

Tennessee Trails Association

Hiking Handbook



Tennessee Trails Association
P.O. Box 41446
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Congratulations on becoming a member of Tennessee Trails Association!

The state of Tennessee is blessed with a dramatic diversity of landscape, flora and fauna. East Tennessee offers the majestic Great Smoky Mountains and the impressive waterfalls and rock formations of the Cumberland Plateau. Middle Tennessee contributes rolling hills, hardwood forests and beautiful rivers. The coastal plains and river valleys of Western Tennessee provide habitats for numerous migrating birds and unique plant-life.

Four distinct seasons insure that you never hike the same trail twice. Spring brings stunning wildflower displays to all of Tennessee's geological regions. In summer, the creeks and rivers will invite you to escape the heat. The many colors of our hardwood forests are a delight in autumn. The relatively mild Tennessee winters allow us to view fascinating rock formations hidden during the greener seasons.

The numerous hiking trails of Tennessee allow you to experience firsthand the beauty and variety of Tennessee's scenery. TTA exists to construct and maintain these trails 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 long-standing member, your voice and participation are needed to accomplish our goals. We hope our members will use this handbook to learn about the mechanics of our organization and their individual responsibilities to hike safely and softly.

Happy Hiking!

Tennessee Trails Association (TTA), a nonprofit, charitable organization was founded in November 1968. The original members of TTA concentrated primarily on developing a statewide network of hiking trails in Tennessee. As of August 2006, TTA boasts more than eight hundred members distributed among fourteen chapters. Our members continue to build and maintain hiking trails, and on any given weekend, numerous recreational hikes are being enjoyed by its members and visitors throughout Tennessee.

ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIP

There are five TTA membership classifications: Individual, Family, Student (full-time students enrolled in college or high school), Supporting (for those donating extra money to support TTA's projects) and Life Member (Individual and Family). Dues from Life Members are invested to further TTA's charitable purposes. The excess money received from Supporting Member donations is allocated to the Evan Means Small Grants Program. Except for Life Members, each membership is valid for twelve months from the date of joining. Members may elect to join a local chapter or to remain unaffiliated if there is no chapter located near them.

LOCAL CHAPTERS

As of this printing, TTA is composed of fourteen local chapters: Big South Fork (Rugby), Clarksville, Columbia, Cove Lake, East Tennessee (Oak Ridge/Knoxville), Highland Rim (Tullahoma/Manchester), Jackson, Memphis, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Northwest (Martin), Plateau (Crossville), Soddy Daisy and Upper Cumberland (Sparta/Cookeville). Each chapter is administered by a locally elected chairman who also serves as its representative to the statewide TTA Board of Directors. Chapters may elect other officers as are necessary. Meeting times and locations vary by chapter, and an updated list can be found in the TTA monthly newsletter, *Tennessee Trails*.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

According to the TTA Bylaws, the Board of Directors is composed of: a representative from each local chapter, a representative from the East Tennessee, Middle Tennessee and Western Tennessee regions, a representative from each associate organization, the two immediate past presidents and the state officers - president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and membership director.

The Board of Directors meets quarterly. Meeting locations vary, but the fourth quarterly meeting is held at the TTA Annual Meeting where officers are elected for the coming year. All TTA members are welcome and encouraged to attend Board meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS

TTA maintains a website at www.tennesseetrails.org. Our website contains: an updated calendar of chapter outings and events, schedules of chapter meeting times and locations, a Change of Address form, a form for prospective members to request a complimentary newsletter, a page to sell new and used gear, a link to buy merchandise from Amazon.com (a portion of all sales is returned to TTA), a form to sign up for TTA's list server, and links for contacting all chapter representatives and members of TTA's Board of Directors.

Each month members receive a copy of ***Tennessee Trails*** containing information on upcoming hikes, trail projects, chapter meetings and other items of interest to the membership. The mailing label on your newsletter shows your membership expiration date. Please renew before your yearly membership expires to avoid missing a newsletter. Each year members receive an updated Membership Directory listing the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all current members. Address changes may be made via the Tennessee Trails website (www.tennesseetrails.org).

