; roots in trails
- cross country travel: generally XC travel is more rigorous than trail travel
- distance traveled over the duration of the trip: greater distance usually means more effort
- distance traveled per day: greater distance usually means more effort
- elevation gain: elevation gain is always more rigorous than level travel
- elevation loss: travel downhill under a full backpack can strain joints
- grade (steepness) of trails: Steeper trails are generally more taxing than level trails, regardless of whether the travel is up or down
- health or physical condition of participants: illness, injuries can slow person down
- pace: what may be comfortable for the leader may grind someone else into the ground
- time of day for the trail travel: travel in full sun, in very hot or very cold temperatures, when fighting a wind, or through the routine afternoon shower can add to the rigors
- time of year: affects the # hours of daylight, the average temperatures, the availability of water, the bug population, the weather; may also affect which of trip goals can be met
- weather: temperature / rain / snow / wind
- weight of packs & gear carried: typically pack weight increases with each day of travel; this may also be a factor for those participants who bring too much or unnecessary food

# Tips offered by experienced Trails Club backpackers

## Clothing

## Food / Cooking

- plan for 2 lbs/day; weigh your food to avoid over packing
- use an aluminum ziplock container from a commercial 2-person freeze-dried meal to rehydrate your trails meals; it is lighter and takes less room than a bowl, provides much better heat retention & reflection than ordinary ziplock bags
- powdered peanut butter (aka PB2); [www.bellplantation.com](http://www.bellplantation.com)
- use a Cozy from [www.antigravitygear.com](http://www.antigravitygear.com) to wrap your food bowl & retain the heat for better re-hydration
- **Freezer Bag Cooking** by Sarah Svien Kirkconnell; [www.freezerbagcooking.com](http://www.freezerbagcooking.com)
- nuts, grains, & dried meats are excellent for snacks on the trail
- trioxane heat tabs provide good emergency heat and stove for boiling water; use it like you would use coals, do not set the stove right on top of it; can be found at army surplus stores; 6 pack costs ~ \$12
- use a food planning chart to help you plan & prepare your meals: track food groups, calories, variety, weight of foods

## Foot gear

- use socks that come just to the top of your boots rather than normal crew socks which go (unnecessarily) higher on leg; cooler on legs, nominally less weight
- To cross streams:
  - Remove boots & socks
  - Remove insoles from boots (I ALWAYS replace the trivial insert that comes in boots with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party insert; mine are reasonably sturdy)
  - Insert insoles into spare socks
  - Put on the spare socks with the insoles
  - Carry your boots & pack across water
  - Once on the other side of the water, remove the socks with the insoles
  - Take insoles out of spare socks
  - Put insoles back in boots
  - Put on socks and boots (with insoles)
  - Squeeze out spare socks and attach to pack to dry
  - The sturdiness of the insoles will protect your feet from rocks. The texture of the socks will keep them from slipping on the rocks. The insoles don't absorb water so there is only surface moisture on them. This saves you from having to carry shoes just for stream crossings, and is much more comfortable than having wet boots & socks, especially when the water is deeper than your boots.
- to keep your feet dry in camp when wearing Crocs; try Rocky Gore-tex waterproof socks <http://www.rei.com/product/688268>; you might be able to find a better price than REI on the web; for a women's size 8½ shoes, a size 9 fits best over a wool sock; REI tells women to order one size down - don't do it; best to go to REI and try them on; Neoprene socks, especially "SealSkinz", are not suggested because of poor fit

## Miscellaneous

- a 6 holed aluminum tent stake is lighter, takes less room than orange plastic trowel to dig potty holes
- lithium batteries are lighter & work better in cold weather than alkaline batteries, but in extended uses, such as headlamps, they stop functioning suddenly rather than dimming over time like alkalines; be sure you have a backup light source
- take fresh batteries so you know they will last; eliminates the need to take spares
- dryer Lint mixed with paraffin or Vaseline makes a good Fire Starter
- Wet wipes have many uses
- use a plastic trash bag as a liner for your pack; it eliminates the need for an external pack cover
- hand warmer packets can keep shoes from freezing at night; and in the morning the packets keep your fingers from freezing
- a headlamp that attaches to the bill of a hat is light, cost roughly \$10-\$15
- for waterproof stuff sacks, buy the lightest weight ones - made from "sil" or other like material; another advantage of these stuff sacks is their "slipperiness", which makes it easy to stuff things into them
- store used toilet paper in ziplocks, then burn it in camp at night
- a lip balm holder can keep the tube always within reach; pockets on shirt, pants, or pack eliminate the need for the separate holder
- small multivitamin container helps you with your drugs
- chopsticks can help you eat AND untie your hair

