

# Hike Leader's Corner

Revised 2016-03-27

This paper outlines responsibilities of the Hike Leader for planning and conducting a hike, as well as some tips and reminders to make the task easier. As hike leader you are responsible for all aspects of the assigned hike. Contact the Hike Chair for clarification of any issues addressed in this document or for assistance in planning or executing a hike.

## **Plan the Hike:**

**Note:** If you as the assigned Hike Leader are for any reason unable to lead the hike, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and to notify the Hike Chair of the change.

**Plan your route.** Information about many of the trails we hike is available in the "Trails We Hike" section of the club website under the "Hiker's Reference" tab. This data base is built from your hike reports, so anything already contained in the data base does not have to be repeated in your hike report. Links to many national forest and state park maps are also available in the "Trails We Hike" section of the website. The Hike Chair may also have resources or be of other assistance. If necessary, conduct a scouting hike a week or so before your scheduled hike.

**Times and meeting places for the hike.** Determine when you want/need to actually start hiking at the trailhead and work backwards to establish meeting times and carpool times and provide this information in the Hike Flash.

**Carpooling.** When appropriate, establish both a Hot Springs and a Hot Springs Village car pool location. Ask another (experienced) hiker to organize cars at the car pool site where you will not be. Calculate the carpool distance and the rider cost share based on the current club reimbursement rate of \$0.07 per mile, rounded to nearest dollar, for the entire round trip or distance driven by shuttle drivers. Include this information in the Hike Flash.

**Plan the logistics of your hike.** Consider parking availability at the trail head and arrange for an appropriate number of vehicles from each carpool location as necessary. For one-way hikes, pre-arrange shuttle drivers or key swaps. In the event of a key-swap, pre-arrange for a second hike leader to lead one hike group while you lead the other.

## **Screen Hikers:**

**Screen all new hikers** to determine that they understand what they are getting into and that they are ready. Ask them about hiking experience and general physical condition. Explain that good hiking shoes or boots and, depending on the hike, other hiking gear (poles, packs, etc.) are essential. New hikers should be requested to join in two Saturday hikes before joining a Thursday hike. If for any reason you do not feel that they are capable of participating in your hike, suggest they start with a simpler hike or more local walking to get in shape. Advise new hikers that they will be required to sign a Participant Release Form.

**Consider each hiker's ability.** When any hiker checks in for your hike consider their abilities and physical condition in relation to that particular hike. It is your prerogative to ask any individual not to participate in your hike if you deem them not capable due to physical condition or lack of experience. Suggest another upcoming hike more suited to their abilities or suggest a plan to work up to the difficult hikes. If you are uncomfortable with a particular situation, refer it to the Hike Chair.

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## Conduct the Hike:

**Weather aborts are the Hike Leader's call.** Either before or during the hike, you have the responsibility and the authority to cancel the hike if you think weather conditions dictate. Consider both trail and road conditions. Common sense should be your guide.

**Assign a sweep person to bring up the rear.** The sweep should be an experienced hiker who can remain with stragglers and get them out safely.

**Set a pace** that is appropriate for the hike length and difficulty and the club defined Thursday versus Saturday hike criteria. Stop periodically to let slower hikers catch up. Wait at trail intersections or other points of possible confusion for all hikers to catch up before proceeding on with the hike.

**Dogs are your choice.** Dog owners are responsible for a) informing you in advance that they intend to bring their dog along on a hike and b) that their dog is well behaved and does not create an issue with others, including both club hikers and other users of the trail or general area. As hike leader you have the authority to say whether dogs are welcome on your hike or not, or to tell dog owners to exercise better control once the hike has commenced. You should advise them that leashes are required in the state parks and in Hot Springs National Park and if you prefer dogs on a leash elsewhere.

## Administration Before the Hike:

**Hike Flash.** Submit information for the hike you are to lead for the club's weekly "Hike Flash" no later than the Friday preceding the date of your hike. Submit this information via the "Hike Flash Form GOOGLE", which is located under the "Club Admin" tab on the club website. Required information is noted with an asterisk and the form is self-explanatory.

## Administration on the Day of the Hike:

**New Hikers.** Obtain a fully executed Participant Release Form from each new hiker prior to the start of your hike (you may wish to bring several blank Participant Release Forms with you when you are Hike Leader). Return these to the Membership Chair following the hike.

**New Members.** Collect a completed Participant Release Form, Membership Application and dues from any new member.

## Administration After the Hike:

**Forms and Dues.** After the hike, return all completed forms and dues collected to the Membership Chair. Forms may be submitted on paper or as a scanned copy via e-mail.

**Hike Report.** After completing a hike, submit a Hike Report by means of the "Hike Report Form GOOGLE" which is located under the "Club Admin" tab on the club website. Required information is noted with an asterisk and the form is self-explanatory.