

# **Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club**



## **Activity Leaders' Guide**

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club  
P.O. Box 8246  
Norfolk VA 23503  
Rev: 2014-01-28

# Introduction

Rev: 2011.02.01



A great deal of responsibility is placed on the activity leader. To be effective, activity leaders must possess certain skills and qualities to ensure optimum enjoyment and safety of all participants. Trip leaders set the standard for the activity — that standard will be observed by all and remembered long after the trip has ended. Just as the activity leader sets the standard for the activity, participants hold their leader to a standard. That standard may be expressed as the following skills set:

Appropriate knowledge, skill, and ability to properly plan and lead the activity.

Effective and creative communication skills to ensure all participants are prepared for the activity.

Ability to solve unexpected problems and emergencies.

Good time management skills.

Technical competence for the planned activity.

Ability to recognize strengths and weaknesses of participants, and use or compensate for them accordingly.

This Guide is intended to provide prospective activity leaders a framework of knowledge for organizing and leading Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club sponsored activities. In addition to using this Guide, new leaders should seek mentors and learn from their experiences. More important, for the club to continue its mission, experienced leaders must recruit and mentor potential leaders.



**Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.**

**John F. Kennedy**

## About this Guide:

The Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) Activity Leaders' Guide is sponsored by the TATC Education Committee and authored by club members interested in providing both new and experienced leaders a concise resource to help plan and lead trips. Each section is designed to stand alone and may be updated independently as new information and ideas become available. Members are encouraged to submit their ideas for improvements or additional chapters to the Education Committee.

## Attachments:

A number of TATC Education Handouts have been attached at the end of this Guide. To prevent having to update two items each time an Education Handout is updated, they have simply been inserted into the copying package for this Guide, and not into the electronic text.

To see the full compliment of Education Handouts refer to the Club's web page, [www.tidewateratc.org](http://www.tidewateratc.org).

To see whether the Education Handouts in your Guide are current, refer to the revision (Rev:.) date on the same Education Handout on the web page.

## Additions and Corrections:

The only way for this Guide to improve is for you, the Activity Leader, to make suggestions and comments. Even small typographical errors are welcome news, it means you're paying attention. ***Please*** pass any ideas you have to the TATC Education Committee:

- At regular meetings, or
- Via e-mail to: [education@tidewateratc.org](mailto:education@tidewateratc.org), or
- Via regular mail to:  
Education Committee  
Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club  
P.O. Box 8248  
Norfolk, VA 23503-0246

And a big **THANK YOU** for doing so !!!!!

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# **You're in Charge!**

## **Some Leadership Tips for Activity Leaders**

Rev: 2011.02.02

Perhaps the most important consideration in deciding to lead an activity is to choose something with which you are comfortable. Many people, especially in volunteer organizations, find themselves thrust into leadership roles out of a sense of duty to the group. These good intentions must be balanced against the reasonable expectation participants have that their leader will have the necessary physical, technical, and leadership skills needed to guide them. In choosing to lead an activity, you should be comfortable with your abilities to plan, select equipment, live comfortably in the out of doors, navigate, lead, make safety decisions, and think clearly in an emergency. Select an activity type and level of difficulty you have done several times before. Leadership offers enough personal challenges. Raising the bar on your physical and technical skills at the same time can demand too much of your attention and cause you to lose focus on your leadership responsibilities.

Getting organized and staying organized throughout the planning and conducting of the activity will help you ensure important details are not overlooked. While you may be able to recover from a forgotten piece of equipment or clothing, your trip will probably fall apart if details such as permits, parking, and emergency phone numbers are forgotten. The information provided in this section, and the attached Education Handout 'Activity Leader Pocket Guide' will help you to plan and organize your activity.

***When placed in command -- take charge.***

**Norman Schwarzkopf**

By choosing to lead an activity, you are making a very deliberate statement that you want to be in charge. Your activity participants want you to be the one to make the tough decisions and do the painstaking planning and preparation. No matter what the skill level and personality of the other participants, your position as leader sets you apart in responsibility and authority. While the preparation and conduct of the activity may have the appearance and feel of a group of friends having fun together, when critical decisions must be made there must be no doubt who is in charge. Leaders may use one or a combination of styles to lead and direct a group. The following is one way to characterize those styles:

Directive: As the name implies, directive leadership focuses decision-making on the leader. This style is especially useful in emergencies and when leading novices.

Democratic: Even though the activity leader has the ultimate responsibility for the activity, it is often useful to share some decisions with the group. Achieving consensus may be especially useful when there is a need or benefit in departing from the original itinerary. Giving participants a say in some of the decisions can help develop cohesiveness in the group by encouraging people to interact and

discuss the matter at hand. When placing a decision in the hands of the group, it is important to respect the rights and feelings of the minority. This may even require the leader, in some circumstances, to over-rule the majority. A democratic leadership or decision style is inappropriate for dangerous or emergency situations, when speed and decisiveness are required to prevent injury or death. Finally, while some level of participation by the group in decision-making is useful, a leader will lose authority and credibility if all decision making is offered to the group.

Educative: Educative leaders lead through example. By exhibiting and explaining the behaviors they wish the participants to follow, they subtly direct their behavior. This style is especially important in reinforcing Leave No Trace principles, proper hydration, and safety considerations. Going out of your way to avoid a risk or restore a campsite sends a powerful, positive message to the group about the expected standard of behavior. Conversely, demonstrating unsafe or other inappropriate behaviors sends an equally powerful negative message.

As the leader, you must accept responsibility for the activity and the need to make tough or unpopular decisions. This may mean alienating some actual or potential participants. Remember the job at hand, especially in a potentially dangerous situation, is to be a leader, not a friend.

Your success as an leader will hinge on your ability to communicate. This does not mean you need to be an eloquent public speaker or a gifted conversationalist. You must, however, be ready and willing to clearly state your intentions and decisions. You must also be a good listener. Paying close attention to what people tell you will alert you to potential problems and reinforce your knowledge of how things are going. Communicate throughout the planning and conduct of the activity. Keep your assistant leader and participants informed of the progress through the activity, your expectations, and potential problems. Ask questions and be open to questions. Be approachable. Effective communication promotes empathy and will help you shape and maintain awareness of the mood of your group.



There are many reasons to lead an activity, ranging from the sense of giving something back to the club or community to the desire to experience an activity "your way." Despite the seriousness of your responsibilities, a desire to have fun should be your prime motivator. By enjoying the activity and your role as the leader, you will help ensure the participants enjoy themselves as well.



# Basic Principles for Organizing and Leading An Activity

Rev: 2011.02.01

While each type of outdoor activity has its own unique requirements for proper leadership and organization, the basic process for running them is much the same. Each activity requires the leader to plan and prepare, assemble and inform the participants, guide them through the activity, and bring it to a conclusion. This section provides an approach for organizing and conducting an outdoor activity.