Prospective members may call toll free 1-866-TN-HIKES (1-866-864-4537) for general information and to request a complimentary newsletter. The Nashville chapter maintains a Hiking Hotline at (615) 367-7045 listing its monthly hikes and outings.

ANNUAL MEETING

A statewide Annual Meeting is held in the last quarter of every year. The privilege of hosting the Annual Meeting rotates among the local chapters so the location will vary yearly. Every member is encouraged to attend for a fun weekend devoted to hikes and TTA business.

EVAN MEANS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

In February 1999, TTA's Board of Directors established the Evan Means Small Grants Program to honor Evan Means, one of the co-founders 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 non-profit group (including TTA chapters) may apply for a grant. Grant application forms may be obtained by contacting the current TTA president.

ASSOCIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Upon approval of the TTA Board of Directors, a group of TTA members can form an Associate Organization to address a very specific trail or hiking issue. An external group whose mission supports TTA's mission may also become a TTA Associate Organization, upon approval of the Boards of Directors of both organizations. If an Associate Organization elects to become a membership organization, its members are also considered members of TTA. Currently there are two Associate Organizations: the Cumberland Trail Conference (which was formed within TTA) and the Tennessee Rails-Trails Advisory Council (which was formed externally).

Cumberland Trail Conference - CTC was formed in 1997 and is based in Crossville. Its purpose is to preserve the cultural and historical heritage of Tennessee, to conserve natural resources and to provide educational and recreational opportunities through the development and completion of the Cumberland Trail State Park - Tennessee's first linear state park. When completed, the Cumberland Trail will be a 280+ mile greenway stretching from its northern terminus at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park at the Tennessee/Kentucky/Virginia border all the way across Tennessee to its southern terminus within a few feet of the Georgia border near Chattanooga.

The Cumberland Trail is being built entirely by volunteers. CTC sponsors several unique and rewarding trail-building programs - most notably the Cumberland Trail BreakAway Program. Every March, CTC hosts college students from around the country as they spend their spring breaks building new trail, revitalizing existing segments and learning about the conservation of our natural resources. Other national volunteer programs include American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacations and Elderhostel.

Over a hundred miles of the Cumberland Trail are already open, but work is ongoing in many areas. CTC must arrange for the purchase of proposed trail corridor via private and corporate donations as well as by grant applications. CTC also sponsors trail training workshops to educate volunteers on how to build and maintain trails. There are several Backcountry Outings offered every year where seasoned and novice volunteers hike/backpack onto the Cumberland Trail to complete a specific project. Finally CTC is actively developing local leadership to insure permanent protection of natural areas along the trail corridor.

Everyone is welcome to get involved! You can learn more about upcoming volunteer opportunities, the Adopt-A-Trail program and current fundraising projects in ***Tennessee Trails*** and CTC's newsletter, ***The Cumberland Trail***, as well as on their website: www.cumberlandtrail.org.

Tennessee Rails-Trails Advisory Council - TRAC's mission is "to advocate the planning, development and management of rail-trails throughout the State of Tennessee for the purposes of appropriate recreation, preservation of rail corridors and alternate transportation, in order to benefit the general public, communities, commerce and tourism." TRAC utilizes the National Trails System Act to "railbank" abandoned railroad lines so that they may be preserved for future recreational use.

Currently TRAC is being reorganized because its primary leadership moved out of state. We hope TRAC will be revitalized soon with a new generation of leaders.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIKERS

HIKE COORDINATORS

TTA Hike Coordinators are not paid professionals. They are hikers who are volunteering their time to plan and organize outings. However, a Hike Coordinator's preparation greatly increases the chances for a fun and safe outing. Below are recommendations for both experienced and novice Hike Coordinators.

