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## Thank You for Being a Member of Tennessee Trails Association!

The numerous hiking trails of Tennessee allow you to experience firsthand the beauty and variety of Tennessee's scenery. Tennessee Trails Association (TTA), a nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1968, exists to construct and maintain Tennessee's trails through the Evan Means Grant Program and to promote responsible hiking throughout the state. We are a dynamic volunteer group that attempts to address and respond to the ever-changing needs of Tennessee's trail system. Whether you are a new or a long-standing member of TTA, your voice and your participation are needed to accomplish our goals. We hope our members will use this handbook to increase their enjoyment of Tennessee's natural beauty and to learn about their responsibilities to hike safely and softly.

TTA has local chapters throughout the state of Tennessee, and as a member of TTA, you are invited to participate in all TTA hikes, meetings, and functions.

A statewide **annual meeting** is held in the last quarter of every year. Members are encouraged to attend for a fun weekend devoted to hikes, socializing, and TTA business.

### Communications

Each month, our members receive a copy of the TTA newsletter, *Tennessee Trails*, which contains information on upcoming hikes, trail projects, chapter meetings, and other items of interest to members. Please renew your membership before it expires to avoid missing a newsletter. Members also receive this *Hiking Handbook and Membership Directory*. We also encourage you to visit the TTA - Tennessee Trails Association [Facebook](#) page to connect with other hikers and to learn about the many different events our members enjoy.

TTA maintains a website at [www.tennesseetrails.org](http://www.tennesseetrails.org). The site allows you to:

- Join or renew your membership or prospective members request a complimentary newsletter by navigating to the **To Join!** page.
- Update your current information (name, address, phone number, email).
- View the calendar and find upcoming hikes and events.
- Review past issues of the newsletter.
- Obtain the **Liability Release Form** whenever you serve as a hike leader located under **Member Services**,
- Link to contacts for all chapter representatives and members of TTA's board of directors.
- Learn more about Tennessee's many trails and state parks, including the Cumberland Trail.
- Connect with other hiking organizations in Tennessee and throughout the Southeast.
- Purchase merchandise through **Amazon.com** (TTA benefits by receiving a small commission on each item purchased). Go to the TTA web site and navigate to the **To Buy!** page, then follow the link to the virtual bookstore or click on the **Amazon** link at the bottom of the page. Commissions are earned solely on sales made through the TTA website, so please always enter Amazon.com from the TTA website, Do not sign up for Amazon's one-click service.

The TTA web site is regularly updated with up-coming hikes, chapter blog posts, and other information of interest to members.

## **Evan Means Grant Program**

TTA's board of directors established the Evan Means Grant Program to honor Evan Means, one of the cofounders of TTA and an originator of the Cumberland Trail. Each year, TTA's board awards grant money to support trail work and trail-related projects in Tennessee. Any nonprofit groups (including TTA chapters) may apply for a grant. Grant application forms are available on the TTA web site.

## **Cumberland Trails Conference**

Members are encouraged to support the Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC) with their time, money, and skills. To learn more about the CTC, visit [www.cumberlandtrail.org](http://www.cumberlandtrail.org).

## **Hikers' Responsibilities**

### ***Hike Leaders***

TTA hike leaders are **unpaid volunteers** who give their time to plan, organize, and lead outings. One of the benefits of volunteering to lead a hike is that **you** get to choose your destination. As a hike leader, your preparation before the hike begins, greatly increases the chances of a fun and safe outing. Below are recommendations for both experienced and novice hike leaders.

- Whether the trail is an old favorite or something new, try to scout your hike before the scheduled trip. A scouting trip allows you to master your desired route, familiarize yourself with current trail conditions, choose a suitable lunch spot, and write down travel directions for your drivers. The scouting trip should take place in time for you to write a knowledgeable hike description for the newsletter.
- Write a hike description and send it to your chapter's outings coordinator by the newsletter deadline the month before your hike. Your description should include your name and telephone number; brief highlights of the trail such as waterfalls, scenic overlooks, spectacular wildflower displays, and interesting rock formations; potential trail hazards that are likely to be encountered; post-hike plans (dinner); distance and difficulty. It's not always easy to assess the level of difficulty for every hike. Each of us has our own idea of what constitutes an easy, moderate, or difficult hike. Instead of simply labeling a hike strenuous, explain why it is rated a strenuous hike, for example, "This ten-mile trail is rated strenuous for the 2,000-foot elevation gain in the first two miles."
- You may choose to include the meeting time and place for your hike in your newsletter description. Be aware, however, if you include this information, hikers may not RSVP. Instead, they may show up at the meeting place on the morning of the trip. While this decreases the number of calls you must return, it increases the chance that you may have more hikers than expected and that the unexpected hikers may not be adequately prepared for the hike. This last point is especially true if the hike is rated difficult or strenuous. Also, if you must cancel the hike, these unexpected hikers may be waiting for you at the meeting spot and wondering why you aren't there.