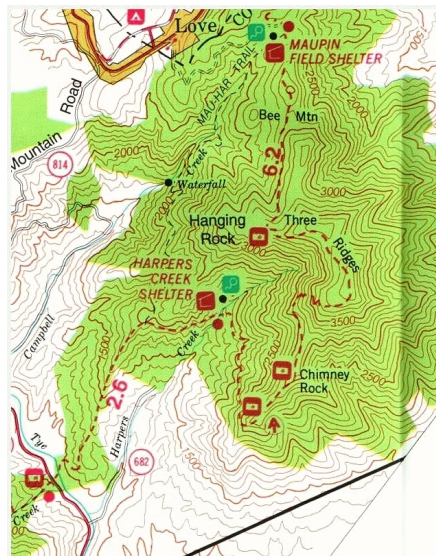
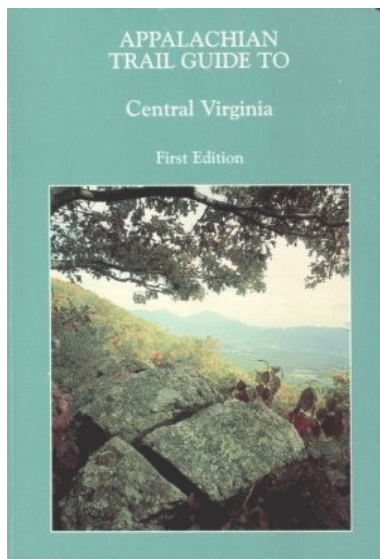
## Pre-activity Planning and Organization



Choose and scout the activity. Determine how best to access the starting point. The starting point is the place where the activity actually begins, such as a trailhead or canoe landing. Note location and capacity of the nearest parking — have a plan if it appears there will not be enough parking available. Study the route and location (by personal inspection, if possible), paying particular attention to the following:

- Hazards and obstructions.
- Rules and regulations that apply to the location and activity you will lead (e.g. forms and fees, fire restrictions, off-trail travel, etc.)
- Availability of drinking water.
- Availability of toilet facilities.
- Significant landmarks and route markers.
- The amount of time required to accomplish the activity, as well as travel time to and from the starting and ending points.
- Emergency access to the starting point and points along the route. Obtain phone numbers and location of nearest emergency services.
- Know the jurisdiction in which your activity will take place. Rescue response often depends on not where you call from, but where the emergency is located. For instance: The TATC A.T. section is solely within Nelson County. If you make the call from the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center, you are out of Nelson County and may have to ask to be connected to a Nelson County Rescue Squad, or the dispatcher may have to forward the call to Nelson County. You MUST know in which jurisdiction the emergency is located !
- Points of interest. Select a lunch spot, if appropriate.
- Camp sites, if appropriate
- Overall difficulty in terms of physical condition and skill level required.
- Place to eat at the conclusion of the activity, or on the way to and from an overnight activity.





With the location selected and scouted, it's now time to develop a plan for how you will conduct the activity. This includes your personal plan for recruiting and screening participants, as well as the plan for how you will lead the activity. This is a good point at which to select an assistant leader. This individual can help with the planning,

take over if you have to drop out prior to departure, and support you while you lead. Your plan should include the following:

- When and where you will conduct the activity.
- How and when you will advertise the activity.
- How participants will travel to the activity location.
- How and when you will screen the participants.
- A plan for the actual conduct of the activity, including items such as when and where breaks will be taken, camping or lodging locations, sources for renting equipment (if appropriate), scenic detours, and any other items that will ensure you can conduct the event in the time available and meet the overall goal of the activity.
- Who at home will have a copy of the plan and emergency phone numbers.

Develop an inclement weather plan. Poor weather may force you to cancel or choose an alternate route or day. Monitor conditions at the activity locations for several days prior to the activity. Think about how and when you will notify participants of any changes. This is especially important for persons who will be joining you at the activity location.

Consider and plan for how you will deal with an emergency. Planning for and dealing with emergencies is discussed in a later section.

Provide dates, description, difficulty level, and points of contact to the Hikemaster for inclusion in the activity schedule, newsletter, and web-page. Prepare Activity Sign Up sheet and announcements for monthly meetings and the newsletter.



### **Sample Activity Announcement**

January 29, 2011, Saturday MERCHANT MILLPOND DAY HIKE

John Doe 757 123-4567

An easy, almost 7-mile woodsy hike with views down into the Edgar Allen Poe-ish Lassiter Swamp for lunch. See legions of cypress knees along the lakeshore. Bring camera, lunch, a hot or cold beverage, appropriate clothing for the forecast weather, and a piece of plastic or such to sit upon for lunch. Afterwards visit the fascinating Visitor Center (free). Participation limited. For meeting place, time, and directions, to ask questions, and to sign up, telephone John.

For information on submitting your activity to the Hikemaster and Newsletter Editor refer to the Education Handout “Scheduling Your Activity - Activities Schedule, Newsletter, Web Site” located at the end of this Guide.

Interview the participants. This is actually a dialog. The leader presents essential information regarding the nature of the activity and solicits important information regarding the prospective participant’s ability to complete and enjoy the activity. Inform participants of the following:

- Description and location of the activity
- Skills required, potential hazards, and level of difficulty
- Names and telephone numbers of the leader and assistant leader
- Equipment required. Include water recommendation, suggested daypack contents, and clothing, as well as any special items the individual must bring (e. g. canoe, climbing shoes, skis)
- Meeting/carpooling place and time. If you plan to pre-screen participants, provide this information to participants only after pre-screening is complete. Otherwise, unanticipated persons may arrive at the meeting place wishing to join the activity.
- Expected activity expenses, including entrance fees, lodging, permit costs, meals, tolls, transportation (including driver reimbursement recommendation).
- Waiver and release of liability, as written on the Activity Sign Up sheet.
- Explain club policy prohibiting illegal substances and leader's policy on alcohol use.
- Explain the leader's policy on participation by minors. If minors are to be permitted on the activity, explain guidelines to the parents, or sponsor, and send them a copy of the TATC Education Handout "TATC Guidelines for Activity Participation by Minors" attached at the end of this Guide.
- Inclement weather plan.
- Who at home has a copy of the activity plan and can be contacted in case of emergency.

Solicit the following information from prospective participants:



- Level of experience. This may include how many years and how recently individual engaged in similar activities, special training or certification in the activity, and leadership experience.
- Most recent experience. Ask very specific questions such as when and where was the last similar activity in which the individual participated. If you are unfamiliar with that area, ask additional questions such as distance, elevation, difficulty rating, and terrain.
- Physical condition. Does the individual maintain a fitness routine sufficient for the projected level of difficulty? For

most activities, some sort of aerobic exercise of at least 20-minute duration a minimum of three times a week is recommended. This is good time to reiterate the level of difficulty, especially for strenuous activities.

- Medical history. Include allergies, diabetes, heart condition, and special medications the leader should be aware of in case of emergency. Also include a reminder to bring any required medicines and to inform the activity leader of any life-saving medicines - where they will be carried and how they are to be administered.
- Transportation requirements. Is a ride to the trailhead needed? Individuals are normally expected to make their own arrangements for getting to the meeting place.
- Identify any special skills and knowledge the individual may possess, such as medical training, CPR and wilderness first aid, plant and wildlife identification, and local history.

The interview is your best tool for screening out persons who are not suited to participate in your activity. When provided detailed information about the activity, some persons may decide they are not up to the task and choose to pass. Based on the answers you receive to your questions, you may have to tell some individuals that they cannot participate. Most people will accept this gracefully. You may even be able to suggest alternate activities. Some individuals; however, may not easily accept your decision and insist they be allowed to participate. Remember, the decision is yours and is made for the safety and enjoyment of all. Know how to say “No,” respectfully, but firmly.

