

# Out of Town Hiking Trip Planning Guide, Timeline & Hike Leader Reimbursement Policy

## Planning Guide

(Revised 01/22/2022)

**Overview:** Overnight hiking trips are popular with members of the Grand Hiking Club. They can vary from one to four nights out. Generally, weekends are avoided except for travel to or from the destination. Any club member can plan and organize an out-of-town hiking trip.

**Participation:** Participants must be members of the Grand Hiking Club. Each out-of-town trip is unique. The club's Executive Board will decide prior to each trip whether qualifying guests will be permitted. A qualifying guest on an out-of-town hike is defined as one who is accompanied by a sponsoring member and who pays the appropriate non-member trip fees for each day of hiking. A qualifying guest must be accompanied on all hikes by their sponsoring club member. The sponsoring member shall pay the trip fee for their guest in advance. Trip fee details are explained below.

- Out-of-state multi-night trips timed so that snowbirds can participate enroute typically attract 25-60 participants, depending on timing and venue.
- In-state 1 to 3-night trips attract 25-70 participants.
- The Trip Planner and Hike Director will determine whether an out-of-town trip should have a limit on number of hikers (based on trail restrictions, lodging and available safety equipment).

**Hikes:** Trip Planner and Hike Leaders must offer choices for all skill levels. This could mean:

- One hike with the group divided, each group self-contained with the required safety equipment.
- Three hikes per day, each of different skill levels and each self-contained with the required safety equipment. Hikes planned should include one Easy, one Moderate and one Difficult or Strenuous hike each day. Identify the appropriate number of Hike Leaders.
- The number of Hike Leaders chosen should support three hikes each day of the trip. Hikes planned in areas with a restriction on number of hikers per group may require additional hike leader support. Hike Leaders should not be required to lead hikes each day of the trip.
- Hike Leaders should not be assigned to lead designated Photo Hikes. Those interested in photo hikes should consider joining the daily Easy hike.

**Accommodations:** The Trip Planner will make arrangements with a motel (or several) to set aside a block of rooms under Grand Hikers at a discounted rate.

- General rule of thumb is 15-20 rooms per motel, depending on venue and season.
- Best to get as many 2-bed rooms as possible
- A large breakfast area is best, or breakfast restaurants close by.
- Get permission from motel in advance to use motel space (such as the breakfast room) for club meetings to avoid taking over public space in the motel
- Clarify motel policy on use of guest-provided snacks and alcoholic beverages
- Specify that each room will be reserved and paid for individually
- Get written confirmation of reservation procedure, latest cancellation dates and policies for group meetings.

**Pre-Trip:** If necessary, the Trip Planner and hike leaders will do a pre-trip, checking on mileage, accommodations, restaurants, trailheads, and hikes. Board approval is required for out-of-town trip planning prior to reimbursement of pre-trip planning expenses. Hike Leaders will be asked to report their pre-trip expenses for purposes of an ongoing evaluation of pre-trip actual expenses vs. trip fee levels.

**Pre-Trip Reimbursement Policy:** Hike Leaders identified on the out-of-town hike list who incur pre-trip expenses will be reimbursed from trip fees paid by hikers who have signed up in advance for at least one hike. Trip fees will be determined as follows:

- In-state trips: \$25 per hiker for club members, \$25 per trip hiking days (not days hiked) for guests of members. For example, a three-day hike would cost members \$25 and guests \$75 (even if they only hike one day).
- Out-of-state trips: \$50 per hiker for club members, \$50 per trip hiking days (not days hiked) for guests of members. (See the example above).
- Non-hikers who accompany hikers on the trip but are not participating in club hikes are not required to pay the trip fee.
- Identified trip Hike Leaders will not be required to pay the trip fee.

Trip fees will be collected in advance of the trip for all hikers signed up for one or more of the club hikes. Hikers who have not paid the trip fee by the designated deadline will be notified by the Hike Director that their name will be removed from the advance sign-up list. Trip fees provide reimbursement for trip planning, so there will be no refunds of trip fees for those who sign up and then cancel last minute (medical exceptions will be considered).

The total amount of trip fees collected will be equally divided among the identified trip Hike Leaders. Trip fees will have a net zero effect on the hiking club annual budget. All trip fees collected will be distributed equally to the designated trip Hike Leaders.

Based on historical information, the trip fee revenue generally does not come close to covering all expenses, but rather is meant as a gesture of support for the participating hike leaders.

## **Timeline—General Trip Planning**

### **Up to a YEAR in advance:**

1. Choose a venue and approximate dates (Spring, Fall, etc.)
2. Choose travel days and hiking dates that will not conflict with club meetings such as member meetings, board meetings and social events.
3. Coordinate with local land-use agencies (BLM, NPS, USFS) to determine whether the club will be required to secure a Special Recreation Permit, Letter of Authorization or other agency approval for our hiking plan.
  - Establish point of contact with local agency when possible.
  - Identify any restricted hiking areas
  - Clarify whether there are restrictions on number of hikers
  - Determine timeframe for permit or plan requirements if any
4. Get approval from Hike Director and Grand Hikers Executive Board for venue and approximate dates.
5. Identify additional hike leaders if needed.
6. Write up a general description of the trip. Send to Hike Director to post on website (for in-state hikes, this can be done 3-6 months ahead). Include:
  - location of trip and highlights of area
  - dates (approximate or real) of the trip and a brief description of the plan
  - approximate distance from SCG and car pool/roommate plan