- As the hike leader, you may limit the number of participants based on concern for group safety or as required by park regulations. For example, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park limits backcountry outings to eight participants.
- Prepare clear directions for your drivers. Photocopies of maps help as well as written directions to the trailhead, or you may prefer to direct drivers to a rendezvous point where everyone will regroup and then caravan to the trailhead. This arrangement allows your carpools to make bathroom stops as necessary and avoids the headache of trying to keep multiple cars in sight on long drives.
- Answer calls about your hike as promptly as you can. Always keep a list of participants' telephone numbers in case the hike must be canceled or changed. If your meeting spot is a large parking lot, direct people toward one end of the parking lot, which will make it easier for everyone in your group to find you and to arrange carpools. Tell your callers if you have a rain plan (canceling or changing the route or destination), so that they can decide whether to participate if the weather is bad on the day of the hike.
- Check with everyone to confirm they are physically prepared for the outing—particularly if they are visitors to TTA. If they are new hikers, ask them what trails they have hiked, and try to compare your hike to something they have already done. This approach gives people a more realistic idea of the trail's difficulty rather than just telling them, "There is a lot of hiking up hills." Spend time talking with new people to make sure they have adequate gear, water, and food. If your hike may be beyond someone's ability, suggest another scheduled, more suitable hike.
- On the day of your hike, arrive at the meeting location a few minutes early to greet any early birds. As people arrive, introduce yourself and **have people sign the liability waiver**. Liability waivers are **mandatory** for all TTA outings. Copies of the liability waiver can be obtained from your chapter chair or downloaded from the TTA web site. Once everyone has arrived, form the carpools and have your hikers introduce themselves before everyone drives off.
- Once on the trail, decide if you are going to lead from the front or hike at the rear (**sweep**) of the group. If everyone is following you, assign a seasoned hiker to be the sweep. No one should fall behind the sweep. Even with a sweep, take a headcount on rest breaks. If there are side trails, confusing trail junctions, or false trails, such as old roadbeds or use trails, stop and let people catch up so that they can be directed along the correct route. If you are acting as the sweep, make sure your lead hiker knows the route, and give him or her points along the way for stopping and regrouping. No one should get in front of the person designated as the lead hiker.
- Always watch your fellow hikers for signs of fatigue or other physical problems. If someone appears to be struggling, talk with him or her and assess what can be done to alleviate the problem.
- After the hike, make sure drivers know the return route, invite everyone on another outing, and congratulate yourself on a job done well.
- Occasionally, a hike leader must cancel a hike due to weather or unforeseen and unavoidable personal reasons. If you know in advance of the date that you will be unable to lead the hike, try to find an alternate leader so that the hike can still go on.

Your chapter chair may be able to locate a veteran of that trail. If you must suddenly cancel the hike, contact all your hikers as soon as possible so they can make other plans. If you published your meeting time and location, you might want to swing by that location in case people are waiting for you.

### **Hikers**

Hikers enjoy TTA outings because it gives them a chance to experience the beauty of the outdoors while socializing with old friends and meeting new people. Group hiking is also safer than solo hiking. When you participate in a hike, please keep in mind that your hike leader is there to facilitate the administrative details of the outing and to make decisions to ensure the welfare and safety of the group. **There are risks and responsibilities involved in all outdoor activities. All hikers are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that will promote a safe, successful hike.**

Below are guidelines for safe and courteous hiking on a TTA outing.