- One of the privileges of volunteering to coordinate a hike is that YOU get to choose your destination. 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 travelling 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 hiking coordinator by the newsletter deadline a month before your trip. Your description should include: your name and telephone number, brief highlights of the trail (e.g. waterfalls, scenic overlooks, spectacular wildflower displays, etc.), any potential trail hazards that are likely to be encountered, post-hike plans (dinner), distance and difficulty. It's not always easy to assess the difficulty level of every hike. Everyone has his own idea of what constitutes an easy, moderate or difficult hike. Instead of simply labeling a hike "strenuous," explain why it is rated strenuous. For example, "This 10 mile trail is rated strenuous for the 2000 foot elevation gain in the first 2 miles."
- You may choose to include the meeting time and place for your hike in your newsletter description. If you include this information, hikers may not RSVP by calling you even though they should ALWAYS call. Instead they may simply show up at the meeting place on the morning of the trip. While this decreases the amount of calls you have to return, it also increases the chance that someone will not be prepared for your hike, especially if it is rated difficult. Also, if you must cancel the hike, unanticipated people may be at the meeting spot wondering what happened.
- As the hike coordinator, 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 back country outings to eight participants.
- Prepare clear directions for your drivers. Photocopies of maps can really help. You may want to give drivers directions all the way to the trailhead, or you may prefer to direct them 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 cancelled or changed. If your meeting spot is a large parking lot, direct people towards one end so that hikers are not parked in all four corners. Tell your callers if you have a rain plan (canceling or changing the route or destination), so that they can make a decision whether to participate if the weather looks rotten on the day of the hike.
- Talking to people will help determine whether 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, "Oh, there's a lot of uphill." Spend time talking to new people to make sure they have adequate gear, water and food. If someone decides your hike may be beyond his ability, suggest another scheduled hike better suited to his level.
- On the morning of your trip, try to 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 Chairman or downloaded from the TTA web site. Help form the carpools. Have your hikers introduce themselves (in circle form) before everyone drives off. It's embarrassing to sit in a car for two hours without knowing your driver or riders' names.
- On the trail, decide if you are going to lead from the front or the rear. If everyone is following you, try to assign a seasoned hiker to be the "sweep." No one should fall behind this person. Even with a sweep, take a headcount on rest breaks. If there are side trails, confusing trail junctions or false trails (e.g. old roadbeds), stop and let people catch up so that they can be directed along the correct route. If you are leading from the rear as the sweep hiker, make sure your lead hiker knows the route, and give him/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 to him and assess what can be done to alleviate the problem.
- After the hike, be sure drivers know the return route. Invite everyone on another outing. Congratulate yourself on a job done well.
- Occasionally hikes must be cancelled 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 trip can still go on. Your chapter chairman may be able to locate a veteran of that particular trail. If you must suddenly cancel the hike or the weather is nasty, call all your hikers as soon as possible so they can make other plans for the weekend. If you published your meeting time and location, you may want to swing by in case there are unexpected people waiting.

HIKE PARTICIPANTS

Hikers enjoy TTA outings because they give 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 hiking solo. However, there are risks and responsibilities involved in all outdoor activities. Hike Coordinators are there to facilitate the administrative details of an outing and to make decisions consistent with the welfare of the group. **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 by calling the Hike Coordinator even if a meeting time and location are published in the newsletter. This gives the Hike Coordinator an idea of the size of the group, and he/she will be able to call you if there is a change in plans. Call at a reasonable hour, preferably not the night before the trip. Speak clearly and slowly when leaving your name and telephone number on an answering machine. If the Hike Coordinator doesn't return your call in a reasonable amount of time, give him the benefit of the doubt and call again. Answering machines occasionally garble and eat messages.
- Honestly assess your ability to participate in a hike. If you are unsure, talk with the Hike Coordinator and candidly discuss your level of experience. Not only is it very discouraging and potentially dangerous to get in over your head on a hike, you will also be inconveniencing everyone else on the trip. If you decide this 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 out slowly.
- If you have tight time constraints on the day of the hike, you probably should not go or you should at least drive yourself. Hike Coordinators are not responsible for herding everyone along to meet your deadline. It's not fair to rush everyone else along the trail because you have plans for the afternoon or evening. Unforeseen trail conditions can also slow a hike's pace.
- Arrive at the meeting place on time. When you RSVP a hike, make sure you have accurate directions to the meeting place, and then allow yourself extra traveling time in case of road construction or traffic. Hike Coordinators are not obligated to wait around wondering if you are showing up.
- If you do not sign the TTA Liability Waiver, you cannot participate in the outing. These waivers are mandatory for all participants.
- Be prepared with adequate gear, food and water!! Your clothing should be suitable for the weather forecasted for the day, but you should always anticipate more extreme weather conditions. Rain gear should be a staple in your pack. Your boots should be sturdy and broken in. **DO NOT WEAR NEW BOOTS ON HIKES.** 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. It's always a good idea to bring along a map and/or trail description of your hiking destination.