## Sleeping

- Tyvek as ground cover is lighter than commercial ground cover & black plastic
- titanium tent stakes are lighter and sharper than aluminum stakes
- "footprint" for tents can serve as a tarp
- use a Ziplock bag OR wide-mouth soft-sided Nalgene bottle to pee in at night in tent & avoid that cold excursions outside
- Emergency Bivvy: it can be found at [www.adventuremedicalkits.com](http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com); the web page has a store finder feature if you want to buy locally
- as a pillow, use a 1-liter platypus with insulated sleeve

## Sun protection

- an umbrella can provide portable shade

## Water

- remove mouthpiece from hose attached to water bag, attach water filter outlet port directly into the end of the drinking hose; eliminates need for outlet hose
- Crystal Light "On The Go" packets [www.crystallight.com](http://www.crystallight.com) -- one packet flavors 17 oz; comes in many flavors, some with electrolytes & B vitamins. Available at grocery stores; it is lighter & less expensive than similar drink flavoring packets sold at REI; individual packets weigh less than .15 oz. each. Great for people who don't like the taste of plain water or need the extra boost of electrolytes and B vitamins
- to get gunk out of a hydration hose, use dental floss and paper towels; suck the dental floss thru from the opposite side and pull the paper towel thru); can also buy bottle cleaning kit (MSR?) with a couple of long-handled brushes
- to sterilize small-mouthed water containers (such as Platypus) and water hoses, fill/rinse them with water containing a few drops of bleach OR with dissolved denture-cleaning tablets
- chlorine tablets for water purification- can be found online

# TRAILS CLUB BACKPACK PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

Please print your answers clearly.

Name of backpack: \_\_\_\_\_ Backpack dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Backpack leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Membership Status (select one): Club Member  FWOC Member  Non-Member

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience as relates to this backpack: Please list training and experience such as other outings attended current fitness program, etc. Attach an additional page if necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any medical or physical condition the leader should be aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you passed a recent First Aid Class? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_ CPR Class? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

## RECOGNITION OF RISKS

The Trails Club of Oregon was organized in 1915 and currently promotes the enjoyment of outdoor activities such as trail hiking, mountain and rock climbing, skiing, cycling, swimming, camping, and other similar activities involving the out-of-doors. While the club has had an excellent safety record, it is the responsibility of the Trails Club of Oregon to inform you that these activities, although peaceful in nature, can be dangerous and as such can cause severe injury and even death due to conditions and forces which we cannot predict. Having made you aware of these facts, the Trails Club of Oregon believes you must make your own decision regarding participation in these activities.

## DECLARATION OF INTENT

I acknowledge that the Trails Club of Oregon has apprised me of the dangers and hazards, hidden or apparent, in the various activities it sponsors, as outlined above, and I elect to accept such risks and undertake these activities on my own responsibility. My signature below signifies I hereby, for myself, my heirs, and personal representatives, release and forever discharge the Trails Club of Oregon and its elected officers from any claims or demands for resultant injuries or even death, sustained by me, while participating in a Club sponsored event. Furthermore, I am financially responsible for the costs of any medical treatment or evacuations, requested by me or others on my behalf, should I become seriously ill or injured.

Signature of applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian if applicant is under 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TRAILS CLUB BACKPACK MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please print your answers clearly. This form will be kept confidential.

Name of backpack: \_\_\_\_\_ Backpack dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Backpack leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Medical Insurance

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group/Policy#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following information is necessary before participation in this Trails Club backpack. It is essential to have this information in case of illness or accident. Attach additional page if necessary.**

1. Do you have any current medical problems, issues or limitations? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

2. Have you had any previous medical conditions of which we should be aware? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

3. List your current prescriptions, natural, and over-the-counter medication (aspirin & etc.) that you are now taking or have taken in the last few months: (drug name, dosage and frequency).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Allergies to food, medications, or the environment? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ Please list:

5. Current tetanus immunization? No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ Please list date:

**Your leader will keep a copy of this during the backpack in case it is needed. Please keep a copy of this completed form with you at all times during the backpack.**

**Signature of applicant** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of parent or guardian if applicant is under 18** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Participant Feedback

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of event:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** 1 (very good) 2 3 (average) 4 5 (needs improvement)  
**Comments / Suggestions / Concerns:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Trip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** 1 (very good) 2 3 (average) 4 5 (needs improvement)  
**Comments / Suggestions / Concerns:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Destination:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** 1 (very good) 2 3 (average) 4 5 (needs improvement)  
**Comments / Suggestions / Concerns:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Travel arrangements:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Lodging when not on trail:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Highlights:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Further comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_