Leading Sierra Club Outings
Range of Light Group, Toiyabe Chapter
Revised June 28, 2006

→ Essentials
  • Sierra Club outings policies: See http://mitchell.sierraclub.org/outimgs/
  • Insurance
  • Planning
  • Publicizing
  • Group Management
  • Navigating
  • First Aid and Safety

Sierra Club Outings Policies
→ Ancient Customs & Strict Rules
  • Children & dogs only if the trip announcement says they can come
  • Minors under 16 must have written parental permission
  • No firearms, audio entertainment devices
  • Communication, navigation radios OK
  • Get releases from property owners
  • Owners may want insurance or hold-harmless certificates
  • People must arrange their own car pools
  • No rented vehicles to be provided by leader (charter buses OK)

Insurance Considerations
→ Insurance Changes: Find Out
  • Guidelines available on Club website
  • Leaders are covered by liability insurance
  • Includes field appointees and assistants
  • Participants are not covered
  • No medical insurance for participants
  • Foreign or technical trips require additional insurance
  • Bus companies must provide certificates of insurance

Planning
→ Plan Something You Know
  • Day hikes
  • Backpacks
  • Ski tours
  • Car camps (desert)
  • Peak climbs

Things to Consider
→ Time, Distance, Food, Water
  • Naismith's Rule: 3 miles, 2000 vertical feet per hour on trail
  • Example: Telescope Peak 14 mi, 3000’ = 6:10 plus rest stops
  • Allow for rests: 3 to 5 minutes per half hour
  • Food: 1000 calories per day plus:
    • 100 cal per mile on trail, 200 cross-country
    • 400 cal per 1000 feet gain
  • Example: Mt Morrison 6 mi, 4800’ = 1000+1200+1920 = 4120 cal
  • Water: 1 liter per 1000 calories
  • Backpacking: Increase by added percentage weight (20-25%)

Announcing Your Trips
→ Submit Writeup To Outings Chair:
  • Make it fun
  • When: Give date (and time if no reservations)
  • Where: Give location & easy-to-find meeting place if no reservations
  • What: Explain objectives, gain, mileage, on trail or not
  • Why: Why should anybody want to do this?
  • Who: Explain qualifications, how to contact leaders
  • Screening: Have people write or call and reserve space

Using Trip Sheets
→ For Reply To Reservations
  • Describe outing objectives and plan
  • Name an easy-to-find, specific meeting point, not area
  • Road junction, campground entrance
  • Give precise mileages and landmarks for back roads
  • List required experience and conditioning
  • List equipment (boots, day or back pack, stove, ice axe)
  • Include unique items of interest (history, geology, etc.)

Screening Participants
→ For Difficult, Strenuous, or High-Skill Trips
  • Ask for advance signup and experience summaries
  • Ask about similar experience, especially recent
  • Ask about recent conditioning if strenuous
  • Ask about equipment (beginners don't know the brands)
  • Listen for macho or naive attitudes

Meeting At the Trailhead
→ Use a Checklist At First!
  • Sign-in using sign-in sheet
  • Appoint assistant leader(s): at least one trail sweep required
  • Introductions: make it friendly
  • Review plan and rules (keep together, breaks, tell a leader if leaving trail)
  • Equipment check (review personal checklists, share stoves)
  • Distribute community equipment (ropes, radios, shovels...)
  • Take off, don't dawdle: time is safety

Carry the Ten Essentials
  • Sunglasses & sunscreen
  • First aid kit (at least bandaids, tape, compress)
  • Map (typographic, detailed road)
  • Compass (protractor type)
  • Knife (“Swiss Army” or equivalent)
  • Flashlight (with spare bulb and batteries)
  • Matches and firestarter (redundant lighters OK, keep dry)
  • Extra food (high energy)
  • Extra Water (at least a liter more)
  • Extra Clothing (rain/wind gear, sweater, avoid cotton)
On The Trail

→ Keep Together!
• Leader in front, assistant in rear (or the reverse)
• Set pace for the slowest people (or you’ll have to wait!)
• Take frequent but short rests (3 to 5 min per half hour enough)
• Stop at trail junctions to show correct fork
• Watch for problems:
  • Glazed eyes, lack of energy, low morale, crankiness: low blood sugar, take food and water
  • Stopping too often: heart rate too high, slow down; food, water.
• Overheating: cool off (fast if dry hot skin!)
• Check for gear left at rest stops

Why Keep Together?
• Some People Get Impatient, But It Saves Time
  • Nobody gets lost
  • The leader knows that nobody is lost (no uncertainty)
  • The leader can communicate with everybody
  • People have problems the group can fix
  • People need first aid or assistance
  • Boot soles come off
  • Ski poles break
  • Stuff gets left behind
  • Be smart, stay together!

Elements of Safety
→ Stay On Schedule and Stay Awake
• Check that everybody has the essentials
• Those sharing tents or stoves must stay together!
• Keep the group together (again!)
• Avoid delays, keep group moving at a steady pace
• Take action to recover from delays (change plans)
• Take easiest and fastest route

→ Camping & Wilderness Manners
• Pick a pleasant campsite
• Maintain distance from lakes and streams
• Use camp stoves where fires prohibited
• Carry out all trash and garbage
• Do not damage trees
• Erase signs of campsite where possible

→ Navigation
• Know Your Map and Compass
  • Learn how to read a typographic map
  • Plan your trip with the map: distance, gain, calories, water
  • Practice with the map to locate yourself
  • Take exit bearings at the cars (critical in the desert or snow)
  • Keep track of time and location on trail
  • Use GPS, compass, altimeter to resolve uncertainty

→ Navigation Tricks
• Be wary – don’t jump to conclusions
• Take cross bearing on known landmarks
• Compare terrain to map completely
• Compare compass bearing to map for:
  ◊ Ridges
  ◊ Canyons or gullies
  ◊ Road segments
• Use all the clues and make sure they agree

→ Handling Accidents
• Sierra Club Leaders Must Have First Aid Training
  • Current card desirable, not required
  • Wilderness first aid preferred
  • Courses sometimes offered in our area
  • Learn how to improvise bandages, splints, etc.
  • Know how to get help (contact the sheriff)
  • Keep in control, think, do not endanger others

→ Handling Car Caravans
• Each Driver Must Keep Car Behind In Sight
• Give mileages on trip sheet
• Auto Club maps useful (show desert roads)
• Take tow chain, shovel, oil, coolant, duct tape, tire pump
• Be prepared to push, tow, shovel...
• Strobe lights useful to put on car

Search & Rescue
→ How to Get Help
• Notify Park Rangers in National Parks or Monuments
• County sheriff otherwise responsible in California
• Leader is responsible until official team arrives
• Send people out for help (preferably two) with list of:
  • Who is lost or needs rescue
  • Assistance needed (medical, helicopter, search)
  • List injuries, physical condition of injured, first aid given
  • Current weather conditions
  • Exact location of party (use UTM grid, send a map)
  • Best estimate of location of lost people
• Who is at the scene, how many helpers, gear available

→ Report accidents involving first aid or medical treatment
• Report accidents on Sierra Club form