- Always RSVP for a hike by contacting the hike leader even if a meeting time and location are published in the newsletter. Responding gives the hike leader an idea of the size of the group and a way to contact you if there is a change in plans. RSVP to the hike leader in a timely manner, preferably not the night before the trip. If you leave a voice message, speak clearly and slowly when leaving your name and telephone number. If the hike leader doesn't return your call in a reasonable amount of time, contact the hike leader again to confirm that your message was received.
- Honestly assess your ability to participate in a hike. If you are unsure, talk with the hike leader and candidly discuss your level of experience. Not only is it discouraging and potentially dangerous to get in over your head on a hike, but you will also affect everyone else's enjoyment of the hike. If you decide a scheduled hike is not for you, don't be discouraged; choose another more suitable hike and work up to the harder trails. You'll thank yourself for starting slowly.
- If you have time constraints on the day of the hike, speak with your hike leader to get an idea of how much time you will need to drive to and from the trail and how many hours the hike will take. It's always wise to add a bit more time as unforeseen trail conditions or slower hikers slow the pace.
- If you don't think you will be able to complete the trip in time, do not go. If you think you might be able to complete the hike but aren't sure, you should drive yourself. Just like you, your fellow hikers want to hike at a comfortable pace and enjoy their time on the trails. You cannot expect your fellow hikers to hike with your schedule in mind.
- Arrive at the meeting place a few minutes early. When you RSVP to a hike, make sure you have accurate directions to the meeting place, and then allow extra travel time in case of road construction or traffic. If you are going to be late, call the hike leader. Depending on the overall time needed for the hike and hours of available daylight, the group may be able to wait a few minutes for you. If you don't call the hike leader with your ETA, you should expect the group to leave at the scheduled departure time.
- TTA does require all hike participants to sign the TTA **liability waiver** to participate in an outing.
- Be prepared with adequate gear, food, and water. Always carry more water and food than you think is necessary. Pack basic first aid supplies, particularly blister kits, bandages, and

the analgesic of your choice. Your clothing should be suitable for the day's weather forecast; it is wise to anticipate inclement weather conditions, and rain gear should be a staple in your pack. Your boots should be sturdy and broken in—**do not wear new boots on hikes**. Bring a map and/or a trail description of your hiking destination.

- When it comes to your pack, bring the essentials items listed at the end of this guide. These are the minimum requirements for every hiker. One of the biggest challenges new hikers face is the temptation to bring too much. **Don't overpack**. Keep your pack weight manageable and remember, you will need to carry your pack for the entire hike. Be self-sufficient when participating in a TTA outing.
- Unless your hike leader has announced otherwise, assume that there will be no breakfast stops on the drive to the trail. It's very time consuming, especially on long trips, for everyone to stop at a fast food restaurant. Do bring money if there will be a post-hike meal.
- If you are a frequent TTA outing participant, take your turn as a carpool driver. If you are a rider, always contribute to the cost of gas. Consider bringing a change of shoes and clothing for your comfort and to protect the driver's upholstery. Grocery bags make great luggage for muddy boots. If you're riding shotgun, assist your driver by reading maps and directions to the trailhead. Help your driver remain alert on the drive home by staying awake and conversing. All participants in a TTA hike must wear seat belts to minimize the risk of injury in case of an accident. The drive to and from a trailhead is generally the most dangerous part of any hiking trip.
- While hiking, observe all trail-etiquette rules. Do not leave the trail unless you have notified another hiker (even for bathroom breaks). Follow your hike leader's instructions and directions. Your hike leader is making decisions based on the group's well-being. You can return on a different day to explore on your own.
- If you are having a problem while hiking (blisters, exhaustion, heat cramps, etc.), tell your hike leader at once. Do not let the problem intensify by trying to ignore it. Chances are the problem can be remedied or at least minimized by timely action.
- Keep pace with the group by staying between the lead hiker and the sweep hiker. If you are a fast hiker, be patient with slower hikers. TTA outings should be enjoyable for everyone, and we have room for different hiking levels.
- Children are our next generation of hikers, and TTA welcomes them on trips that are appropriate to their level of fitness; however, all children must be accompanied by an adult. The accompanying adult is solely responsible for determining whether a trip is appropriate for the child's stamina and interest level and whether the child has the proper clothing, footwear, and gear necessary for the outing. On the trail, the accompanying adult must supervise the child's actions. If you bring a child (of any age), **you only** are responsible for making sure the child follows instructions and is respectful to the hike leader and other hike participants and that the child does not fall behind or leave the group.

## Trail Etiquette

Hikers have a duty to minimize their impact on the trails they walk and the surrounding environment, and TTA supports **Leave No Trace** principles. The following guidelines will ensure that we do our part in maintaining our trails.

