



WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Sunday Hike Leader's Guide

Purpose

In offering a 'Program of Hikes', the Waskahegan Trail Association (WTA) is concerned about the safety of its hikers. As a result, every hike will be lead by a responsible hike leader. This document details these responsibilities.

Hike Schedule

The hike schedule is compiled and published in our newsletter and on the Waskahegantrail.ca website. When you agree to lead a hike your first name and phone number are listed beside the hike you have chosen to lead. Your first name and phone number will also appear in other advertising such as newspapers and bulletin boards. This is so that you can be contacted by WTA members and the general public for more information.

Newcomers may ask the hike leader about proper clothing and footwear. You may have to give advice on wearing good hiking boots, layers of warm but light, sweat absorbing clothes, and a hat. Hikers need to bring a lunch and plenty of water.

It is always a good idea to let newcomers know about the duration of the hike and when they can expect to return. This is not a fast jog solely for exercise, but a holistic appreciation of the countryside, its animals, the greenery, and people hiking in the group. Many people experience in city walking should be told that the hike may be over uneven terrain, over stiles and fences, climbing hills and across meadows in all seasons and weather.

Scouting the Hike

Prior to leading a hike the leader scouts the trail, defining the route to be taken for that next Sunday hike, making sure that it is in good condition, well marked, and readily traversed considering the weather. Adjustment can be made by having the trail maintenance crew clear trees or brush. Occasionally it may be necessary to choose an alternative Waskahegan route or hike because of weather, condition of trail or change in land ownership. Scouting should always be done with another member(s).

The Hike

On the morning of the hike, the leader arrives early at the meeting point to greet new and current members, and have everyone sign the list which includes a waiver of liability clause and permission to use photos taken on the hike for publicity and DVD production.

The leader forms a circle for introductions arranging car pooling to minimize the environmental impact. H(he) provides the hike details and tells the drivers how to get to the trailhead.

The leader instructs hikers to stay behind the leader and ahead of the tail ender, whom the leader appoints that morning.

During the hike, the leader arranges bathroom stops, water breaks, and a suitable lunch spot. S(he) must check the hiking pace frequently and keep in touch with the tail ender to keep everyone together and accounted for.

After the hike the leader extends an invitation to everyone to join in coffee and conversation usually at the nearest place to our meeting point.

After members experience hiking with the Waskahegan Trail Association for awhile leadership will become second nature - just a dance in the woods!

Checklist

1. Consult the guide book for any special landowner requests, historical information and notes on flora and fauna.
2. Scout out the planned route with an experienced member for maintenance required, viability considering weather and exact route. Decide whether the hike should be in and out or a straight route taking into account a distance of approximately 10km to 12km.
3. The morning of the hike, gather a first aid (available from maintenance supplies if required), extra water, sign up - waiver list. Arrive early to greet everyone and have them sign the list. Explain the waiver to newcomers. If necessary, have directions for accessing the trail head from the guidebook or a map to distribute to drivers.
4. Form a circle; introduce yourself and the tail ender. Ask the others in the group to give their first names.
5. Go over any hike details, distance, terrain, wildlife, conditions and route to drive there.
6. Arrange all to car pool reminding everyone that a contribution to the driver's expenses is \$5.
7. Let everyone know that we usually have coffee after the hike and invite everyone to join in.
8. Lead the convoy of cars, making sure all the vehicles are following along the way. Stop at turns in the route if necessary to make sure all the drivers are following.
9. At the trail head allow time for people to get ready. Form a group, adding any cautionary comments and explain about the first separation break.
10. Keep the group intact, stopping for water breaks and changes clothing.
11. Allow time at lunch for all to relax and enjoy lunch and conversation.
12. After lunch, make sure there is a time and place to separate, and breaks are taken as needed in the returning route.
13. Pass the hike list to the Archivist directly or through another board member or by mailing.