



LAKE PLACID OUTING CLUB PARENT LEADERS' PRIMER

NIGHT BEFORE THE TRIP

What can I do/prepare as an adult to anticipate the kids' lack of preparedness?

1. Check weather forecast.
2. Review route by map/guidebook; carry map and compass.
3. Check first-aid kit contents if carrying my own (or check LPOC first-aid kit contents in blue pack at LPES foyer if using a club kit; please plan ahead as **summer school hours are 7:30 to 3:30 Monday through Friday**).
4. Check second-aid kit contents (equipment repair/emergency items--from spare shoelaces to flashlight batteries, etc.).
5. Ample quantity of insect repellent.
6. Supplemental warm clothes item(s) packed in plastic.
7. Spare large garbage bags.
8. Plastic soda bottles filled with water and/or water filter.
9. Even on short day trips, bring first-aid kit, map and compass, and extra supplies.

AT THE LPES PARKING LOT

What can I do to help get us organized and on our way?

1. Check first-aid kit contents (in blue pack in foyer) and replace missing items as needed (also found in blue pack).
2. Borrow map and compass if needed (blue pack).
3. Borrow 46-er trowel (blue pack) both for use and for educational purposes.
4. If using digital camera please record the day and send to Mr. Jeff Pedu for LPOC Archives: jeffpedu@gmail.com.
5. As kids arrive, begin circulating trip sign-up sheets to form trip groups of 12 or fewer including leaders. Occasionally requires forming a second group for an additional destination.
6. As kids arrive and **before their parents leave**, pull their Health Forms/Medical Histories (Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 3:30) from alphabetical order in file (blue pack) and place in plastic zip bag to go in your pack in case of emergency. If this is missing, ask parent to complete 2-sided form (blanks in blue pack, rear of file).
7. Also as kids arrive and before their parents leave, check for proper footwear, personal gear for rain, warmth, etc. May be able to help in some cases (soda bottle filled with water or plastic garbage bag as emergency poncho); in other cases, advise against repeating a mistake (cotton sweatshirt or no insect repellent), or in extreme cases (wearing sandals or lacking bee-sting kit if allergic), may have to send a child home.

GETTING STARTED ON THE TRAIL

Some thoughts about starting out:

1. **Assemble trip group away from traffic areas.** Some trail heads (such as Giant, Pitchoff, Hopkins) or swim stops (such as Chapel Pond) are located right on the edge of high-speed traffic corridors. Get the kids into the woods to adjust packs, etc.
2. Always carry a pack, even with minimal gear, and expect everyone in your group to do the same.
3. Always wear Class III approved PFD when canoeing and kayaking. Our insurance regulations require our canoe parties to have at least one adult certified by BSA in "Safety Afloat" and "Safe Swim Defense," 20 to 30-minute programs are available on BSA website. Complete American Canoe Association participation form, separate file in blue pack.
4. Discuss the day's goals and use map to familiarize/educate group members.
5. Always respect the environment that you travel in and the people that you come in contact with.

The key is "low impact." While first starting out is a good time to clarify some basics:

- A. Two leaders at all times; **the group must be kept together at all times.** One leader acts as "sweep" letting no one behind. Verbal contact between front and back of group. Leader must stop if the group becomes spread out. Place the slowest hiker as the pace setter. "Group dynamics" can spell success or failure. Same principles apply to canoeing or kayaking.
- B. Low impact also refers to noise.
- C. Low impact refers to plants, flowering and otherwise, so walk in the middle of the trail--not on the mosses, grasses, and flowers. **This often means walking in mud.**
- D. Maintain single file on normal-width trails and never pass another member of your party.
- E. Pass oncoming parties to the right or **yield trail to the uphill travelers** when too narrow to pass. In winter this etiquette is reversed, yielding trail to downhill travelers.

THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Some general thoughts when traveling in the woods:

1. Hike at a pace that is slow and steady, not getting you out of breath. Use the "rest step" for steep slopes.
2. Eat high-calorie, tasty foods often (at every stop) and constantly sip water. Repeat to the kids: **"Eat before you're hungry; drink before you're thirsty"**.
3. Try to carry with you all of the water you'll need for the day--or carry a filter or water purification tablets.
4. Teach the "layering" technique for clothing and discourage 100% cotton clothing. Might simply encourage wool sweater or fleece instead of sweatshirt next time.
5. Carry bug repellent and a bug net hat.
6. Urinate 150 feet off a trail and far from water. Defecate by digging a shallow hole with a trowel or boot heel and depositing in there. Remind party members to borrow the 46-er trowel when needed. Offer "separation breaks" for the sexes as a way to discourage restraint due to shyness and encourage all-important drinking. **Dehydration is a very real danger.**
7. Always require an accurate head count before leaving camp or the trail head, after all rest stops, and before leaving the top of a mountain or trail junction.
8. Always point out hazards and establish rules. For example, you may choose to allow some limited "exploring" on a summit but require a "buddy system." You may encounter a wading situation where you also would choose to require a "buddy system" and establish bounds within which everyone must remain. Most of the time you will have to establish rules as you see fit, but let us **please be completely inflexible about our "no head-first diving" and "no rock-throwing" rules.**
9. Repeat the low-impact message throughout the day when appropriate occasions arise:
 - staying on trail or rock surfaces above timberline
 - picking up spilled gorp, etc. at rest stops
 - keeping muddy feet out of lean-tos

- noticing the damage caused by another's lack of judgment can sometimes help deliver the message--for example, holes in lean-to shingling due to another's boots, names carved in logs, trees cut off at hatchet height
- setting an example where feasible--i.e., picking up another's litter is easy and noticeable

NEXT STEPS

Further thoughts for your kids' care and safety:

Some excellent (and brief, to-the-point) texts we would recommend most highly for LPOC

Parent/Leaders for more complete information are:

1. For general leadership principles: AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership by Alex Kosseff.
2. For map reading/navigation: Be Expert with Map & Compass by Bjorn Hjelstrom.
3. For first-aid training the 16-hour Wilderness First-aid (WFA), taught by either Wilderness Medical Associates (WMA) of Bryant Pond, Maine or Stonehearth Open Learning (SOLO) of North Conway, New Hampshire, is unequalled, although both teach more advanced courses as well. This course is available regularly through WMA in our area. Jointly the Adirondack 46ers and LPOC will refund your entire WFA tuition upon completion.
4. For a basic backcountry first-aid text: The Outward Bound Wilderness First-aid Handbook by Jeffrey Isaac.
5. For mountain stewardship: Backwoods Ethics (1979) and Wilderness Ethics (1993) by Laura and Guy Waterman.
6. And the High Peaks Region bible to the trails and routes: Guide to Adirondack Trails, High Peaks Region, Adirondack Mountain Club, edited by Tony Goodwin.

IN CASE OF BACKCOUNTRY EMERGENCIES

It is said that God protects fools and little children. I've come to believe that there is also a clause in there for backpackers. We all have our lists of outdoor "10 Essentials"--so who am I to buck the trend?

The following is my list of first aid "dos" and "don'ts":

1. USE COMMON SENSE to prevent accidents before the fact. Beforehand evaluate: a) strength of group, b) reasonable goals, c) time of day, d) trail conditions.
2. BE PROPERLY EQUIPPED and carry the minimum emergency gear (everyone's idea of minimum is different) and enough food and clothes to spend a typical night out. Being properly equipped may also include hiking with a large enough group (four is considered a safe minimum)
3. BE HUMBLE and don't get summit fever. Monitor and adjust throughout the day and change your plans accordingly.
4. CARRY A FIRST-AID KIT and know how to use it. Take a locally-offered first aid course.
5. ALWAYS LOOK TO YOUR OWN SAFETY first! Don't be a second victim.
6. HAVE EVERYONE BUY INTO SAFETY. Don't just give sets of rules; discuss the reasons why. (Although we need to be completely inflexible about certain rules--i.e., keeping the party together, no head-first diving, no stone throwing--there is more learning happening if we talk about the fatal head injury that occurred at Lake Colden due to stone throwing; the fatal fall on Snowy Mtn. that occurred due to a divided party running down the trail, etc.)
7. NEVER PANIC. Take charge and give everyone something to do.
8. BE SELF-SUFFICIENT. Try to deal with the injury and evacuation on your own first.
9. DON'T OBSESS about what COULD go wrong. People die from falling out of bed at home, remember.
10. ALWAYS ACT WITH CONFIDENCE--even if you are clueless--to inspire calm in others. But remember: first do no harm.

IN THE EVENT OF BECOMING LOST

Water, food, heat and shelter are the basic needs. Fear of the unknown and unfamiliar weakens the ability to think and plan. If trouble arises, keep your group together.