Obtain reservations and permits. Because this may require some lead-time, you may have to get these before you are sure how many people will participate in your activity.

Notify park, forest, or private property owner where vehicles will be parked, for how long, and how many vehicles will be parked.

Provide a copy of all activity and participant information to the assistant leader and the at-home contact. You may wish to send each participant a copy of the activity description, including directions to the meeting place and the name and phone number of the at-home contact.



**In simplest terms, a leader is one who knows where he wants to go, and gets up, and goes.**

**John Erskin, The Computer Life**

## At the Meeting Place

The meeting place is where you will assemble the participants prior to setting off to the activity location. In some cases, the meeting place will be at the activity location's starting point or trail-head. Be sure and have a copy of the Activity Sign Up sheet and extra copies of the driving directions.

As people arrive at the meeting place, introduce yourself and begin checking them off on the Activity Sign Up sheet. As they gather, look them over to see if have prepared for worst weather and conditions anticipated in the activity area. Pay particular attention to clothing, footwear, and water. Ensure participants have any personal medications required for the duration of the activity and during travel to and from the starting point. If participants were not interviewed prior to assembly at the carpool area, perform interviews now. Be prepared to tell individuals who do not appear prepared that they may not participate. This is a fundamental right and duty of the leader. Unprepared persons are a danger to themselves and the group.

Promptly at the advertised meeting time, get everyone's attention and introduce yourself and the assistant leader. Then ensure each participant has signed the activity sheet. You may wish to perform a roll call of all persons listed on the Activity Sign Up sheet. Read the Waiver and Release of all Claims aloud to the group and answer any questions individuals may have regarding this statement. Explain the route to the starting point, re-assembly points, refueling stops, and comfort stops along the way, speed and estimated driving time. Remind participants of the level of difficulty and provide an update of the weather conditions en route and at the destination. Give participants a chance to drop out at this point. Present this information as briefly as possible, otherwise you will lose people's attention and they will miss some important details. If stragglers arrive while you are making these announcements, do not start over, but, instead, gather them afterward and cover what they missed. This is your first opportunity to truly assert your role as leader. If you appear organized and confident, participants will usually relax some and will be more inclined to follow your direction.

After everyone is accounted for, match drivers to those needing a ride. Make sure everyone is accounted for — personally check with each individual to ensure they are matched with a vehicle. Remind riders that they will be expected to reimburse drivers. Review the route and travel plan in detail with drivers. Provide a detailed description of the starting point and the planned departure time. If possible, all this information should be provided to drivers in writing.

## At the Starting Point

Account for all participants. Have them introduce themselves.

Observe weather and environmental conditions. Consider canceling if conditions are poor and/or participants do not wish to continue, or do not appear prepared for those conditions

Assign and brief the sweep. Remind the sweep not to overtake any participants and establish a process for the sweep to signal the leader between breaks.

### **Sweep**

The leader, or other assigned person leads the hiking, paddling, biking group. The sweep is the last person in the group. The sweep insured that the group does not get too strung out, and that no one is left behind. Anyone leaving the group must communicate with the sweep. The sweep will then wait for the person to rejoin the group. Whistle signals between the leader and the sweep may include:

- 1 blast = speed up a little.
- 2 blasts = slow down a little
- 3 blasts = stop because someone has left the group, or it's time for a break, or, or, or.
- 3 long, 3 short, 3 long blasts = Stop the group, **I need help !**

Such signals must be coordinated between the leader and the sweep and should be on paper for quick reference. Memory may fail two hours or two days into the activity

**Conduct a Safety Briefing. This should include:**

- Description of the activity route. Use a map, if possible. Point out planned campsite location, water re-supply points, significant landmarks, points of interest, and hazardous areas.
- A "buddy system" so that no one hikes alone.
- Assembly points along the way. These should include trail junctions and water crossings.
- Review of the level of difficulty, including distance and elevation gain to be covered, and the planned speed.
- Procedures for toilet breaks. These should include the need to inform a member of the group when departing the trail, leaving one's pack on the trail, and the requirement for the sweep not to pass through. Leaving one's pack on the trail may not be appropriate for all outing situations. The key point is to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Times, locations, and desired duration of rest-breaks and lunch.
- Safety considerations, including how to avoid hypothermia.
- Special rules or laws applicable to the activity, such as no fires or the need to respect private property and archeological artifacts.
- A general description of the desire to observe Leave No Trace principles.
- Where to contact the nearest law enforcement, ambulance, and medical facilities. Point out who has first aid kits and training and where the emergency telephone numbers are packed (recommend packing these in the leader and assistant leader's first aid kits).
- A general description of lost hiker procedures, emphasizing the need to immediately inform the leader or sweep (the person designated by the leader to remain last in line) and not disturb the point last seen.
- A reminder that, if disoriented or lost, to stay put and not wander about.
- A reminder to report any problems to the leader.

Observe how people prepare themselves and their equipment for the activity. This will often indicate how they will perform during the activity and will provide the leader some insight into who may potentially be enlisted to assist others or who may require extra assistance or consideration. This is the time to assist an individual who is disorganized so they do not slow up the group by constantly adjusting equipment or dropping gear.

Encourage participants to peel a layer of clothing before departing the trailhead. Conditions are often cool while people are getting ready and they will dress accordingly.

However, a little hiking exertion will quickly get the furnace going. If people start off a little cool, they will quickly warm and the group will not have to halt only a few minutes after starting while people remove a layer. But, big word, you should pause after about ten-minutes on the trail. By then feet and shoes have warmed and conformed to each other, and folks should be given a chance to adjust laces. At that time they can also adjust clothing.

## While Underway

If you have properly planned and prepared for the activity, the bulk of your leadership chores are finished and you effectively become a participant on your own activity.

Set the example. Reinforce the behaviors expected of others by exhibiting them naturally and obviously to others in the group. These may include Leave No Trace behaviors, frequent water consumption, checking for blisters, and courtesy and patience with others, among things. The leader's behavior can set the tone for the group, and the atmosphere for the duration of the activity.

Set and maintain a realistic pace for all participants. Read the situation and adjust to the group's needs. Often this may mean quickening, or reducing, the pace.

Tell about points of interest. Solicit others to share their knowledge and skills.

Keep the group together. Ensure breaks are realistic and evenly dispersed. Avoid ending the break when the last person catches up. If appropriate, keep the faster members of the group busy at some task such as precisely identifying the group's location or reviewing some nature or field-craft knowledge while waiting for the tail end of the group to catch up.

Monitor water consumption by the group. Be aware if individuals are running low, or are not drinking enough.

Monitor changing weather conditions. Ensure participants are properly clothed for current weather conditions. Be prepared to turn the group around and head back home, shift to the weather back-up plan, or otherwise adapt to conditions, as necessary.

Pay attention to the mood of individuals and the group as a whole. Adjust breaks, pace, and even the overall plan as required. Remember that the overall goal is for everyone to have a good time. While some individuals may not be enjoying the activity as much as others, a positive approach and a few minor adjustments can at least ease some of the problems while still maintaining the original goal of the activity.

Be prepared for emergencies. Some useful information and guidelines for handling an emergency during an activity are outlined later in this Guide.



## Activity Conclusion

Account for all participants. Briefly thank participants and remind non-members to consider joining the club. Encourage those who appear to have leadership potential to consider becoming leaders themselves. Consider eating out together after the activity. This may bring a nice closure to the activity.