- web links to general information on the venue
- Make arrangements with a motel (or several) to set aside a block of rooms under Grand Hikers at a discounted rate. See guidelines in planning guide above.
- Gather info on:
  - possible hikes (if high elevation, plan a low and slow hike first day)
  - driving distances and road conditions from circle-up location
  - cost of park permits, parking and other probable expenses
  - weather possibilities
  - non-hiker activities
  - restaurants

### **Up to approximately 6 months ahead (less for in-state):**

1. Update the website description with a more detailed trip plan and hike descriptions; send it to the Hike Director to post on the website.
2. Hike Director will create an advance sign-up list on the website to identify those who tentatively plan to participate
3. Call motels to get a count of rooms which have been reserved. Adjust number of available motel rooms as necessary.
4. Begin record keeping:
  - List of people who need riders and who need a ride. Try to get these people in touch with each other.
  - List of people who need a roommate. Try to get these people in touch with each other.
  - Confirmations and correspondence from the motels being used.

### **ONE MONTH before:**

1. Get latest info on road and trail conditions from the local agency - USFS, NPS, BLM, etc.
2. Call motels to get a count of rooms which have been reserved. Notify club members of available motel room status.
3. Make sure all info is updated on website. For hike start times, allow plenty of time for breakfast.
4. Write an email to the membership, reminding them of the last day to reserve at discounted rate and any other updated information. Send to President who will send email to membership.
5. Treasurer and Hike Director will identify those who have signed up but have not paid the trip fee.
6. Hike Director will notify those who have not paid the trip fee that their name(s) will be removed from the hike sign-up lists.

### **PRE-DEPARTURE:**

1. Check weather. If any last-minute changes, send email to membership via the President.
2. Coordinate with Hike Director to obtain hike safety bag(s). Based on estimate of number of hikers, plan on having the following safety equipment.
  - a. At least 3 radios on each hike: 2 on the hike, one extra in leader's pack.
  - b. First aid kit on each hike, 2 for a group of more than 15 hikers.
  - c. Ice Pack for each hike.
  - d. Breathing face mask for each hike.
  - e. SPOT will be assigned to the most difficult hike each day
  - f. Copies of Advance sign-up sheets for each hike.

### **ARRIVAL:**

1. Check with all motels in person to make sure plans are OK.
2. Confirm that Circle Up area is appropriate and approved by motel management.
3. Check weather report and make adjustments if necessary.
4. Prepare for first Circle Up.

## **ON SITE:**

1. Arrange for daily review of next day's hikes by each Hike Leader
2. Be prepared to offer alternate hikes if required by weather or other unforeseen conditions
3. A social hour with refreshments may be scheduled daily if permitted by the motel. Refreshments should be provided by attendees and subsidized by hiker donations. Club funds should not be used for out-of-town social activities.
4. Assist hikers with local activities and dinner plans as required. Help to assure that all participants have a ride to dinner if required.

## **POST TRIP:**

1. Assist the Hike Director with preparation of a post-trip written summary of trip activities, to include:
  - Total number of hikes
  - Total number of hikers and guests on each hike
  - Breakdown of difficulty level of hikes offered
  - Breakdown of trip fees collected
  - Agreement on Hike Leaders to be reimbursed
  - Summary of Hike Leader pre-hike expenses
  - Total number of motel rooms reserved by hikers
  - Feedback on hotel accommodations
  - Recommendations for future trips to the area

## **Timeline—Registration & Trip Fee Administration**

The Trip Planner and Hike Director will establish specific dates for each out-of-town overnight hike based on the following guidelines:

1. Hike list and hike descriptions posted: two to three months in advance of trip
2. Last day to register for trip lodging at the club's block rate: TBD by hotel and Trip Planner
3. Advance sign-up begins for out-of-town trip hikes: one month before trip starts
4. Last day to pay the hiker trip fee: one month before the trip starts
5. Last day to get refund for trip fee if unable to participate: two weeks before the trip
6. Last day to cancel lodging reservation: TBD by hotel and Trip Planner
7. Reimbursement of the trip Hike Leaders who incurred pre-trip expenses: within 30 days after completion of trip

## **Guidelines for reimbursement of pre-trip hiking expenses:**

- The out-of-town overnight Trip Planner will determine the number of Hike Leaders required for their trip and designate which of these Hike Leaders will be asked to participate in pre-trip hike planning
- There will normally be only one group trip planned for pre-hiking. Subsequent trips will not be eligible for additional reimbursement unless authorized in advance by the Trip Planner and Hike Director.
- Each Hike Leader who participates and incurs expenses due to pre-trip hike planning activities will receive an equal share of the trip fee income.
- Spouses/partners who are both designated as hike leaders and who both participate in the pre-trip hike planning will be reimbursed as two individual hike leaders
- Reimbursement is based on participation in pre-trip planning and is not based on the number of hikes led during the trip

- Hike Leaders who lead hikes during the trip but who did not incur pre-hike expenses will not be reimbursed for expenses. However, they will be reimbursed for the cost of the trip fee if they have paid it.
- The decision on which Hike Leaders will be reimbursed for pre-trip expenses is the responsibility of the Trip Planner and should be finalized before the actual hiking trip.
- Deviations from the guidelines should be reviewed with the Hike Director and the Executive Board.
- The Trip Planner will request an estimate of each Hike Leader's mileage and lodging expenses following the pre-trip for use in the evaluation of future trip fee amounts.