This is only a beginner's list of the minimum requirements for every hiker. Remember that the Hike Coordinator is not the group's gear sherpa. Be self-sufficient when participating in a TTA outing.

- Unless your Hike Coordinator 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.
- Take your turn as a carpool driver. If you are a rider, always contribute to the cost of gasoline. Consider bringing a change of shoes and clothing for your comfort and to protect the driver's upholstery. Grocery bags make nice "luggage" for muddy boots. Your driver is not a chauffeur. Assist him by reading the map and/or 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 the "trail etiquette" rules (page 10). Do not leave the trail unless you have notified another hiker (even for bathroom breaks). Follow your Hike Coordinator's instructions and directions. He/She is making decisions based on the group's welfare. 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 Coordinator 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 up with the group's pace, by staying between the lead hiker and the sweep hiker. Don't feel like you must always stay at the front of the pack. If you are a fast hiker, be patient with hikers who do not travel as fast as you. 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 all trips that are appropriate to their level of fitness. However, all children must be accompanied on all outings 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. Hike coordinators and other participants are not babysitters.

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Get Outside Yourself

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Hikers have a duty to minimize their impact on the trails they walk and the surrounding environment, and TTA is a corporate non-profit member of the Leave No Trace organization. The following guidelines will ensure that we do our part to maintain our trails.

- Stay on the established trails. Shortcutting a trail might save you 20 seconds of walking but will eventually erode the true trail.
- Try to walk single file in the middle of the trail. This 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 have packed it in, then you must pack it out. Bring extra zipper storage bags to carry away your trash, leftover food, fruit peels, etc.
- Do not wash anything directly in a water source. Carry water away from the creek, etc. and use biodegradable soap.
- When nature calls, dig a cat hole at least 6 inches deep and well away from the trail and any water. Use biodegradable toilet paper. Cover it completely when you are through or pack it out in a Ziploc bag.
- DO NOT PICK FLOWERS OR PLANTS. Leave them for others to enjoy this season and in the future.
- Observe wildlife, but do not feed them. Feeding animals teaches them that humans are a food source and eventually destroys their natural behavior patterns.
- When horses approach, hikers must yield the trail by stopping and stepping to the side.
- Please consult with the Hike Coordinator before assuming your dog is welcome on a trip. Dogs are not allowed on the trails in some state natural areas or most national parks. If you bring your dog, it must be controlled at all times. No one likes an unrestrained dog pushing past them, 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 all can 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 problems when venturing into the wilderness. Almost all mishaps on the trail can be avoided with a little knowledge and adequate preparation.

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 dryer day.

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 30-50 degrees fahrenheit, but it can occur at warmer temperatures if a person is exposed to wind and/or water. You are more prone to hypothermia if you become exhausted or dehydrated. Although hypothermia is the leading killer of outdoor recreationalists, the good news is that it is preventable.

Wear clothing made of synthetic fibers (polypropylene, polyester fleece, nylon, capilene, etc.) that will insulate your body from cool air while wicking away 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 so that you do not become exhausted on a hike and take adequate rest breaks. Drink plenty of fluids and eat plenty of food to provide your body with the fuel it needs to generate heat.

HEAT RELATED AILMENTS

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.

BLISTERS

Properly fitted hiking boots are absolutely necessary to prevent blisters. Have your boots fitted by a trained professional, then break the new boots in before your first hike. A rule of thumb is to walk 50 miles in them before you consider them trail-ready. Hiking socks made of wool or synthetic fibers also prevent blisters by wicking away moisture from your feet. A pair of synthetic liners worn under your socks will also help the wicking process. Always carry some moleskin, and apply it at the first sign that you may be forming a blister.