- Stay on the established trails. Shortcutting a trail might save you twenty seconds of walking, but it will eventually erode the true trail.
- Try to walk single file in the middle of the trail. Walking single file protects fragile plant life on the sides of the trail. Also, be careful not to stab the edge of a trail with your hiking stick.
- If you packed something in, then you must pack it out. Bring extra zipper storage bags to carry away your trash, leftover food, fruit peels, and so forth.
- Do not wash anything directly in a water source. Carry water away from the water source and, if you must use soap, use biodegradable soap.
- When nature calls, dig a small hole at least six inches deep and well away from the trail and any water. Use biodegradable toilet paper. Cover the hole completely when you are finished or pack your waste out in a zipper storage bag.
- **Do not pick flowers or plants.** Leave them for others to enjoy this season and in the future.
- Seeing wild animals in their natural habitat is part of the fun of hiking, but the saying “a fed animal is a dead animal” is unfortunately true. When you feed wild animals, you teach them that humans are a food source, which makes them less wary of humans, alters their natural behaviors, and increases their vulnerability to injury and death. An instinctive wariness of people is important to a wild animal’s survival.
- When horses approach, hikers must yield the trail by stopping and stepping to the side.
- Please consult with the hike leader before assuming your dog is welcome on a hike. Dogs are not allowed on the trails in many state natural areas and most national parks. If you bring your dog, **you must control your dog at all times** and keep it on a leash. Unrestrained dogs may cause injuries to themselves and to hikers, especially on trails with a steep drop-off. Dogs may also limit the group’s chance to observe wildlife.
- Although we like to socialize, occasionally walk in silence so that we can all enjoy the beautiful sounds of nature.
- Carry an extra trash bag to remove the thoughtless litter of others. Leave the trail in better condition than you found it.
- Follow all rules and regulations established by park officials. If a trail is closed, do not use it. Comply with all permit requirements.

## **Trail Hazards**

Responsible hikers need to be aware of potential hazards when venturing into the wilderness. With a little knowledge and adequate preparation, you can avoid almost all mishaps on the trail. The following tips address several of the most common hazards hikers face.

### **Black Bears**

Black bears are native to Tennessee and can be found throughout the eastern part of the state, and there have been recent, but rare, sightings in Middle Tennessee. Black bears will generally shy

away from human contact, and if you see one on the trail, it is usually a fleeting glimpse of a bear running away from you; however, black bears are opportunistic foragers that are attracted to food smells, and their size makes them potentially dangerous.

If you are camping in an area populated by bears, **never** leave your food unattended—even in a civilized campground. Store your food in a bear-proof locker provided by the campground or in the trunk of your car. **Never store food in your tent.** If you are backpacking, cook away from your tent site and clean up any dropped food so that no appetizing smells linger after your meal is finished. If bear-proof pulley systems are available (like in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park), use them to hang your food (as well as your cooking gear and anything with a scent) at night and during the day if you are even briefly away from your campsite or backpack. If no pulley system is available, bring adequate rope to suspend your food between two trees or carry bear-proof food canisters.

Depending on your comfort level, you may want to carry a whistle and/or bear spray when hiking in bear territory during the spring, summer, and fall. If you see a bear, do not approach it and do not offer it any food. If the bear does not immediately retreat, blow your whistle, make loud noises, shake your hiking stick, and throw rocks if you must. Make yourself look and sound like you're higher on the food chain than the bear. In the highly unlikely event that a black bear attacks you, fight back with your bear spray, hiking stick, or any available object. Running away will make you look like prey, and even a three-legged bear can climb a tree faster than you can. Immediately report any bear incidents to park authorities.

### ***Blisters***

Properly fitted hiking boots are necessary to prevent blisters. Have your boots fitted by a trained professional and then break the new boots in before your first hike. A rule of thumb is to walk fifty miles in them before you consider them trail-ready. Hiking socks made of wool or synthetic fibers also help prevent blisters by wicking moisture from your feet. A pair of synthetic liners worn under your socks will help the wicking process. Always carry some moleskin and apply it at the first sign that you may be forming a blister.

