

Guidelines for Event Organizers

Important: We DO NOT post Trail Magic Hiker Feed events in our group.

The reason is out of respect for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy that has frowned upon hiker feeds which create a bubble on the trail and may create a false impression that thru-hikers need not be self-reliant. It is important that our group is seen as a positive partner for the Conservancy! They do a lot for the trails that we use frequently!

Scheduling your event:

- Try not to post an event when there is trail maintenance scheduled. It's important that our members contribute to the trails they hike on so giving them every opportunity by not posting a competing hike is ideal. Check the calendar before scheduling your event.
- Multiple hikes of different abilities/locations are perfectly fine (and encouraged) on the same day/time.

Listing Your Event:

The following items should be described in your hike description. The most important items are distance and pace so be sure to list those and accurately describe them.

- Distance in miles
- Pace – Leisure (1-2mph), Average(2-2.4mph), Brisk(2.5-3mph), Fast (3+mph) – you can also state your mph hiking pace or average mph pace with breaks.
- Terrain – Easy, Moderate, Moderately Strenuous, Strenuous
- Description – Clearly state where the group will be hiking and any other pertinent details. It is assumed that the hike leader knows the hike. If not, that needs to be stated in the description so that others know it will be an exploratory hike. There's nothing wrong with those, but people should know what they can expect ahead of time!
- Pets – State whether pets are permitted on the hike (see below).
- Optional: If hike leaders do not want beginners on the hike, please add "This is not a beginner hike."
- Optional: End time, but make sure you add a disclaimer that unforeseen things can happen in nature or with individuals that could delay the estimated finish time.
- Hike meetup location: There are problems with some existing Meetup and Google Maps locations on the meetup site. Latitude and Longitude are recommended. Help is available from Dennis Hurley at dennisjhurley@comcast.net or 717-385-6879.

Sample:

Susquehanna Trail, 4.2 mile loop

Terrain – Moderate

Pace – Leisure

Pets are not permitted on this hike

Elevation gain is 800ft

Steep incline for first mile, then levels off to rock scrambles before descent back to trailhead. Bring water, snacks, bug spray.

Hike will be rescheduled if it rains due to the rock scrambles.

RSVP Settings:

- **Limits on hikes** will be up to the event leader based on their comfort level; however, keep in mind that the **Appalachian Trail Conservancy requests that no groups exceed 25 persons on the Appalachian Trail and there is a strict limit on PA Gamelands of no more than 10 persons in a group.** There are various maps that indicate Gamelands if you do not know where they are. **You could be fined!** It's happened before. Day Hikers will not pay for any fine incurred by an event organizer if you go over the limits.
- The guest policy is up to the event organizer. Some hike leaders prefer not to allow guests due to liability issues. If you disallow guests and hikers ask if they can bring others, you may tell them although guests are permitted on some Day Hiker hikes, they are not permitted on this one. Tell them it's easy for their guests to sign up and encourage them to do so.
- Guest policy continued: Please keep in mind that guests often have not read the description of the hike, have not signed any kind of liability waiver (Meetup.com's or Day Hiker's), and do not get communications directly from the hike leader in preparation for the hike. If guests are allowed, the hike leader should print off the [Day Hikers Liability Form](#) and have guests sign in on the form. You can also use this form if you prefer that all participants sign (added protection).
- Please remember that as event organizer, you have the ability to update any rsvp. This will be handy when people frequently "forget" to update their rsvp. If they send an email canceling without updating it on meetup, the hike leader can do it for them.
- RSVP deadline should be 24 hours before start of the event, if possible, but it is up to the hike leader. If an event is copied from a previous post, you **MUST** go in and update the RSVP because it will default to a random date prior to the event. I suggest an RSVP deadline of 24 hours prior, especially for carpooling and shuttle hikes, to give you time to prepare.
- If the waiting list for any event becomes too large, a second group can be started at the discretion of the event organizer and only if another leader familiar with the hike can be found.

