

# Trip Planning

SEM Leadership Training  
2019 – Bob Vogel

- ## LOTS of information today!
- Don't feel overwhelmed...
    - SEM is good at mentoring new Leaders.
      - (vs. bigger Chapters, like Boston)
  - And the Good News?
    - Most AMC participants are very easy going, and grateful for Leaders offering trips. And helpful too.
      - My presentation will be available electronically; relax, listen, and think about the activities you want to offer.

- ## What trips do *you* want to lead?
- ?

- ## Which of these are good trips?
- ?

- ## Why *This* Trip? Maybe...
- You're working on your 4000 footer list.
  - To lead a paddle to your favorite place.
  - Offer a nature walk, or "Forest Bathing" trip, where opening folks eyes, and other senses, to nature around them might be your goal.
  - There are *many*, good, reasons for a trip...

- ## What matters about a trip...
- Is that the **leader**, any **co-leaders**, and the **participants** are all "On the same page."

## Getting on the Same Page...

- The L and CL:
  - Discuss their expectations, and the qualifications and equipment for the participants.
  - Develop a trip listing that expresses those expectations.
  - Screen folks (A/R) to meet those goals.
    - Or describe requirements so folks can self-screen.

## Over/Under Qualified

- Accepting participants without the proper qualifications may be putting them in 'over their heads,' and can threaten the enjoyment for all of the participants. (And you may all have to turn back.)
  - For an kayak trip, it could get worse. Think people in the water.
- Accepting participants who are 'over qualified' **may** be OK, but **only** as long as they understand that the trip may not be challenging; and they can truly enjoy the 'slower' pace/lower objectives.

## The AMC Computer System

- All trips *must* be entered into the AMC system before they can be run.
- It will take a few days to get trips through the system.
- Guide at:  
[https://activities.outdoors.org/docs/AMC\\_OLTL\\_User\\_Guide.pdf](https://activities.outdoors.org/docs/AMC_OLTL_User_Guide.pdf)

## Trip Names, and Descriptions

- **BE CREATIVE!**
  - (Develop enthusiasm for your trips!)
  - But be careful with words like 'Easy!'
    - (Don't ask how I learned *that* one.)
- You are the *Leader*
  - But you are also the Marketing Manager

## The Leader Owns the Trip

- As an AMC *Leader* you *OWN your* trip.
  - (Think of yourself as an entrepreneur.)
- *You* are the boss, with authority, and responsibility, to make it a good trip.
- Don't be afraid to try things! See what works.

## Trip Rating Systems

- Rating systems vary by Committee, Chapter
- Sample SEM Hiking Committee ratings

Miles	Pace(mph)	Terrain
AA = 13+	1 = very fast (2.5)	A = very strenuous
A = 9 - 13	2 = fast (2)	B = strenuous
B = 5 - 8	3 = moderate	C = average
C = < 5	4 = leisurely	D = easy

- So B3B might be a typical NH 4000 footer, and C3D an easier Borderland hike. (Subjective!)

## The Info Sheet (Screened Trips)

- Good trip description (Use lots of words, they're free!)
- **Required** equipment list
- The 'Rules'
  - Stay together...
  - Phones off...
  - 'No dogs' (or 'Dogs permitted w/ prior approval' if you are willing to allow dogs along.)
  - Cancellation causes: Threat of rain? Rain? Thunderstorms?
- Meeting location, Start time
  - (Given out **after** participant has been accepted.)

## The Waiver Form

- Good to attach the text to the Info Sheet
  - So everyone has had the opportunity to read it carefully before they come to the trailhead.
- Or link to it at: <https://www.outdoors.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Volunteer-Led-Activity-MemRelease-17.pdf>

## Group Size

- Certain 'Wilderness' portions of the WMNF (White Mountain National Forest) are restricted to parties of 10 or less.
  - Even in non-wilderness areas of the WMNF a limit of 10 is 'encouraged'.
- In other areas, such as the Blue Hills, where the limit is 24, this is something that the leader and co-leader should discuss when they are planning the trip.
  - Big groups change the atmosphere, and **are more of a challenge for the leader**. "Herding cats." Just counting to verify everyone is there is a 'chore'.
  - Big groups tend to spread out, and the lead hikers may go past a turn, while you are back checking on the slower folks. And gaps can grow between the faster and slower folks.
  - Big groups can impact the enjoyment of others using the facilities.

## Differences between 'alone' or 'with friends' and 'AMC' trips...

- The group dynamics are different.
  - You *know* your friends
- You might enjoy paddling in waves (or cycling up long hills)... but others might not.
- It is one thing to be a competent hiker/biker/paddler/skier...
  - It is a much **different** thing to be a competent AMC Leader. (Not 'harder', just different)

## 'Show & Go' vs. 'Screened' trips

- There is no '*right*' answer. Each has advantages and disadvantages.
  - Screened advantages: Limited group size, pre-qualified participants, full Info Sheet.
  - Whatever works for you, and your Committee.
- 
- You will get practice screening folks later today.
  - And the Cape Hikes folks will address Show & Go activities later today.

## But either way...

- You, the Leader, are responsible for assuring everyone is capable, and equipped.
  - As the Leader, you are the Boss
    - and the one responsible for the trip's success.

## Plan for the unexpected.

- It *will* happen
  - Not always. Maybe not often.
    - But it *will* happen.
- Thinking about these things before they happen let's you develop a 'Plan B'.
- You may not get the trip you *planned*
  - But you can still have a great, fun, trip.