Ensure all vehicles start and each participant is matched with a vehicle for the return home. Remind riders to share expenses. Encourage those drivers reluctant to accept reimbursement to accept it out of consideration and fairness to those who do desire reimbursement.

Once back home, let the at-home contact know you have returned. Self-critique the activity, noting what went especially well, as well as what went wrong. If appropriate, pass information about trail or route conditions to the TATC Trails Supervisor or appropriate agency, and to others whom you know lead activities in the same area. It's nice to call the activity participants a few days after the return to thank them for participating and to ask for any suggestions or comments about the activity.

## Summary



By taking and maintaining charge of your activity, getting and staying organized, and maintaining open communication with all participants throughout the planning and conduct of the activity, you improve the likelihood that your activity will be a success. Participants expect you to be qualified and able to lead them through skill in the activity, knowledge of first aid and CPR, organizational ability, and a willingness to be in charge and make decisions. Following the guidelines presented in this section will aid you in meeting those expectations. Adapt these guidelines

and the attached 'TATC Activity Leader Pocket Guide' to suit your individual activity and style. Above all, have fun!

**In the last analysis sound judgement will prevail.**

**Joseph Cannon**





# **When Things Go Wrong - Safety Management and Preparedness**

Rev: 2011.02.01

Serious incidents on the trail usually occur due to an accumulation of human and environmental factors. One factor gone wrong might be an inconvenience. Multiple factors could result in a critical situation. Once a full-blown crisis is underway, options out on the trail are limited. Safety management is largely a matter of good planning, with the goal of preventing harm to individuals or the group. It requires consideration of human and environmental factors in order to reduce the likelihood of an accident.

## **Hunting**

Be aware of the many and very varied hunting seasons in the areas where TATC hikes and does trail maintenance. Crossing Blue Ridge Parkway lands with unloaded guns is allowed. Hunting is allowed in the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests. When in doubt wear blaze orange and encourage others in your group to do the same. Except for a short A.T. section near Reeds Gap and Rt. 664, the entire TATC section of the A.T. is within the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests and also within Nelson County.

**Nature... She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

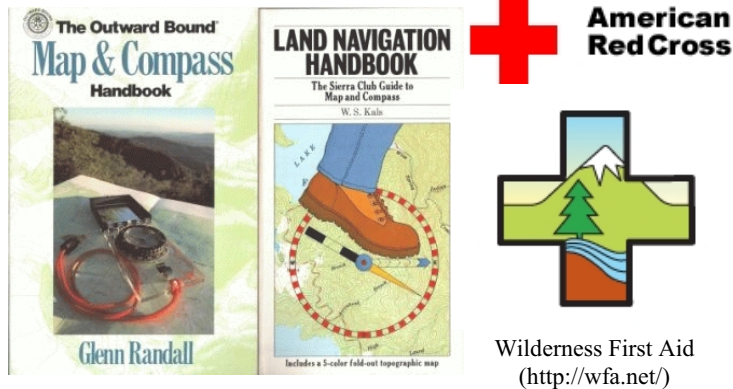
## **Leader Preparedness**

Preparedness is perhaps the most significant human factor in avoiding an accident. Be emotionally prepared. Being the leader is a job, and sometimes just hard work. Learn to say no. Expect that some of your decisions will not be appreciated or make you popular. For example, screening of potential participants, by definition, means that some may be told this activity is not appropriate for them. Make an activity plan, but be prepared to make adjustments. Keep safety foremost. If a change in factors significantly raises the accident potential, then delay, modify, or cancel the activity.

## **Be Prepared Physically**

This means maintaining a level of reasonable fitness. Do not lead beyond your personal endurance. Stay within your level of skill. Push yourself to the limit on someone else's activity, not your own. Remember, people are counting on you. Keep your equipment well stocked and in repair.

## Be Prepared to Act



Know CPR, and basic or advanced first aid. If you spend much time at leadership activities, then go a step further and take a wilderness first aid course. Also invest time and money (it does not require much of either, really) into learning basic trail skills, land navigation, leadership, and trail maintenance. Know

how to identify and treat hypothermia. For winter activities know how to recognize and treat frost bite.

## Expect the Unexpected

Take pre-planning seriously. Consider environmental factors such as the nature of the activity, terrain, remoteness, weather, and availability of emergency help. Do research to know what to expect. However, things happen. Make contingency plans.

## Screen Participants for Preparedness

This is the leader's chance to begin an assessment of several key human factors, such as experience, skill level, physical condition, and proper gear. View this as an ongoing process. Shortly before beginning the activity review the medical history information gathered during the screening interviews. During the hike, periodically consider the mood and behavior of the group. For example, is enough water being consumed, is someone overwhelmed by the pace or struggling with gear, and has the group maintained their sense of humor. Fear, poor communication, and equipment failure are significant factors in injury. Remind folks that the activity environment is not the same as at home and that they must bring their own medicines and keep them where they can see them and use them.

## If Something Serious Does Go Wrong, Start by Stopping



It is important that the leader make good decisions. Do not act hastily. Take immediate action only if it is required to prevent imminent harm, and then only if there is not a risk of creating a separate victim. To make a good response plan requires time. Resources are minimal. Think creatively. Consider the options, make a plan, communicate the plan carefully to others, and assign tasks. Nothing happens fast in terms of rescue when you are out in the backcountry. Expect your intervention to be a long, slow process.

Even a non-emergency task, such as helping a blistered hiker down the trail, is going to require a lot of time and physical effort. For an idea of what is involved in evacuating an injured hiker, refer to the attached Education Handout 'Search and Rescue - Mau-Har Trail.'

## Common Injuries

Some injuries on the trail include blisters, insect stings, abrasions, and sprains. These are usually not serious and can be managed with the contents of the leader's first aid kit. See the first aid related Education Handouts attached at the end of this Guide for recommendations as to what to carry.



## Heat and Cold-Related Injuries

Hypothermia, deep frostbite, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke can create significant harm, even death, to the victim. They pose an immense challenge to any would be rescuer, including professionals. In advanced stages, treatment of heat and cold-related injuries can only occur with the full resources of a hospital and a successful outcome is still not a given. Know that environmental and human factors contribute to the likelihood of these injuries. The good news is that prevention is usually easy. Avoid hiking in extreme weather. Have participants use protective gear. This includes rain gear, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, proper footwear, and appropriate layers of clothing. Make certain hikers consume adequate calories. Prevent exhaustion by taking breaks. Heat- and cold- related injuries often sneak up gradually on the victim. Encourage communication. Use your powers of observation. More than any other single factor, consider water. Make certain participants stay hydrated and keep dry.

## Lost Hiker Situations

These incidents demand that the other goals of the group be suspended until the hiker is located or a coordinated search effort can be arranged. It is time consuming and anxiety producing for everyone. Prevention is the easier option. Prevention includes sticking together as a group, making use of a lead and sweep hiker, using a "buddy system" and notifying others when stepping off the trail for privacy. Getting lost often occurs when someone leaves the trail to take a "short cut", or dashes off to check out an attraction of some sort, and in their excitement becomes disoriented. The difference between being temporarily disoriented versus lost is usually time, distance, and effort. One way of preventing someone from getting lost is by acknowledging that becoming momentarily turned around can happen to anyone. It can often be resolved very quickly - by yelling out to the group - and the cost is no greater than a little swallowed pride. One gent stepped about 75-ft off a trail in then Seashore State Park to visit a tree. In getting interested in his surroundings he became disoriented and had to call out to the group to get his bearings to return to the trail. It can and does happen!