SNAKES

Snakes are part of the wilderness food chain. They do not lurk trailside waiting for a juicy ankle to pass by. We rarely see them. However, if they feel threatened by a big hiking boot or an outstretched hand, even non-venomous snakes may strike out defensively. If you see a snake while hiking, alert other hikers, admire it from a distance, and then move on.

Recognize what kind of "snake weather" you are hiking in, and be alert for their potential hangouts. On hot days, cold-blooded snakes will cool themselves by lying under rocks, logs and leaf cover. On cool days, they will seek warm areas such as sunny spots and warm rocks. They are virtually non-existent on winter days. Always watch where you are placing your feet and hands. Thick socks, ankle-high boots, long pants and gaiters provide extra protection.

BEARS

Black bears are native to Tennessee and can be found in eastern Tennessee from the Big South Fork to the Great Smoky Mountains. Generally they shy away from human contact, and if you see one on the trail, it is usually a fleeting glimpse of a bear running from you. However, they are opportunistic foragers who 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 for a moment – even in a "civilized" campground. Store your food in the trunk of your car – never 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 done. If bear 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) not only at night, but also when you are even briefly away from your backpack. If no pulley systems are available, bring adequate rope to hang your food suspended between two trees or carry bear-proof food canisters.

Depending on your comfort level, carry a whistle and/or bear spray when hiking in bear territory during spring, summer and fall. If you see a bear, do not approach it, and do not offer any food handouts. If the bear does not immediately retreat, blow your whistle, make loud noises, shake your hiking stick, throw rocks if you must – basically make yourself look and sound like you're higher on the food chain than the bear. In the highly unlikely event that a bear actually attacks, 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 twice as fast as you can. Report any bear incidents to park authorities immediately.

TICKS

During warm months, ticks can attach to a hiker's clothes or body as he passes through grassy/brushy areas. Insect repellent sprayed on the skin or Permethrin sprayed only on clothes will deter the critters. However, you should check yourself if you have been walking through tick-infested areas. Light colored clothing makes them easier to spot. Long pants help keep ticks off your legs. If one has attached, remove it by grasping it with tweezers as close to your skin as possible. Try not to crush or squeeze the tick's body during removal. If you develop any type of swelling or redness at the bite area, see a doctor to rule out any tick-borne diseases.

STINGING INSECTS

Bees, wasps and yellow jackets are usually preoccupied with earning a living and take little notice of hikers. Yellow jackets, however, tend to become ornery in the fall months, so give them a wide berth. Watch out for yellow jacket holes on or near the trail. 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 Benedryl. Occasionally, people will have a life-threatening reaction to stings. If you know you are severely allergic to bee stings, consult your doctor **before** you begin hiking and **always** carry a prescribed antidote. Alert your Hike Coordinator to your condition.

POISON IVY

Poison ivy contains an irritating resin called urushiol, and it is quite common along Tennessee's trails. Learn to identify its three-leafed shape, and do your best to avoid touching it directly or anything that has come in contact with it (your pack, hiking stick, etc.) even in winter. 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.

WATERBORNE AILMENTS

Giardia is one of many waterborne diseases that you can contract from drinking untreated water. Where there are animals or humans, there is potential for giardia. In Tennessee, experts recommend you filter, boil or chemically treat **all** water obtained in the wilderness. Water coming from a cave or spring can still contain giardia.

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. Trying to wander cross-country will only inhibit 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 the hunting seasons occur before you venture onto the trail. Consider rescheduling your hike if it falls during a hunt. If you must go, wear as much international orange as you can.

CELL PHONES

Although many of our hiking destinations may be too remote for cell phone usage, carrying one can be helpful in an emergency. Please turn off your cell phone during a hike unless it is being used for emergency purposes.

