

Guidelines for Hike Leaders: Short- to medium-length hikes in familiar, close-by locations

Contacts:

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- Saturday Hike Coordinator, Bob McGinnis, rmcginnia2@comcast.net, ph. 610-945-5490
- Sunday Hike Coordinator, John Trexler, johngtrexler@gmail.com, ph. 484-319-2350
- Backpacking Coordinator, Bob Gagnon, robertgagnon@verizon.net, ph. 610-547-0034
- Hike Scheduler, Dee McGrath, hikingclub803@gmail.com, ph. 610-331-7410

Hike leader sign-ups for the upcoming quarter are open until the 15th of the previous month. Send hike write-ups to the applicable hike coordinator. For late hike submittals, or for hike changes or cancellations, contact Hike Scheduler Dee McGrath (24 hours advance notice).

Identifying Hike Options:

- Identify hikes that you might like to lead, based upon your personal experience, participation on CCTC hikes, discussions with hike mentors or leaders, or a review of "Hike Leader Resources" materials.

Things to Verify about your Hike Location:

- Expected hike mileage and intensity (i.e., trail conditions, hills, etc).
- Will there be any stream crossings? If so, your hike write-up should mention this and indicate the degree of difficulty of the crossing.
- Confirm that there is adequate parking
- If you haven't been to the area recently, scout the trail in advance for route changes and/or other problems.
- Are rest-rooms or porta-potties available? If not, determine options for people to relieve themselves (e.g., wooded areas with plenty of cover). The first bio-break/people-break location should be near the start of the hike, with additional breaks about once per hour, or as requested.
- For longer hikes determine good options for a lunch stop.
- Are there any good bail-out points (in case of emergency, or in case anyone feels like they need to drop out)?
- During hunting season, will trail access be restricted, or will blaze orange outer-wear be required?
- If parking is limited, make sure that detailed instructions for car-pooling are spelled out in the hike write-up.

Before the Hike:

- Monitor weather conditions in the days leading up to your hike. If you need to cancel the hike (e.g., heavy rain expected, extreme cold, extreme heat, etc.), notice should go out to Club members about 24 hours ahead of time.

- The hike leader should probably arrive at least 20 minutes early, particularly if the hike location is one that's less familiar to hikers.
- It's recommended that you carry a simple first aid kit for cuts, bruises, bee-stings, etc.
- Also recommended: Bring extra water, if the weather is very hot (in case a hiker under-estimates how much water they'll need).
- Bring a hike sign-in sheet with Location, Date and Leader/Co-leader Names filled in.

At the Meeting Place or Trailhead:

- Have all participants print and sign their names on the sign-in sheet. Bring a good pen or pencil. If any of the hikers are guests, make sure that is noted on the sign-in sheet.
- Recognize and welcome newcomers; introduce yourself and others to them and help them to feel a part of the group.
- At the hike start time, form a circle, introduce yourself as the hike leader, and have the hikers introduce themselves. Briefly describe the hike (route, interesting sites, trail conditions, etc.). Some items you may want to address: a) Will people need hiking poles?, b) Will you be out in the sun a lot (hats, sun-screen)?, c) The likelihood of encountering ticks, yellow jackets, etc.
- Make and ask for club announcements. Take note of the number of participants.
- If there are more than 6 - 8 hikers, ask somebody to act as a sweep. For a really big group, more than one sweep may be required.

While on the Hike:

- In general, the hike leader will be near, or at, the front of the group. If some people hike ahead of the group, tell them to wait at trail intersections or confusing turns and wait for the group to catch up.
- Advise hikers that no one is to leave the group for any reason without first advising the hike leader of his/her plan to do so.
- Make sure to take regular breaks (to allow people to get a drink of water or to catch their breath), particularly if you're walking up a long hill, and/or the weather is rather hot.
- Check periodically to make sure the group isn't getting too stretched out. It may be necessary to adjust the pace of the hike, take more frequent breaks, or post a knowledgeable individual to wait for stragglers.
- Give physical and moral support at all stream crossings.
- From time to time check the group number to make sure no one has been left behind.

After the Hike

- Make sure everyone is accounted for and has finished the hike, and thank everyone for coming.
- Check available pedometers and average the readings for the agreed-upon mileage. Enter mileage on the hike sign-in sheet in half-mile increments, rounding up or down as necessary. Check that printed names are legible.
- If the hike is in a remote location, make sure everybody's car starts okay before leaving.
- Send the hike sign-in sheet promptly to the Club Hike Recorder (contact info on the front of the form).