## If a Hiker Is Lost

First protect the point where the person was last seen. Give this area a large berth as it may provide clues for a professional search and rescue team if one eventually has to be contacted. Think in terms of confining the lost hiker. Lost hikers often "find" the group in this manner. Make a coordinated plan but act quickly, especially if you suspect injury or poor health. The less time the person has to wander the smaller the search area needs to be. Assign small search groups, each with clear instructions. Direct them to the greatest probability areas, such as possible points of confusion on the trail (example - trail intersections), and to land features that form natural confinement points (example - stream beds). Searchers should travel light, travel quickly, and remain within view of one another. Their job is to look for clues and to set out attraction devices (such as notes, colorful clothing, etc.). The teams should then return promptly to the base location for the next assignment. Assess the situation to determine whether it is time yet to call for official help. Consider the age of the hiker, weather factors, health factors, and the likelihood of injury. It can take hours to mobilize a search team to the area. If in doubt, it is better to request help sooner than later. Untrained search teams generally should not search at night. Remember that no set of guidelines is adequate in all situations. Use your intuition, and your knowledge of the area and the person, to help guide your actions.

If You Become Lost, then **STOP** (S**top** moving, T**hink**, O**bserve**, and P**lan**)



Holler or blow a whistle. Increase your visibility to others. If you are on a trail, do not leave it. Mark your spot with groupings of three (such as three rocks, three branches, three arrow marks in the dirt), three being the signal for distress. You may opt to walk out a short distance from this spot to see if you can get your bearings or attract attention. If it becomes apparent that the situation is not going to be resolved quickly, then look for other ways to attract attention, such as building a small fire or hanging bright objects. Conserve your energy. Use it to stay dry and warm. Generally, you should stay at the point where you first realized you were in trouble. This makes sense - think of how much harder it is to locate a moving target. Stop, look, and listen for any signs of your searchers. No guideline can cover all situations. If you believe that your particular situation requires you to travel, then clearly mark your path. Make it possible for others to determine your path and direction. If need be, you can also retrace your own steps to return to this point. Traveling downhill is usually easier, toward the location of roads and homes, and what your searchers will expect.

**I knew that if I wanted to live to be an old mountaineer, I could not take such chances and be so uninformed about dangerous activities.**

**Paul Petzholdt**



## Evacuation Considerations

When there is a serious incident, the first step is to prevent further injury to the victim and others. There is a duty to create no additional victims. Assess the scene. Assume leadership. Rescue may proceed only if the rescuers are not also at risk of being harmed. Do a primary survey of the person. Check their airway, breathing, and circulation. Check for bleeding, symptoms of shock, and consider the possibility of a head or spinal injury. Provide CPR, treat for shock, or control bleeding if needed. Then do a more thorough secondary survey. Do not move the person. Conduct a head to toe examination. Check vital signs. Review the person's medical history. Resist the urge to act hastily. Take time to gather information, assess, and plan. Correct action is more important than speed. Decide whether to send for help or to evacuate. Evacuation may worsen the injury. Consider the nature of the injury, the size and experience of the group, and the materials at hand. Do not evacuate based on the urge to "do something." Evacuate only if it is believed that this choice will provide a higher probability of a positive outcome for the victim and the group. Send messengers (two if possible) for help. They must be well informed of the nature of the emergency, the location of the group on the trail, and how to initiate emergency help. Double check that the messengers are carrying a description of the victim's medical status, as well as keys, coins, map, telephone numbers, and directions. Delegate tasks to the rest of the group. Periodically review and document the victim's symptoms. Comfort and stabilize the victim as much as possible. Be attentive to the emotional and physical state of the rest of the group. If evacuation is to be carried out, then begin to put in place the plan. The details of evacuation options are discussed in wilderness first aid courses. Be prepared to provide the TATC President or Vice-President with a written report of the accident and actions taken. For a sample, real, evacuation situation, refer to the attached Education Handout 'Emergency Evacuation on the Mau-Har Trail.'





# Trail Maintenance Trips

Rev: 2014.01.28

Trail maintenance trips are scheduled throughout the year. We have weekend work trips to maintain the TATC section of the A.T. in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and day work trips in the local area. There are maintenance trips to suit everyone's ability. You do not need to be an 'expert' to lead a maintenance trip. Routine weeding, pruning and waterbar maintenance are not glamorous, but need to be done several times a year. Consider volunteering to lead a maintenance trip.

Leading a maintenance trip follows all of the basic steps of leading any other activity. First you need to plan your trip. During the Fall and Spring trips, the trails supervisor will have determined the work to be done. Other times you will need to plan the work, determine the level of difficulty of the trip, and arrange for publicity of the trip. If you do not have the necessary tools, you will need to arrange to get them from the Tool Boss.

Next you should screen your participants. Whether this is to be done over the telephone before the trip, or at the parking lot on the fall or spring maintenance trips, be sure they understand where you will be meeting and give or send directions. They need to be aware of the distance and strenuousness of the hike to the work point. Also explain the type of work to be done, skill level required, and personal gear to bring. Be sure that all participants have the experience and fitness level required for the activity. If some people are hesitant, direct them to a more appropriate trip.



At the meeting point (this may or may not be the parking lot used on the Sherando Lake trips), be sure that everyone has signed the Activity Sign Up sheet. Check to be sure that everyone has come prepared with proper equipment. This usually means work-gloves, plenty of water, lunch, and appropriate clothing for the work and season. Read the "Waiver and Release of all claims" to the group. Give people one last opportunity to back out of the trip. Make sure that all participants have rides and encourage carpooling to and from the

Sherando Lake campsite on maintenance trips headquartered there. People working out of Maupin Field are strongly encouraged to walk in from Love Gap.

At the departure point, account for all participants and have them introduce themselves. In addition to the safety briefing outlined in the first section, special mention should be made of safely hiking with, and working with, tools.

- Explain how to properly carry tools. Carry them on the downhill side, blade facing down, and away from the body. Blades on crosscut saws, and other sharp tools, should be covered during travel.).
  - Be sure to work at least two arm/tool lengths away from each other, more when using swingblades.
  - Work at your own pace and take plenty of breaks.
  - Encourage the use of Blaze orange during the various hunting seasons. ■ The TATC publication Trail Maintenance Crew Briefing Booklet may be helpful when briefing trail crews on the work to be accomplished. It is available on the TATC web site.
- Use of the TATC publication Trail Maintenance and Construction Task Hazards and Recommended Safety Gear is mandatory for work trips on US Forest Service and National Park Service land, and is recommended for local trail maintenance trips. Review the form and the proposed work day, then enter a check in the ✓ column for each hazard associated with the proposed work. At the end of the form print, sign, and date the form. Gather your crew and explain/read each line of the form where you entered a ✓. When finished, ensure that each person on your crew prints their name and signs the form acknowledging that they have attended the hazard briefing. At the end of the trip the filled in form is attached to the Activity Sign up sheet and turned in to the TATC Trail Supervisor along with the number of hours worked. The Activity Sign up sheet and the Trail Maintenance and Construction Task Hazards and Recommended Safety Gear form are available on the TATC web site.