### ***Getting Lost***

**Always carry a trail map.** Be familiar with your route before you start the hike and orient yourself along the trail by consulting the map along the way. Stay with your hiking group, and let others know if you must leave the trail for any reason, including bathroom breaks. Stopping at all trail junctions and confusing intersections allows the group to reassemble and ensures everyone takes the correct path. If you become separated or lost, stay on the trail and don't panic. Professional rescuers always search established trails first. Hiking cross-country will only hinder anyone searching for you. Carry a whistle, which you can blow to alert others to your location.

### ***Hunting Season***

State natural areas, national parks, and some privately owned lands forbid hunting. However, hunting is generally allowed in national forests, national recreation areas, and some state parks. Find out when hunting seasons begin and end before you venture into the woods. Consider rescheduling your hike if it falls during hunting season. If you do hike during hunting season, wear as much international orange as you can.

### ***Heat-Related Ailments***

With Tennessee's warm summers, hikers need to be particularly aware of heat-related emergencies, which typically begin with cramps and can quickly lead to heat stroke and possible death. Avoid

heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke by drinking a lot of fluid while hiking in warm weather. Drink before you feel thirsty. Always pack more water than you think you will need. Wear light-colored clothing to minimize solar heat. Take breaks in the shade (or a dip in a creek) to cool down.

The following conditions are signs and symptoms of heat-related emergencies:

**Cramps:** nausea; vomiting; muscle cramps, spasms, or pain; dizziness; exhaustion; sweating

**Exhaustion:** pale, moist or flushed skin; weakness; headache or dizziness; cramps; sweating; feeling faint

**Stroke:** high body temperature; fainting; dizziness; seizure; nausea and vomiting; cramps

In a heat-related emergency, immediate hydration, rest, and cooling are needed to prevent serious health issues.

### ***Hypothermia***

Hypothermia is a lowered, core body temperature that leads to rapid physical and mental collapse. If left untreated, it can result in death. Most cases of hypothermia occur between 30° and 50° Fahrenheit, but it can occur at warmer temperatures if a person is exposed to wind or water. You are more prone to hypothermia if you become exhausted or dehydrated.

Although hypothermia is the leading killer of outdoor recreationists, the good news is that it is preventable. Wear clothing made of synthetic fibers such as polypropylene, polyester fleece, nylon, and capilene, that insulate your body from cool air while wicking perspiration from your skin. Layer your clothes so that you can remove a layer when you are perspiring and add a layer when you stop hiking. Always carry rain gear and a hat. Know your limits and take adequate rest breaks so that you do not become exhausted. Drink plenty of fluids and eat plenty of food to provide your body with the fuel it needs to generate heat.

### ***Phones***

Although many of our hiking destinations are too remote for cell phone usage, carrying a cell phone or a satellite phone may be helpful in an emergency. To preserve your phone's battery life and enjoy the sounds of nature, please turn off your cell phone during a hike unless it is being used for emergency purposes. If using as a camera. Putting in airplane mode can save battery life.

### ***Poison Ivy***

Poison ivy, which contains an irritating resin called urushiol, is common along Tennessee's trails. While poison ivy is a well-recognized summer hazard, it's wise to remember that it does not lose its potency in winter. Learn to identify poison ivy's three-leafed shape and avoid touching it (or anything that comes in contact with it, such as your pack, hiking sticks, and boots). Carry alcohol wipes with you to clean any areas that have touched poison ivy. Wearing long pants and changing your clothes after a hike will minimize exposure. Wash well with soap and water after hiking. Launder your hiking clothes as soon as possible after exposure to poison ivy.

### ***Slips and Falls***

Always wear hiking boots with good tread to provide traction on slick or uneven terrain. Hiking sticks will also help you maintain your balance. Assume that rocks may be slick or unstable until proven otherwise. Try not to leap or jump onto or down from rocks. Do not venture close to the edge of a waterfall. Keep a body's length away from the edges of bluffs. Help each other across unbridged

water crossings and bring water shoes to give you good traction on slimy rocks. If the water looks too swift or deep, find another place to ford or come back on a drier day.

### **Snakes**

Snakes are a beneficial part of the wilderness food chain. Snakes do not lurk trailside waiting for a juicy ankle to pass by, and hikers rarely see them. However, if a snake feels threatened by a big hiking boot or an outstretched hand, it may strike out defensively. Always watch where you are placing your feet and hands. Thick socks, ankle-high boots, long pants, and gaiters provide extra protection. If you see a snake while hiking, alert other hikers, admire it from a distance, and then move on.

