

Tour Day Tour Plan Activity

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The most important step in having a successful tour day in my eyes is to go through a thorough tour planning session the night before heading out into the field, not just doing a quick one in the parking lot immediately before you head out where it may be snowing, windy, and unpleasant.

This is pretty simple in the PNW where the avalanche forecast comes out at 6PM the night before, but other folks may have to wait and do it in the AM. If that's you, then try to do it in a comfortable place where you don't feel rushed!

Here's the activity description:

1. After the debrief of the day on the first field day, establish a time to meet up with the squad to tour plan. Here in Washington, I typically go for 7PM so folks have time to get a shower and eat.
2. Give them the homework of filling out the Anticipate the Hazard section of their field book with the help of the weather and avalanche forecast. Then **ask them to complete a run list and then come up with a tour plan appropriate for the group and conditions to share at the meeting.**
3. For the meeting, I typically use Zoom and try to not go over 45 minutes. First off in the Assemble Your Group section, I check in with the group to see how people are doing. Any gear issues? Bodies feeling good? Then I like to ask them to tell me their main goal(s) for the tour day. **I write these down to reference throughout the tour day and ensure we hit them all.**
4. Run through the weather and avalanche advisory efficiently. If they did a good job on this, it should just be reading it off so that everyone is on the same page.
5. Move into planning the route. For framing, it's nice to bring it back to basics: we're looking for terrain with the best snow for the day, that avoids avalanches, and is appropriate for the group and our goals. You can even draw a Venn diagram of those three things using the whiteboard feature on zoom and then put hearts stamps in the center for terrain selection to really drive this home.
6. Before hearing what they came up for tour plans, **make sure to go through the run list for your area and open and close terrain.**
7. After going through the run list, then **hear from folks what they came up with for tour plans.**
8. Spend the remainder of the time helping them narrow in on a tour that has a ton of options from the run list open to them. I usually frame it this way: if everything goes perfectly, what's the furthest point you'd like to get to that's open to us? That is our Plan A. Then work backwards from there to other things on the run list that are open all the way back to the vehicle.