

**Leading a JFW Nature Hike**  
**For Pathfinder and Trailblazer Leaders**  
**Adventurer Challengers as part of the Leadership Program:**  
*Lead a nature awareness walk for younger wardens.*

*By Terry Bartley*

Leading a group of younger Wardens on a Nature Hike is a basic building block to the JFW Program. A Nature Hike is an interesting, stimulating and informative activity for young wardens to become aware and comfortable in the outdoors. The theme and activities of a nature hike can be chosen to cover all four of the Junior Forest Wardens program; Forestry, Ecology, Outdoor Skills & Leadership. You don't need to be an expert, with a few basic resources you can lead a hike that allows Wardens to explore and learn with you.

**Getting Started**

Know the area and trails where you are going. Unless you are very familiar with the location, or have a reliable information source, a pre-trip scout of the hike is recommended for safety and preparation. Best practice: the leader should check out the area within a week or two of the hike.

**Equipment:**

**Clothing** -The leader should ensure that all participants are dressed suitably for the weather and activities of the hike. Advise them prior to the hike and check before heading out.

**Backpacks** - I like to have all my Wardens put together a JFW daypack and bring it to all JFW activities throughout the year. All the basic essentials plus anything needed for the hike.

**Trip Plans** - A hike, no matter how basic should have a written Trip Plan, just like we would do for a higher risk activity or an out trip. Include a list or sign up sheet for everyone and their roles in the activity. Take attendance formally or informally at the start and finish.

Designate responsibility to members of the group:

- First Aid: carries a First Aid Kit and responsible for dealing with First Aid issues.
- Leader: Leads the hike - 1<sup>st</sup> in line – nobody goes ahead
- Sweep: Last in line – nobody falls behind.
- Buddy system helps in a larger group.

## Leading a JFW Nature Hike

### The Plan

Start with an idea or theme and then develop objectives for your activity.

Plan it. Don't go out with a bunch of kids and "wing it." Choose a topic and narrow down so you have a focus or theme. Express your idea concisely.

#### *Decomposers*

*Have Adventurers explain to a group of younger Wardens why we are not up to our necks in dead leaves. What happens to the leaves that fall annually during the autumn season? (Without decomposers, the Earth would soon be piled high with organic wastes.) Find other examples:*

Develop objectives to provide guidance so that your presentation will be orderly.

Objectives can be written in such a way that you and the learners are able to measure what they have learned. Consider the participants. The age and experience of the Wardens is the determining factor when considering the complexity of the ideas to be presented.

#### *Scavenger Hunt - JFW Learning Objectives*

*The Wardens will develop an appreciation for the beauty and uniqueness of all living things by observing and comparing the differences in colour, form, texture, arrangement or design of objects in the environment and demonstrating knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding the diversity of the environment, including life found within.*

1Develop three main points that you will develop during the hike.

For example, you may decide to choose Ecology as your topic and theme of the hike will be "Decomposers"

- 1) Why does a healthy ecology need decomposers?
- 2) Who are they?
- 3) How do they do it?

2Pre-visit the trail as part of your planning process. Look for interesting things to talk about and hazards that may detract from the hike or cause an injury.

3Encourage hikers to use all their senses- smell, touch and listen. Kids learn best from first-hand experience, and they learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process. Be careful about tasting unless you are positive about the edibility of a wild plant.

4Structure your walk to include variety. Don't do the same types of things all through the walk. Using a variety of approaches to enhance learning.

5Try to find out unusual information to spark interest, for example, the male mosquito never bites and the main diet for mosquitoes is plant liquids.

6Be enthusiastic. This should be easy for AC's, after all; you are an older Warden with knowledge to share and a role model for the younger Wardens.

7Use Questions. Questioning can encourage involvement in three ways:

1. Ask questions to get hikers thinking.
2. Encourage younger Wardens to ask you questions.
3. Answer questions in such a way that draws wardens into further discussion.

When you are asked questions, wardens will give you hints about what they really want to know and whether you are addressing their interests.

Keep in mind that some friendly competition and games stimulates learning.  
Consider including a game that can make specific point(s) to fit your theme.  
People learn best from first-hand experiences.  
An organized presentation is more memorable than an ad-lib one.

## **Leading a JFW Nature Hike**

1. Meet and organize. Welcome everyone & get to know each other – everybody introduce themselves
2. Sign up and/or attendance
3. Explain “The Plan”
4. Warm up – Ice Breaker game or activity
  - Near – far
  - Rope games
  - Penguins
  - Seaton Sit
  - MY Tree
  - Camouflage

### **Themes for hikes**

Who lives here?

- Tree Identification
- Plant Identification
- Bird Watching
- Scat ID
- All of the above

Destination hike - Day Hike

- Tour of JFW Camp
- Backpack – hike in, set up camp, have lunch & return
- Scavenger Hunt
- Survival First Aid
- Geocache
- Tree Planting Survey
- Soils - dig a soil study pit
- Build a Shelter
- And many more...

Options:

Self Guided Tours of Parks & Natural Areas

Park or Natural area Interpreted Hikes

Local: Birdwatchers, Naturalists, Forestry professionals assist you.

## JUNIOR FOREST WARDEN BACK PACK LIST

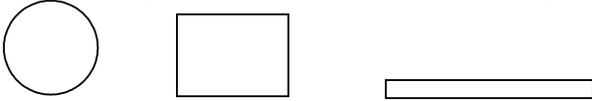
Water bottle  
Snack  
Spare socks  
Gloves  
Hat  
Rain gear  
Sun block  
Bug repellent  
Sunglasses  
Lip Balm  
Whistle  
Small Personal First-Aid Kit  
JFW Mora knife  
Fire starter kit  
Flashlight/Head Lamp & Extra Batteries  
Garbage bags  
Toilet paper  
Nylon Cord  
Survival Kit  
Journal and Pen  
Compass  
Cards or Reading Material  
Space blanket

## Scavenger Hunt

- 1.Pine cone
- 2.Spruce cone
- 3.Insect
- 4.Scat (bonus if you know what made it)
- 5.Aspen Poplar leaf
- 6.Balsam Poplar leaf
- 7.Birch Leaf
- 8.Moss
- 9.Fungi
- 10.Feather
- 11.JFW Shield
- 12.Knife
- 13.Bone (bonus if you know what it came from)
- 14.Red Berry
- 15.Birch Bark
- 16.Cattail
- 17.Flower
- 18.Evidence of a forest DISEASE
- 19.Evidence of a forest INSECT PEST
- 20.Band-aid
- 21.Balsam Fir (small sample)
- 22.Something Metal (small)
- 23.Animal track
- 24.Spruce needles
- 25.Pine needles

## Scavenger Hunt

Please do not pick, disturb or harm any living material (i.e. plants and animals) Your scavenger hunt will take place on the hike. Work together as a group to find the following items:

- 1) Find evidence that humans and nature are interacting.
- 2) Find something that bounces.
- 3) Find something that reflects light.
- 4) Find something that would keep you warm if you were cold.
- 5) Find the perfect spot to build a shelter.
- 6) Find something that you could use to write with.
- 7) Find something that is:  
. rough . soft . slimy . wet
- 8) Find an animal home. How was it built?
- 9) Find something that is beautiful. What makes it beautiful to you?
- 10) Find something you could make noise with (the more creative, the better)
- 11) Find a seed that travels by the wind.
- 12) Find objects that have one of these shapes:  

- 13) Find as much man-made litter as you can!
- 14) Find a feather
- 15) Evidence of Decomposition