

Family Ramblers Hiking Club Guidelines

2025-26 Club Year

(June 1, 2025-May 31, 2026)

What is it?

The Family Ramblers Hiking Club is a GSHNJ special interest group that is open to Girl Scouts and their family members who are looking to connect with other outdoor-loving families, swapping trail ideas, tips, and resources in our private invitation-only forum. Members receive an annual club patch (included in \$5 annual membership) and are eligible to earn “bootprints” to commemorate their documented hikes. Your earned bootprints can “march” across the back of a Girl Scouts vest/sash or, for a non-member on a jacket, backpack, or other item. The signature bootprints are available for only Family Ramblers members to purchase through GSHNJ retail stores. In addition, registered Family Rambler members are eligible to receive a 50 percent discount on any or all of our Let’s Hike! Summer hikes, small group guided hikes led by older Trailblazer Troops and/or GSHNJ staff.

How does it work?

1. JOIN:

To join for the 2025-26 club year, register/renew at this registration link [here](#). The \$5/person fee covers your annual club patch; family access to our invite-only private forum to share resources, tips, hike reviews; eligibility to earn our hallmark “bootprint patches”; and a 50 percent discount on our Let’s Hike programs,

The Family Ramblers annual membership is timed to maximize great family hiking time over the summer and runs from June through the following May. Club registration opens June 1st and closes on October 31st. Annual club patches are mailed out in starting in September (to allow time for a patch contest).

2. HIKE:

We’ll get you started in our info session (live or [recorded](#)) with some of our community’s **favorite places to hike**. Set a personal **family goal** (number of hikes, new places you want to try, etc.) and **get exploring!** You can hike in New Jersey or wherever your travels may take you to—indeed, we love vacation hikes! You can also explore the [Let’s Hike! Summer Hikes series](#) and register for any programs with a 50 percent discount (code is available in the Rallyhood forum and/or by emailing programs@gshnj.org). Wherever and with whomever you hike, IT COUNTS.

Next, log your hikes and “earned bootprints” using [this online submission form](#). Then review your hikes in our forum (see #4 below). When ready to purchase your bootprints patches, visit any GSHNJ shop—your email confirms when you submit your hikes documents that you are a Family Rambler and are eligible to purchase bootprints. You have a choice of how you redeem your documented hikes.

1 hike= 1 standard (blue) footprint (Item #135884; \$1.20/each)—great for those who want to “march” their patches across their vest, sash or jacket.

5 hikes=1 golden footprint (Item #135885; \$2.25/each)—great for those who hike a lot and prefer fewer, larger patches.

3. CONNECT, SHARE, AND LEARN:

Registered members will be emailed an invitation to join our Family Ramblers Forum on Rallyhood starting June 1st and continuing weekly/bi-weekly after that. ***We encourage you to share pictures of your adventures and give your hike a brief review for others in the community.*** Family Ramblers should also feel free to share any tips, resources, or other related events of interest to our community and/or organize any meet-ups with other Family Ramblers.

4. REPEAT!

FAQ:

Can siblings join?

YES! That is one of the benefits of the Family Ramblers group. Since gsEvents allows non-member parents and siblings to register, you are welcome to register anyone in your family who would like a club patch and the chance to earn “bootprints”.

Does an adult need to join as well?

We do recommend that at least one adult register along with their Girl Scout, but it is not required. Except for the council-hosted hikes scheduled on gsEvents, the hikes that you take are considered private family outings, NOT GSHNJ events, so you would assume responsibility for your hikers just as you would with any family outing.

Can we hike with others? This special interest group is primarily meant to be based around families with GSHNJ supporting those efforts with our online forum, patches, and special events. Except for council-hosted hikes, the hikes you take are not official GSHNJ events and they are not troop based, so the assumption is that adults are responsible for the children they hike with. If you want to make connections with other Family Ramblers and hike together or if you want to invite non-Family Ramblers to hike with you, that is at your discretion and responsibility, since they are private events. Because the club allows non-members, when we do host council in-person hikes (where registration is through gsEvents), members and non-members (as long as they are within the noted age range for the hike) are covered by GSHNJ insurance.

Can we bring other members of our troop with us?

Again, hikes are considered private family events, however if you have several girls attending without their families, that looks like a troop outing from an insurance perspective and you should follow the [Safety Activities Checkpoints](#) for supervision ratios (see Hiking section).

Where and when do we get the earned “bootprints” patches?

Boot print patches to commemorate your hikes are purchased through our GSHNJ retail stores (standard boot print is Item #135884, \$1.20/each; golden boot prints— are Item #135885, \$2.25/each). For store hours, see [here](#); to order from our online store click [here](#). Since the patches generally fit in an envelope, if you can’t make it to the store during store hours, you can work with our shops to have them shipped to you for a nominal fee. Pro Tip: Badge Magic makes adding your bootprints to a vest/ sash easier though sewing also works!

What if I bridge to a new Girl Scout level and want more patches for my new uniform? What if I lost my previous bootprints.

If you need additional footprint patches from our retail store for a new uniform or to replace lost ones, they can be purchased by any Family Rambler member.

I registered but did not receive an invitation to the Family Ramblers forum yet. What do I do?

Since we do not receive notifications when new members join, we depend on manual review on a weekly/bi-weekly basis after the initial onboarding process in June. If you’ve registered and not yet received your invitation, just email Program Support at programs@gshnj.org

If we repeat the same hike again, can we count it again?

Yes, the hikes are tabulated each time you do them, so while we encourage you to try new places, if you repeat a hike, you can count it more than once!

I’m from a different council. Can I still join?

Yes, any registered Girl Scout and her family can join, regardless of her council.