Once you have reached the place where you will be working, reiterate the above safety rules. At this point, you should explain how to properly use the tools and any additional safety requirements. Be sure to monitor participants for their exertion level, water intake, and working safely. Monitor the group at all times with regard to worker safety.

Set an example by not overdoing it yourself.

Remember, even though we are working, most of us are also there for the social and recreational aspects of being outdoors. Be sure to leave the work area in plenty of time to return to the trail head. Check and make sure your group is bringing back all the tools with which it started the day.

At the conclusion of the maintenance trip, be sure that all participants are accounted for and have rides back to the meeting point. Thank everyone for their work and summarize what was done that day. Most people like to feel a sense of accomplishment. Turn tools in to the Tools Boss. Finally, be sure to return the Activity

Sign Up sheet, with the attached Trail Maintenance and Construction Task Hazards and Recommended Safety Gear form, and with the number of hours worked, to the Trails Supervisor.







# Trips to the Douglas Lee Putman Memorial Cabin

Rev: 2011.02.01

## Requirements

There are two requirements for renting the cabin: you must be a current TATC member and have attended one of the regularly scheduled cabin orientation weekends. Only the person signing the rental agreement needs to meet this standard; the other participants do not. The purpose of the orientation is to familiarize renters with: basic cabin rules; operation of the wood stove and fireplace; details pertaining to the spring, the outhouse, replacing firewood; and opening and securing the cabin. Trip leaders need to be quite familiar with the cabin before using it as a base for an activity. It is recommended that you take a couple of trips to the cabin to learn the ins and outs of its operation.

It is possible for a trip leader to reserve the cabin up to a year in advance. The trip **must** be open to the general membership, and also be advertised in the newsletter and/or activity schedule to qualify for the advance reservation. If advanced planning is not possible, or the trip is a private one not open to the general membership, the leader may only reserve the cabin eight weeks in advance.

## Access

Although we own the cabin property, we have to cross Blue Ridge Parkway and George Washington-Jefferson National Forest lands to access the cabin. Access to the cabin is by foot **only**. Please park in the parking lot across the Parkway from the trailhead, and not on the Parkway shoulder.

The trail to the cabin, up to the PRIVATE PROPERTY sign, is on public property (Parkway and Forest Service) and may be used by the general public on foot. If folks other than TATC members are seen



making use of the road beyond the 'PRIVATE PROPERTY' sign, perhaps mountain biking, hiking, hunting, or riding ATV's, gently remind them that the road is private property and they are trespassing. If needed, the cabin cart (marked for gear) may be used to carry group supplies to the cabin. The cabin trailhead is purposely kept unmarked in order to not draw attention to it or the cabin. Please report ATV riders to: the Ridge District, Blue Ridge Parkway, or Glenwood-Pedlar District, George Washington-Jefferson National Forest, as appropriate, and to the TATC Cabin chair.

## Hunting

Hunting is allowed in the National Forest and hunters may cross Parkway lands, where hunting is not allowed, with unloaded weapons.

## Safety

An immense amount of volunteer club labor went into building the cabin. To protect the cabin, be particularly attentive to safety rules related to fire and flame, and to properly securing the cabin. The rustic setting of the cabin is a large part of its charm. Pay attention to how activities such as cooking and hauling and splitting wood are being carried out. Discuss safety precautions and practices in advance.

Also, the cabin becomes even more isolated during extreme weather. The National Park Service closes Blue Ridge Parkway gates if there is windstorm damage, snow or ice. It is then necessary to hike two and one half-miles (from the intersection with Rt. 814 where there is usually roadside parking space) down the closed Parkway to get in or out, and another half-mile to the cabin itself.

If and when they clear Rt. 814 your vehicle may get plowed in or, if on the cabin side of the gate, may get locked in
---

The Parkway is sometimes closed for extended periods. Check the weather prior to leaving for the cabin. Be attentive to indicators of significant weather changes when you are at the cabin. Take the appropriate action to cancel or amend the trip. Know alternate weather routes in case you are put into this situation without warning.

All leaders should know the symptoms and treatment for hypothermia and frostbite. Other winter precautions include, but are definitely not limited to: keeping your water from freezing; and making sure that the stove you carry will operate in extreme conditions.

Winter visits to the cabin can be extraordinarily beautiful. But with the beauty comes danger from deep snow, hazardous ice, bitter cold temperatures, and dangerous wind chills. Snowshoes or skis, walking sticks, crampons, cold-weather clothing,

bedding, and survival skills may be required. Weather, any time of the year, may undergo extreme changes in very short periods of time. Be prepared !!! Hiking on ice or in deep snow for three-miles can be exhausting, especially if participants arrive after dark, or after an on-the-road dinner with insufficient calories. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts can be received at the cabin. Some cell phones will also work there.

## Maps

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Map #12, a map of Nelson County, and/or a Virginia map atlas or gazetteer, is very handy for detailed views of roads and trails in the cabin area. Trails from in or near the Parkway parking area lead to White Rock Creek waterfall, and to the Sherando Lake Recreation Area.

**The essence of knowledge is, having it, apply it; not having it, to confess your ignorance.**

**Confucius**







# Canoe and Kayak Trip Guidelines

Rev: 2011.02.01

The basic guidelines for leading a hike also apply to paddling activities. Review the previous sections for general instructions on leading an activity. However, a body of water is more changeable than land features. Spring floods can turn a benign stream into major whitewater. Low water on a rocky river may mean dragging the boat out onto land instead of paddling. Tides have a major impact on some waterways. Bad weather, extremes in water level, or poor decision-making often have a significant impact. What was expected to be an easy paddle could turn into a frustrating day on the water, or worse, into a harrowing event. The club runs flat water and whitewater, protected water and wide open water, activities for novice to intermediate paddlers. Due to the experience level and equipment of most club paddlers, we do not run rapids beyond Class III.

## Pre-plan

When planning an activity be thorough. Refer to guide books, talk with other knowledgeable paddlers, and consult with the agency that has jurisdiction over the area. Check waterway maps and charts to make certain you pre-scout the chosen route. Be frank with yourself about your own paddling skills. Do not attempt waters that are beyond your ability to paddle or to lead. Know basic rescue skills. Practice these and be able to explain and demonstrate them to others. Know the Universal River Signals and the International Scale of River Difficulty. An excellent way of getting rescue experience is through a Water Rescue course. Also, be familiar with basic first aid, and how to recognize and respond to heat related illnesses and hypothermia. Make certain your own equipment is in good repair, that you are carrying appropriate safety gear, and that you know how to use it.

Being the leader of a paddling activity is rewarding. It is also a responsibility that can be time demanding and taxing. Strive to build a mutually supportive group. However, individual paddlers have responsibility for their own safety. Participants must feel free to have input, to question lax or dangerous practices, and to determine for themselves what they feel they can safely handle. As leader, you may have to make difficult decisions, such as: to cancel an activity; to screen out a participant; or to refuse a participant who arrives ill prepared.



Be prepared to spend time on the telephone or e-mail setting up the activity details, answering questions, and pre-screening participants. There is often a barrage of calls required right before the activity in order to arrive at a final list, match up paddlers without partners, and work out transportation issues.



