

Out-Trip Planning

October 2011

Trip planning with a group implies both a legal and moral obligation toward that group. Proper planning well in advance of the actual event will ensure a safe and rewarding experience.

Definitions: Is this to be a club “family” outing such as a weekend camp or day trip, or is it a “warden only” trip with appropriate leaders? Will the event be offered at the **Club, District or Association** level? Who has the ultimate responsibility for the event? As you can see, the term Out-trip can be interpreted in many ways but the planning steps are similar.

It will be necessary to do this planning in several distinct stages. You cannot do equipment, menu or emergency items until you have considered the **5 W’s** and the **4 R’s**:

WHO - WHAT - WHERE - WHEN - WHY

RIGHT PEOPLE - RIGHT GEAR - RIGHT PLACE - RIGHT TIME

These topics are intended to be a reminder of things to be taken into consideration, where applicable, when planning an event.

WHO - is going? RIGHT PEOPLE - COMPATIBILITY

- How many in the group?
- How are the participants involved in the planning process?
- Sex and age considerations
- Physical condition, experience, training
- Medical considerations - allergies (food, plants, etc.)
- Mental attitudes/maturity
- Leader/Warden ratio (**Youth Safe Outdoors Guidelines**)
- Are you the right person to lead this trip?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Note: Speed is inversely proportional to the size of the group.

WHAT - type of trip is it? **RIGHT GEAR - PERSONAL GEAR and GROUP GEAR**

Hike, bike, horse, canoe, kayak, X-C ski, caving, other or a combination

- How long is the trip? Skill levels required? Costs?
- Special equipment requirements, eg. Avalanche Tranceivers
- Are reservations, bookings or permits required? eg. West Coast Trail, Bowron Lakes, National/Provincial Parks
- Are there limitations on the group size?
- Are parental permission forms required?
- _____
- _____
- _____

WHERE- are we going? **RIGHT PLACE - but does the leader have first-hand experience?**

This is a big one!

- Transportation logistics - are the start and end points the same? eg. River trip
- Costs - rentals, campsites, travel permits, registration fees, etc.
- Are pets permitted or practical? Is there potable water on the route?
- Are open fires permitted? Firewood sources - (can affect menu planning)
- What hazards exist? Animals - bears, cougars, rodents (hanta virus).
 - Insects - ticks, black flies, mosquitoes
 - Weather - hypo- or hyperthermia, lightning, (water, high peaks)
 - Terrain - boggy, rocky, desert, snowy, elevation changes, river crossings
- Is help available in the area? What resources can you access?
- _____
- _____
- _____

WHEN - are we going? **RIGHT TIME - but know when to cancel**

- Reservations, bookings, permits
- Alternate dates
- Cancellation policies – money refund, severe weather, etc.
- Hazards associated with trip timing – animal trail closures (bears and berries), ticks, avalanches, hunting season, rutting Elk, high water
- Long range forecasts vs. local weather
- _____
- _____
- _____

WHY - are we going?

- Purpose(s) of the trip – objectives; does the trip fit with the JFW Program?
- Full trip itinerary for all concerned parties.
- Program elements targeting the objectives eg. Group cooking, plant I.D., etc.
- Are special or certified resource people required?
- _____
- _____
- _____

**YOU ARE NOW IN A POSITION TO DO THE EQUIPMENT (GEAR),
MENU AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION PLANNING**

EMERGENCY INFORMATION _____

CARRIED DOCUMENTATION:

- Alberta Health Care number, Family Doctor name and number
- Medical info and medications
- Emergency contact info for each participant
- Contacts in the trip area that can provide assistance (RCMP, Parks, SRD, resource companies)

- **WHO ELSE IN YOUR GROUP AND AT HOME HAS A COPY?**

COMMUNICATION:

- SPOT, GPS, CELL PHONE (which network - coverage?), SATELLITE PHONE, WEATHER RADIO, OTHER RADIO SYSTEMS
- Designated people at 'home' that can initiate a "RED ALERT" if needed

GENERAL:

- Is there an alternate route in the plan?
- Bail out or evacuation points (know your location at all times)
- Designated First Aid (Wilderness) people
- Tip: Have antihistamines for surprise allergies.
- Tip: Have sanitary napkins for surprise situations.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Note: How comfortable are you with the margins of safety within your group?

DURING THE TRIP

- Gear Adjustment - take the time near the beginning of the trip to make changes, eg. Pack straps, canoe trim, blisters.
- Trail Etiquette - bikes, horses, dogs, litter, personal pit stops, etc.
- Monitoring Participants - hypo- or hyperthermia, dehydration, exhaustion, group proximity (watch for stragglers)
- Monitoring Environment - terrain, weather, river channels, wildlife, etc.,
- Campsite security and safety issues

END OF TRIP EVALUATIONS

- Were expectations generally met? What were the highlights? Downers?
- Trip log – times, distances, photos.
- Menu and/or gear changes for next time? Other changes (people?) Did you use everything you took? If not, why did you take it? You should only have two items that you didn't use – a first aid kit and a raincoat!
- _____
- _____
- _____

THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF YOUR TRIP IS IN PART DEPENDENT ON THE LEAST WELL-EQUIPPED PERSON IN YOUR GROUP, BE IT MENTAL, PHYSICAL OR GEAR RELATED!

ADDITIONAL NOTES

NON-JFW PARTICIPATION

- Whose decision, whose responsibility?
- Waiver forms/parental permission forms (Insurance issues)
- Club, District or Association subsidized events (not fair to subsidize non-JFWs)
- Other parties involved (guides, resource people, out-trip companies)
- _____
- _____
- _____

SOME TIPS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Nobody puts on rain gear until after they are wet! Due diligence required here; hard to dry them out later (hypothermia)
- People almost always bring too much, and often inappropriate, food! Stick to the menu plan – but have enough for a 'lean' extra day.
- Never carry water in your food; too heavy and leakage or spoilage may occur – dry, dry, dry!
- Have backups for light and fire starting.

- On a back pack trip, you should target for no more than a 35- 40 lb. pack (adult).
- Lead from behind; it's their adventure!

NOW MAKE YOUR OWN 'PET PEEVE' AND TIP SHEET