TRAILHEAD VANDALISM

Unfortunately thieves are also well-acquainted with isolated trailhead parking areas where cars may be left unattended for long periods of time. If you have heard that a parking area has a bad reputation for vandalism and theft, call the local authorities and/or park officials before you leave cars in the area – particularly if you are parking overnight. Try to leave all valuables at home, and take your wallet with you, if possible, when hiking. Never leave anything of value in your vehicle in plain view. 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/or park officials so they can increase the surveillance of that area. Also report the problem to your chapter chairman so that other hikers can be alerted to a potential trouble spot.

FIREARMS

Firearms and weapons (other than a standard pack knife) are not allowed on TTA outings. If you encounter suspicious people carrying weapons at the trailhead or on the trail (and it's not hunting season), move along and report them to the proper authorities.

HOW TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES ON THE TRAIL

We rarely have serious emergencies on TTA outings. However, there are inherent risks involved when hiking in the wild. This section cannot begin to provide medical procedures that will cover every emergency scenario. Instead, suggestions are presented on preparation and prevention as well as how to proceed if something goes 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, how you deal with a problem will depend on your advance knowledge and preparation, common sense and improvisation based on the situation at hand.

PREPARATION & 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 severe weather than forecasted. Carry plenty of fluids and food. All hikers should pack basic first aid supplies such as bandages, analgesics, insect sting preparations, etc. Everyone should carry a working flashlight 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 Coordinator to your condition and the location of your medicine before starting the hike.

At least one hiker should try to carry a cellular telephone. If there is an emergency that requires professional intervention, a cell phone may save precious time in summoning help. If the 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 Coordinators should be familiar with shortcuts along the trail and alternative trailheads 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 (very slick rocks, yellow jacket holes, etc.), 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 Coordinator. If there is an emergency, step up and do whatever you can to help make the best of a bad situation.

SERIOUS EMERGENCIES

To the best of your ability, assess the injury/ailment and apply basic first aid. If it becomes apparent that professional assistance is necessary, attempt to summon help with a cellular telephone. If you don't have a cell phone or it isn't working, send a minimum of two people to obtain help. Preferably one or more of these people should be familiar with the route back to the car. If not, make sure they carry a map with them. They can also carry the cell phone to see if it will work at a different location along the trail.

While that group is obtaining assistance, try to keep the injured person as comfortable as possible. Keep him warm and dry (unless he is suffering from a heat-related ailment). Everyone should stay calm and try to contribute to the rescue effort in any manner possible.

If the injured person can walk out without professional assistance, let him set the pace on the return trip. Also let him tell you what can be done to make his progress more comfortable. Relieve him of his pack and make sure you take plenty of rest breaks.

*We thank you
for your membership!*

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

In the words of J.R. "Model-T" Tate, "*Keep your boots muddy!*"

Don't Leave Home

Without Them !

The “10* Essentials”

There are 10* essentials that no hiker should be without. Before you head out on the trail, check your pack to be sure it contains the following items:

For Your Protection

- Whistle
- WATER, and a way to purify it!
- Extra Food
- Rain Gear and Extra Clothing (socks, sweater)
- Hat and Sunglasses (especially for hikes above tree line)

For Finding Your Way

- Map
- Compass
- Flashlight (w/extra batteries & bulb)

For Emergencies

- 1st Aid Kit (moleskin, antibiotic ointment, mirror, anti-inflammation meds, personal meds, “Space” blanket)
- Matches or Lighter for Candle or Fire Starter

Other Considerations

- Hiking Poles
- Always tell someone your hiking plans
- Use your common sense

* This list is not to be considered cast in concrete – and should be customized to each outdoor enthusiast's needs.



OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

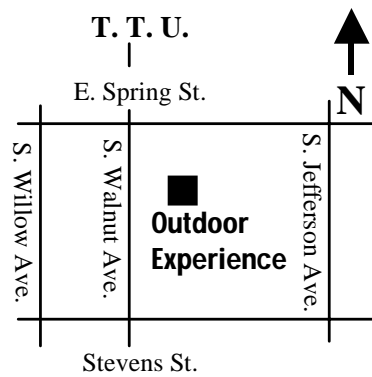
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