Be candid to participants in your activity write-ups about what they can expect. The activity description needs to be detailed as to difficulty, and special skills or equipment needs required. Only by giving an accurate picture of the activity can potential participants realistically determine their preparedness for the activity. You, as leader, need to screen for preparedness, and say no to anyone who does not have the needed skills, experience, equipment, or attitude for this particular activity. Make certain everyone is clear about the route plan, and the put-in and take-out locations. Provide participants with a copy of the road map and waterway map, and leave a float plan with a responsible person at home.

The day before the activity, check for changes in conditions. Include the weather for the area and the water levels at the river gauges. Think ahead of time about possible escape routes, and the location of the nearest medical facility. Think through the shuttle process. Build in extra time. Paddling activities, particularly the shuttle portion, often take longer than expected.

## At the Launch Point

Check that participants are using a canoe or kayak appropriate for the route, and that each has an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and other required gear. Equipment needs will vary depending on the activity. Boats should have grab loops or painters (ropes, preferably floating ropes) on the bow and stern. Participants need to bring food, water, insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, glasses strap, rain gear, safe footwear, bailer, whistle, and a change of clothes carried in a dry bag. The leader needs to carry additional safety gear for group use. Check the equipment chart (it does not yet exist) for specific recommendations on gear. Review appropriate Leave No Trace principles.

Establish lead and sweep. The lead boat must know the route, set the pace, and be prepared to make choices that are for the good of the group. If less experienced paddlers are in the group, then the lead boat must be willing to pick conservative routes for others to follow. In whitewater, the lead boat must have strong river reading skills. The sweep



must be skilled in rescue techniques and carry the appropriate safety gear. The weakest paddlers travel in the middle. The minimum number for a safe river activity is three boats.

Outline the shuttle procedure. Identify the drivers, and remind them to carry their keys with them in a secure location protected from a possible spill, such as a dry bag.

Give a safety talk prior to entering the waterway. Review how to prevent a capsize, and what to do in case the paddlers' best efforts are not successful. The length and breadth of the safety talk will depend on the difficulty of the water being run, any special conditions, and the level of experience of the paddlers. With novice or inexperienced paddlers on a whitewater activity, take plenty of time. Foot entrapment while turning over can cause drowning in very shallow water. Taking the time to explain safe swimming techniques and the basics of self-rescue could save a life. With very inexperienced paddlers, you might wish to provide a how-to-paddle stroke clinic and allow time for practice before departing on the route. See the accompanying chart (it does not yet exist) for rescue basics.

Talk about paddling etiquette. Explain that paddlers should not crowd the boat in front, pass the lead boat or fall behind the sweep, or leave the group for a break without telling someone. Set up expectations for how the group will handle certain situations. For example, challenging rapids will be scouted down from the top and up from the bottom. Each boat will have the option of running the rapid, portaging, or lining. The first boats through will wait at eddies for the remaining boats. Discuss your decision on the wearing of PFD's for this activity. On a flat water activity in mild conditions, you might opt for only non-swimmers wearing a PFD. In whitewater, you might elect to have PFD's worn during all rapids, or PFD's worn the entire time on the water. When making the PFD decision think about a paddler having a heart attack or seizure while not wearing a PFD. T h i n k p r e v e n t i o n .

## On the Waterway

Keep boats together but not bunched up. Make yourself accessible to participants so that they can communicate with you about any problems. Sometimes partners are poorly matched or one boat will struggle to keep up with the rest. Make any adjustments that are required for the group's safety and comfort. Take breaks. Respect private property. Leave lunch spots cleaner than when you arrived. Consider spending time on the waterway practicing rescue techniques. Throw rescue bags, practice picking up swimmers from deep water, or try boat over boat rescues. Scout wherever needed, and warn the group if a challenge is approaching. Monitor the activity as you travel for compliance with the principles of Leave No Trace.

## At the Take-out

Make certain that the take-out is scanned for any overlooked gear, and that borrowed gear is returned to the owner. Do not leave until everyone is accounted for, all participants know the way home, and all vehicles have started. Once home, review your leadership of the activity for strengths and weaknesses. Call participants to thank them for attending and consider asking for their honest assessment; this way you can work on developing your leadership skills.

### Note

This information, with very slight change, is adapted from the original Guide.

**The essence of knowledge is, having it, to apply it; not having it, to confess your ignorance.**

**Confucius**





# Car Camping

Rev: 2011.02.01

Not interested in strapping on a backpack and disappearing into the woods for several days? Do you instead prefer sleeping in a tent, in a bona fide campground, with some (or all) of your worldly belongings close by? If so, why not plan a car camping trip? The Commonwealth of Virginia offers many camping and recreational areas (state, federal and private) perfect for the car camper. Hiking and biking trails, climbing, rappelling, paddling, and swimming areas are sometimes conveniently located nearby. Car camping gives you the ability to come and go as you (and fellow activity participants) please, provides a sense of safety to some, and gives you the ability to load your vehicle with just about anything you may need for the activity, without being worried about weight.

## The TATC Section of the Appalachian Trail

Interested in hiking or biking near our section? Consider a relaxing trip to Sherando Lake, Pedlar & Glenwood Districts, George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, or the TATC Douglas Lee Putman Memorial Cabin (refer to the Table of Contents and see “Cabin trips”).



Information on campgrounds throughout the U.S. is available through many means, including Woodall's Camping Guide (published by Woodalls Publications Corporation), the American Automobile Association, the Good Sam Club, and various state Atlas and Gazetteer publications.

Sherando Lake Recreation Area, Pedlar & Glenwood Districts, George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

Several trail maintenance trips each year are based at Sherando Lake and are car camping. These trips are great for learning about the gear other folks have and use, and what it takes to maintain trails. There is work for everyone, from easy to strenuous. Come along and give part of yourself back to a trail. Encourage others to do the same.



# Leaders' Guide to Weather

Rev: 2011.02.01



Blue Ridge Parkway Closed  
(Here with a Sign, Other Places with Gates)

There are few issues that can impact the enjoyment and safety of a hiking or backpacking activity more than the weather. At best, adverse weather conditions can be a nuisance, a minor annoyance to an otherwise great activity. At worst, they can result in a serious safety and even survival situation. That is why activity leaders would do well to pay attention to the weather forecast, and prepare themselves to cope with unexpected and adverse changes to the

weather. Such preparations should include carrying rain-gear, extra clothing and food, even when blue skies are forecast, and planning escape routes to civilization along the intended route, in the event that conditions turn foul.

Long a butt of jokes, the quality of weather forecasting today is excellent and an activity leader would be negligent to ignore the forecast. The stunning advance in computer technology that has been seen in the last twenty years has changed weather prediction from an art form to scientific precision. Sophisticated computer models predict changing weather conditions over the globe with unprecedented skill. Despite these advances, the atmosphere remains a turbulent system with limited predictability. Today's weather forecasts can provide useful information up to 5 or 6 days ahead, but it's always best to get the most recent information. Among the biggest hurdles for a activity leader, or for any member of the public for that matter, are, first, finding a source of quality weather information and, second, interpreting that information in a meaningful way for the local conditions. Unfortunately, the quality of weather information available is almost as varied as the weather itself. It's important to go to a quality source. If you want a weather forecast for the weekend, should you listen to the 10-second sound bite on a local rock music station, or should you check in with the people who produce forecasts as a profession. The National Weather Service is the weather arm of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Check out the national center at <http://weather.noaa.gov>, the weather channel, [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com), the National weather Service <http://www.weather.gov/>, NOAA's weather radio stations, and other available resources.