Recognize the *snake weather* you are hiking in and be alert for snakes' potential hangouts. On hot days, snakes will cool themselves by lying under rocks, logs, and leaf cover. On cool days, snakes will seek warm areas such as sunny spots and warm rocks. Hikers rarely encounter snakes on winter days.

### **Stinging Insects**

Bees, wasps, and yellow jackets are usually preoccupied with earning a living, and they take little notice of hikers. Yellow jackets, however, tend to be aggressive, especially during the fall months, so give them a wide berth. Watch out for yellow jacket holes on or near the trail. If you are stung and the stinger is still embedded in your skin, remove the stinger immediately. If you are mildly stung, apply a local bee sting anesthetic. If you are severely or repeatedly stung, begin first aid treatment, including the administration of an antihistamine such as Benadryl or Claritin. Occasionally, people will have a life-threatening reaction to stings. If you know you are severely allergic to bee stings, consult with your doctor **before** you begin hiking, **always carry a prescribed antidote**, and alert your hike leader to your condition.

### **Ticks**

During warm months, ticks can attach to hikers' clothes or body as the hikers walk through grassy or brushy areas. Insect repellent sprayed on the skin or Permethrin sprayed only on clothes will deter ticks; however, you should check yourself if you have been walking through tick-infested areas. Ticks are easier to spot on light-colored clothing, and long pants will help keep ticks off your legs. If a tick has attached itself to you, remove it by grasping it as close to your skin as possible with tweezers or press an alcohol-soaked cotton ball against the tick until it detaches. Try not to crush or squeeze the tick's body during removal. If you develop any swelling or redness at the bite area, see a doctor to rule out any tick-borne diseases.

### **Trailhead Vandalism**

Unfortunately, thieves are well acquainted with isolated trailhead parking areas where cars may be left unattended for long periods. If you have heard that a parking area has a reputation for vandalism and theft, call the local authorities or park officials before you leave cars in the area—particularly if you are parking overnight. Take your wallet with you when hiking and never leave anything of value in your vehicle in plain view, or, better still, leave valuables at home. If you see broken glass in the parking area, you may want to reconsider your hiking plans. If your car is vandalized, always report it to the local authorities and park officials so that they can increase the surveillance of that area. Report any problems to your chapter chair so that other hikers can be alerted to a potential trouble spot.

### **Waterborne Ailments**

*Giardiasis* is one of many waterborne diseases that you can contract from drinking untreated

water. It is a diarrheal disease caused by the microscopic parasite *giardia*. Giardia is found in every region of the U.S. Wherever there are animals or humans, there is the potential for giardia to exist. To protect yourself from giardiasis, experts recommend you filter, boil, or chemically treat **all** water obtained in the wilderness. Water coming from a cave or spring can contain giardia.

*Leptospirosis*, considered the most common zoonosis in the world, is a bacterial disease that affects humans and animals. The disease is increasingly associated with activities involving fresh water, mud, or soil exposure such as swimming, wading, kayaking, and rafting in contaminated lakes and rivers. As such, it is a recreational hazard for people who participate in outdoor sports in tropical or temperate climates. In humans, it can cause a wide range of symptoms, some of which may be mistaken for other diseases. Leptospirosis can be fatal if left untreated.

## **Dealing with Emergencies on the Trail**

We rarely have serious emergencies on TTA outings, but there are inherent risks involved when hiking in the wild. This guide does not provide medical procedures that cover every emergency scenario. Instead, it provides suggestions on preparation and prevention as well as how to proceed if something does go wrong.

All TTA hikers are encouraged to take a course in first aid and CPR. There are also many pocket-sized books you can carry in your pack that give basic instructions for dealing with wilderness emergencies. In the end, your success in an emergency will depend on your knowledge, preparation, common sense, and improvisation when dealing with the situation at hand.

### ***Preparation and Prevention***

Everyone can reduce the chance of an emergency by being adequately prepared for the hike. Do not attempt hikes that are too difficult for your physical abilities. Dress appropriately for the weather, but also anticipate more extreme weather than forecast. Carry plenty of fluids and food. All hikers should pack basic first aid supplies such as bandages, analgesics, insect sting preparations, and so forth. Everyone should carry a working flashlight or headlamp with fresh batteries. If you have a chronic health concern (e.g., insulin-controlled diabetes) or a potential emergency health problem (e.g., a severe allergy to bee stings), please carry the medicine needed to correct or regulate the problem and **alert** the hike leader to your condition and the location of your medicine before starting the hike.