## What if...?

- High water at a river crossing?
- Someone can't keep up? Or gets hurt?
- The weather turns *really* bad?
  - Cold, windy, thunderstorms...
- Thinking ahead makes the trip easier.

## Rules and Regulations

- You are responsible for making sure the group follows all 'regulations', and has any permits, etc.
- Check for area 'rules', permits, etc. when planning your trip.

## AMC "Group Notification System"

- If you are planning a backpack to a backcountry destination (Like the Guyot tent platforms/shelter) you need to notify AMC ahead of time.
  - This *isn't* a reservation, but let's them help plan usage.
  - [www.outdoors.org/lodging/campsites/campsites-notification.cfm](http://www.outdoors.org/lodging/campsites/campsites-notification.cfm)

## When to plan/submit a trip

- "In the old days" trips were in the Outdoors and quarterly Breeze, ~5 month lead-time.
- "Today" you *can* list a trip for a week out.
  - But more time gives more folks a chance to find it.
- SNEL listings, AMC weekly digests, and the trips are online, so folks can look the week of a trip.
  - SNEL: Short Notice Email List. See [amcsem.org](http://www.amcsem.org) and <http://www.amcsem.org/assets/chapter/short.notice.email.list.procedure.pdf>

## Leader Gear

- As Leader you may need some things participants aren't asked to bring:
  - Group first aid kit, map & compass, radios, ...
  - Emergency gear (depending on trip)
    - Bivy sack, extra clothes/sleeping bag/pad, ...
- But you *can* ask them to carry some of it!
- Extra gear in car: Water, rain coat...

## Plan Great Trips!

- As a CL you can start planning trips *NOW!*
- And looking for Leaders to lead them with you.
- Talk to the Leaders, Committee Chairs, make suggestions for trips. (Be aggressive ☺!)
- Volunteer to plan, lead, help out as needed.
  - (That entrepreneurial thing!)

## Part Two – “My Life in the AMC”

- So much for ‘The Book’
- “What about *your* experiences Bob?”
- Well.... Since you asked....

## I joined in Feb, 1998...

- (I’d been a hiker ‘in the old days.’)
- I went on a 10 mile Warner Trail hike, led by Charlie Farrell.
- And brought my 9 year old son, Bobby.
  - He had already backpacked a bunch of NH 4k peaks.
- Then signed up for the “Summer Hiking Series”
- And then Leadership Training...

## I like to “Try New Things”

- I like to involve new people...
  - So I ran “My First AMC Hike!” hikes to get people to “Stop just reading these listings, *come on this hike!*”
  - And “My First Snowshoe”, “.. Bike Ride”, “.. XC Ski” ☺
- I started “The Wednesday Evening Hiking Series.”
  - Which led to starting “Red Line the Blue Hills”.
- I wanted to learn about nature...
  - So I started the “Discovering Nature Series.”
- Someone suggested hikes under the full moon...
  - So I started the Borderland “Full Moon” hikes.

## Blatant Recruitment Ad...

- I’d like to run some more “My First AMC Hike!” hikes... this year.
  - Co-Leaders needed (to do all the work!)
    - Hint, Hint...
      - Talk to me today
        - Or email me: [vogel\\_r@comcast.net](mailto:vogel_r@comcast.net)
- And now... Back to our presentation...

## Trailwork

- I’ve always liked Trailwork.
  - It’s like a hike, but you leave the trail in better condition than you found it...
  - AND you come home with a warm, fuzzy feeling.
- What’s not to like?
- So weekend and evening Trailwork
  - At Borderland, the Blue Hills...

## What Now Bob?

- “What the Heck Kind of a Hiking Series is THIS?”
  - NOT like most 'hikes'! ☺
    - Includes participant and Leader training.
      - Map reading, gps apps, Leadership, Trailwork, History, ???
    - “Active participation”, participants to plan routes, lead, sweep, ....
    - We break into smaller groups to hike.
      - Fast/Slow, 3 hr/4 hr, Dogs/No dogs, ???/???
  - Just started last week.
    - “Will this be a success?” Stay tuned... (Or come along!)

## “Map No Compass” ???

- “Do you have trouble finding your way out of a phone booth? Wish you could go hiking by yourself, or with friends, but fear it would lead to you being on the news that evening? Or three days later when you are *finally* located? **This hike is for you!**
  - Co-Leaders needed... hint, hint...
    - (No navigation skills required!)

## Introduction to Backpacking

- “Have you ever wished you knew how to go backpacking? Does the idea of ‘Carrying your house on your back’ appeal to you? Or maybe you just wish you could go hiking in New Hampshire without the need to get up at a ridiculous hour, drive for many hours, go for your hike, and drive for many more hours, only to arrive home very late and *very* tired?”
- Backpacking is the answer, and you, yes **you**, could be doing it this summer.”
  - Co-Leaders needed... hint, hint... Wanna sleep in the woods?

## What else... ???

- Who knows!!
- Maybe one of *you* will approach me today with an idea for “Something I think people would like.”, and I’ll say “Hey, let’s try that!”
- The **ONLY** way to find out if it will be popular is to offer it, and see if folks want to go.

## So, why am I showing you these?

- Because in 20 years I hope **you** can look back at a long list of trips you’ve offered, and ‘New Things’ *you* started.
- And you will think back on all the smiling faces of participants who have come on **your** trips!
- And you’ll have fond memories of all of the fun times you’ve had leading trips for SEM/AMC.
- And your best friends will be the other SEM Leaders.