Interpretation of weather forecasts is just as big an issue as getting quality information. To get the most out of the weather forecast, it really helps to have an understanding of how weather works. All activity leaders should take a regular interest to educate themselves about the weather. TWC is a good place to start. It's very educational, as well as informative. Watching TWC gives you an appreciation of how weather systems form, develop and move; what rainfall, surface pressure and wind patterns are associated with them; how the 'jet stream' guides weather systems; and how changes in air mass determine what temperature, humidity, and visibility we experience at ground level. There are a number of very readable books available too. For example, check out 'The Weather Handbook,' by Alan Watts, published by Sheridan House Inc., ISBN 0-924486-76-7.



It's important to remember that weather changes on a regional scale. It can be sunny in the mountains and raining on the coast. It can be hot and sticky in Norfolk, and relatively cool and pleasant in Charlottesville. It's also important to note that topography, e.g. a mountain chain like the Appalachians, can make its own weather. Think how often you've left a beautiful sunny day in Richmond or Charlottesville only to find yourself engulfed in a

drizzly wet cloud on Afton Mountain. Air rising up the west slope of the Blue Ridge cools and the water it contains condenses to form clouds and rain. As the air sinks on the east side of the ridge it warms and dries giving sunny conditions. Coastal areas also experience their own peculiar weather characteristics. In winter, for example, warm moist air blowing in over a cold sea can yield a sea fog or 'haar' that keeps the coast damp and cold while inland the sun is shining. In summer, a strong sea breeze can spoil your day at the beach while towering cumulonimbus clouds produce thundery showers inland.

Refer to the Education Handout 'Weather Radio' in the attachments at the end of this Guide.

Weather along our section of the A.T. often arrives eight to twelve hours ahead of the forecast.





# Map & Compass Guidelines

Rev: 2011-02-01

## Preparation

Activity leaders should have a basic understanding of how to read and interpret different types of maps and in the proper use of a compass. Classes in map and compass reading are sometimes available through local and state Search and Rescue groups.



Various land navigation, instructional, backpacking and hiking books also provide detailed instruction.

Maps for the A.T., local trails, and popular trail areas nationwide are available in bookstores, libraries, outfitters, and some sporting goods stores. Locally, Blue Ridge Mountain Sports and Wild River Outfitters offer a 10% discount on maps, compasses, and other items, except sale-priced items, to TATC members. Show membership card before sale is rung on cash register. A.T. guidebooks, maps, and other items are also available for sale through the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

## Starting Point Maps

All activity members should be provided written directions or a map designating the route for the drive to and from the activity starting point. It is best to obtain, or make, a map and provide copies to the activity participants — nothing fancy is required. This will help prevent late arrivals or no-shows who "thought" they knew where they were going, but in fact, did not.

## Trail Maps

Backpacking and day hiking have additional requirements. A well-prepared leader will have scouted the activity area to determine the best route, an alternative route, and/or an emergency route, well in advance of the activity. The leader must identify and obtain a good map of the activity area, which includes road and side trails. All activity participants should know which map is being used and should be given the opportunity to review the map in advance.

The activity leader must be familiar with the selected map and know the designated trail route and an alternate, in the event of an emergency. For overnight activities, the trail map should be reviewed for available campsites, shelters and water sources.

The ability to understand grid references, map scales, contour lines, and map distances can be vital in estimating the length of an activity and in determining an approximate position at any time while on the trail.

The map used should either be waterproof or kept in a ziplock bag to protect it from inclement weather. A second map carried by a participant is always a good idea.

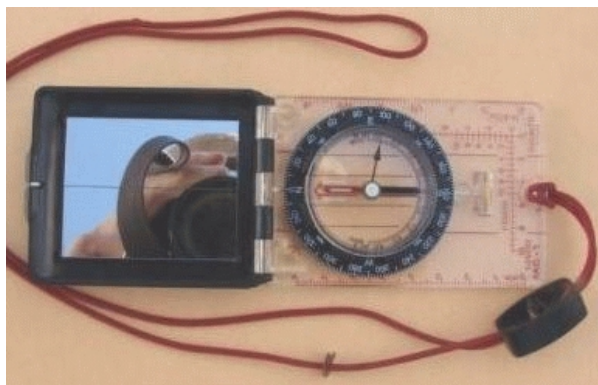
Besides providing trail route directions, maps provide other valuable information. Points of scenic or historical interest, details on the area's wildlife and vegetation, and information on local restrictions can prove helpful to both leaders and participants. Topographical maps provide significant details concerning up and down elevation changes, and terrain steepness.

## Compass Needs

A good compass is a must for all activity leaders on hiking and backpacking activities. It is easy for even the most experienced hiker to become lost or disoriented while on the trail, or after having left it for something as seemingly simple as a “call of nature.” Any sudden or apparent change of direction should be checked with a compass. Even hiking along the Appalachian Trail is never a sure thing — trail blazes are sometimes spotty; and intersecting trails can get one off track; and the trail may be overgrown, or indistinguishable, after a storm.

Activity leaders have several different compasses to choose from. The protractor compass is light, very reliable, and sufficiently accurate for basic navigation. This type of compass can be used as a direction finder after working out a bearing and setting the dial. A prismatic compass, which allows more precise sighting through the use of a prism or lens, is more accurate than a protractor compass and is preferable for night navigation.

Regardless of the type selected for a particular activity, be sure you are familiar with its use.



### Sample Compass

This is a simple Suunto compass model MC-1. The little black arrow pointing up is a clinometer useful for reading the angle of an incline (trail



slope). Because the compass is held vertically on its side to read the angle, the angle is read via the mirror. The tiny thing on the lanyard is a screwdriver for adjusting declination. The black thing on the lanyard is simply a choker to adjust the lanyard loop size.

***A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way.***

**John C. Maxwell**





# Attachments

Rev: 2011.01.14

A number of TATC Education Handouts have been attached at the end of this Guide. To prevent having to update two items each time an Education Handout is updated, they have simply been inserted into the copying package for this Guide, and not into the electronic text.

To see the full compliment of Education Handouts refer to the Education Banner on the Club's web page, [www.tidewateratc.org](http://www.tidewateratc.org).

To see whether the Education Handouts in **your** Guide are current, refer to the revision (Rev:) date on your copy of the Education Handout, **and** on the same Education Handout on the web page.

The following Education Handouts are related to this Guide and may be found on the TATC website under the EDUCATION BANNER and should be inserted in this Guide when booklets are copied for class use.

Activity Leader Pocket Guide	Schedule, Newsletter, Web Site
Activity Sign Up Sheet Information - Why It Is Needed	Search and Rescue - Mau-Har Trail
First Aid - An Introduction	TATC A.T. Section - Trail Heads, Marshaling Areas, and Landmarks
First Aid kit	TATC's A.T. Section - Sketch map
Guidelines for Participation by Minors	Tricks for Outdoor Leaders - Formulas, Hints, and Handy Calculations
Information Tidbits	Water - The Basic Essentials
Leadership Styles	Weather Radio
Outings with the TATC	
Scheduling Your Activity - Activities	

# Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

## Activity Leaders' Guide

— The End —

Attachments follow in alphabetical order.