If there is an emergency and your cell phone will not pick up a signal at the scene of the problem, it may work if it is carried further up the trail or to the top of a ridge.

Ideally, hike leaders will be familiar with shortcuts along the trail and alternative trails in case an injured hiker needs to be evacuated.

Help each other along the trail. Help less sure-footed hikers over obstacles and across water fords. If you are the first hiker to encounter a potentially dangerous situation, for example, slick rocks or yellow jacket holes, stop and alert the hikers behind you. Don't let them discover trail hazards the hard way. If you suspect someone is struggling to complete the hike, tell the hike leader. If there is an emergency, step up and do whatever you can to help make the best of a bad situation.

## **Trail Essentials**

### ***Don't Leave Home Without Them!***

Before you head out on the trail, check your pack to be sure it contains the following essential

items that every hiker should have and customize this list to meet your personal needs.

For your safety, health, and comfort

- Whistle
- Water, and a way to purify it
- Extra food
- Rain gear and extra clothing (socks, sweaters)
- Hat and sunglasses—especially for hikes above tree line

For finding your way

- Map
- Compass
- GPS
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries and bulb

For emergencies

- First aid kit including moleskin, antibiotic ointment, mirror, antihistamines, anti-inflammation medicines, personal medicines, space blanket
- Matches or lighter
- Personal locator beacon
- Cell or satellite phone

In addition to the trail essentials listed above, consider including the following items on your list of must-haves.

- Hiking poles
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Toilet tissue
- Trowel
- Twine or rope
- Sandals or water shoes for stream crossings

Remember to share your hiking plans with friends or family members. Be sure to list the trails you plan to hike, any alternate trails or day hikes you are considering, and when you expect to be back from your hike. Most important of all, always use common sense.

### ***Serious Emergencies***

To the best of your ability, assess the injury or ailment and apply basic first aid. If the injured person can walk out without professional assistance, allow the injured person to set the pace on the return trip. Ask what you can do to make the injured person's progress more comfortable. Relieve the injured person of his or her pack and make sure you take plenty of rest breaks.

If it becomes apparent that professional assistance is necessary, attempt to summon help with a cell (or satellite) phone. If you don't have a phone or it isn't working, send a minimum of two people for help. Preferably one or more of these people will be familiar with the route back to the car; if they do not know the way, make sure they carry a map with them. They can also carry a phone to see if it will work at a different location along the trail. While that group is going for assistance, try to make the injured person as comfortable as possible. If this is not a heat-related emergency, keep the person warm and dry. If this is a heat-related emergency, move the person to a shady spot. Apply cool, wet cloths to the face, neck, and underarms. If a stream or creek is nearby, cool the person in the water.

Everyone should stay calm and try to contribute to the rescue effort in any manner possible.

### **Thank you for your support of Tennessee Trails Association!**

Please make this your organization by volunteering your time, talents, and participation. But most of all get out there and hike.

### ***Is your membership up for renewal?***

Consider renewing online. It's easy, convenient, and ensures that your personal information is current and correct.

Your mailing label or electronic newsletter contains your membership expiration date. To avoid any interruption with delivering your newsletter, we ask that you renew **at least one month before the date shown**. When you renew before the expiration date, your membership will be extended twelve months from your current expiration date.

### ***Become a supporting member. Your generosity benefits all!***

When you renew your Tennessee Trails Association membership, you have the opportunity to become a supporting member by donating a little (or a lot) above the required dues. Your tax-deductible supporting member donations benefit trail projects throughout the state of Tennessee.

## Membership Directory

### Uh-oh . . .

Are there changes or corrections that need to be made to your listing?

Here's how to make them:

- On the internet: Visit our website, [www.tennesseehills.org](http://www.tennesseehills.org), navigate to Member Services, Address Change, select and complete Address Change Form.
- By email: Send an email to our membership director at [membership@TennesseeHills.org](mailto:membership@TennesseeHills.org). Be sure to note the type of change you are requesting in the subject line of the email. Include your name along with the changes you are requesting.
- By phone: Call TTA's membership director. The membership director's phone number is listed on the inside back page of each monthly newsletter.