Charging for Events:

- **We do not charge for events!** If there is a fee associated with the event, then state that in the description. Any hike leader charging for their hike may face removal of event organizer status.
- The Day Hikers site cost is about \$18/month. We do not have any sponsors that contribute to this cost. The \$18/month is paid for by those who have graciously donated when we have asked about once every three years. If a hiker asks to make a donation, you have two choices: 1) Take the donation and give it to one of the organizers, Dennis Hurley, Harris Toser or Trisha Sanders or 2) Tell them to contact us directly via meetup and we will talk them through the donation process.

Pets:

- Hike leaders set the policy for pets on their hikes. In ALL cases, pets must be on a leash and under control when hiking with Day Hikers. You may encounter a Day Hiker that is afraid of dogs, allergic or non-tolerant. You may need to encourage the pet owner to be considerate of others.

Following up:

- Check your event frequently for “comments” from members. They often will ask questions in the comments section and you should provide an answer within 24 hours. If you don’t know the answer, please forward it to someone who might and then get back to the person once you have an answer.

Leave last minute details in comments to promote attendance, since this reminds them with a notification that they signed up for the event. Some suggestions are below:

- Expected weather – I use weather.com hour by hour forecast for the zip code of the event location.
- Special gear if needed – rain gear, poles, etc.
- Reminder to bring water, snacks, and lunch, if applicable.
- Carpooling arrangements including time the carpool is leaving, if applicable.
- When you expect the event to be over, approximately.
- After Hike Venue, if applicable.
- We no longer ask you to provide your cell number as comments are the more efficient way to communicate last minute information. However, keep in mind that there are many locations that don’t have service.

At the Hike:

- Bring map(s) of trail and directions, if desired/needed. However, you may prefer to ask members to download the map on their devices beforehand!
- Bring a first aid kit appropriate for the hike.
- Arrive 15 minutes before the event start time.
- Please remember there is often poor cell reception at trail heads so it is best not to rely on waiting until you get to the meeting point for information you may need from your phone such as the list of attendees.
- It is typical to allow 10 minutes after scheduled start time to begin your event. Special circumstances may apply if the group agrees to wait longer for someone who has called and indicated their status. Ultimately it will be up to the event organizer to decide to wait or not. Please keep in mind that patience runs low with a large group of people and it is not fair to make a group of punctual people wait even if the delay is not the fault of the late participant. (i.e. traffic, accident, etc.) You can tell the late member that they can either catch up to you or they can join you on the next hike.
- Do introductions in a circle. Just name is okay, but it’s also fun to say where each participant has come from.
- For larger hikes, do a head count with each member calling out a number in succession. At different times on the hike, you can do a headcount to make sure you have everyone.
- For larger hikes (>10), ask for a volunteer “sweep” for your hike. This is sometimes difficult to get. The sweep needs to stay at the end of the group and is not to pass the very last hiker in the group. However, the sweep can change during breaks in order to give everyone a chance to mingle.
- Tell your group what you will be doing and when you will be taking a break, etc.
- Make sure everyone has enough water and is dressed appropriately for the hike.
- Ask for questions and then get started!

- Throughout the hike, check to make sure your group is together. Take a break if the end becomes out of sight. Do not begin again when the end catches up. Give them a few minutes to rest first and then start out again. This is especially important for inclines.

After Hike Business:

- Update the attendance on the meetup site. This is important as we are trying to track “no-shows.” A member with two no-shows gets a warning and three is cause for removal from the group, if necessary. Do not mark someone a “no-show” if they let you know prior to the hike that they were not going to make it.
- Attendance can be edited either on the desktop or your phone by viewing the list of attendees and clicking the more options (three dots) next to each hiker's name. The three options are: went, didn't go, and no-show. Please mark accordingly.

Considerations:

- Please remember: Day Hiker hike leaders set the rules for their own hikes. For example, hike leaders can allow/disallow guests; set the RSVP ending time; pets or no pets; etc. In most cases, Day Hikers Organizers and Co-Organizers will not be on your hike so **you** set the rules. If you have questions, however, before or after the hike, be sure to ask the organizer or co-organizers (currently Dennis Hurley, Trisha Sanders, and Harris Toser).

Resources:

- [Day Hikers Liability Form](#)

Thank You!

This group would not be able to survive without all the dedicated event organizers we have and we greatly appreciate everyone's efforts. If you know someone who would like to lead events, please let us know and we will speak with them about becoming an event organizer. Thanks so much!

Guidelines for Day Hikers - Please Read!!!

The following are the guidelines discussed among the group organizers to help better serve the group overall. If you have any questions or comments about them, feel free to email me. I'll be happy to answer any questions or field your comments and I can discuss it with the event organizers when we get together. The Day Hikers are meant to be a fun social group who like to be outdoors and enjoy hiking, or other outdoor activities together. I wish we didn't have to have any "guidelines" but as human nature has repeatedly proved, we do!

Hike Difficulty - Know your limits! Don't take on a hike you cannot handle. Hike leaders/event hosts do their best to describe the difficulty of their hikes. Please READ the descriptions carefully and if you haven't been hiking in a while, don't go on a hike that says "not a beginner hike." There are a variety of hikes constantly circulating on the calendar so there will be one that fits your needs at some point. Likewise, if you are an experienced hiker and the pace is leisurely or average, please don't join the group thinking you will go faster than the rest of the group. Others will feel pressured by that behavior and won't find the hike to be at an "average" pace and may push themselves harder than they feel comfortable.

No Show Policy - If you RSVP "yes" for a hike, you are expected to show up. Our policy is two "no-shows," you get a warning and the third one, you may be ejected from the group. A "no-show" is a yes RSVP where you do not show and do not call PRIOR to the hike start. Once ejected, you will not be able to rejoin the group for 6 months and this is at the discretion of the group organizers.

Details - Look at the comments on each event you sign up for as hike leaders will usually post details about weather, where to meet, and any other important information about the hike just prior to the event start. Use the comments section to notify hike leaders if you are late or cannot make the hike. This is very important to avoid no-shows on your record. You can also send a message to the event organizer through meetup, but be careful not to contact the event organizers (Dennis, Harris, Trisha) as they will not have information about a hike they are not part of.

Wait time - Our general policy on a hike is to wait for "yes" RSVPs for 10 minutes and then the group leaves. It is inconsiderate to expect people who have made it on time to wait longer. You can either catch up with the group on the hike, or you can return home and choose another hike that suits you better. Keep in mind, the wait time may vary by hike leader as this is ultimately up to them.

Attendance Limits - For the safety of hikers and the preservation of our trails, hikes have a maximum participation. No hikes should exceed 25 persons but in some cases due to the trail (10 person limit on gamelands) and the comfort level of the hike leader, that number will be lower. In most cases, there will be a waiting list. Please don't hesitate to get on the waiting list. We often get last minute cancellations and are able to take those on the waiting list.

Pet Policy - Individual hike leaders set the policy for pets on their hikes. Please read the hike description very carefully and when in doubt, message the hike leader/event host. In ALL cases, your pet must be on a leash and under control if hiking with the Day Hikers. You may encounter a Day Hiker that is afraid of dogs, allergic or non-tolerant. Please be considerate of others.

Trail Behavior – It’s hard to believe I even have to add this, but sadly on at least one occasion I have witnessed cruel behavior towards the creatures occupying the trail as we pass. Under no circumstances should any day hiker tease, taunt or torture any creature on any trail including but not limited to snakes, frogs, rabbits, squirrels, etc.

Waiver sign in sheet – You may be asked on each hike to sign a waiver for that hike and provide an emergency contact number, if the hike leader/event host requires it. Please make sure you sign this and put someone else’s number. Picture this...you fall, you’re unconscious and after dialing 911, we dial your “emergency” number and we hear your cell phone ring in your backpack. That is probably not a good emergency number. 😊

Day Hiker Dues – There are no dues to hike with us. Members often support the group by donating during our once every three years request for help. These awesome members help pay the cost of the monthly fee that meetup charges. If you find this group has enriched you and you want to help, please contact one of the organizers (Dennis, Harris, Trisha) and we can provide details on how to do so! Donations keep the group going! Thank you!

Now get out there and hike and have some fun with us!!!