

# Basic BACKPACKING COURSE

Trainer's Notebook

girl scouts  
san diego



Materials supplied by Girl Scouts San Diego volunteers

# Basic Backpacking Course

## Girl Scout Trainer's Notebook

### Table of Contents

I.	The Basic Backpacking Course (BBC)	3
II.	Program Culture and Training Expectations	3
III.	Roles and Responsibilities	4
IV.	Basic Backpacking Course Curriculum	6
V.	Planning & Executing Backpacking Class/Trip - Calendar Checklist	8
	A. 1+ Year in Advance	
	B. 6 Months to 1 Year	
	C. 3 - 6 Months	
	D. 2 - 3 Months	
	E. 3 - 4 Weeks	
	F. 2 Weeks	
	G. 1 - 2 Weeks	
	H. Week Before	
	I. Classroom Training Day	
VI.	Safety Management	19
	A. Manage Health and Permission Forms	
	B. Discuss Health & Welfare and Key Concerns	
	C. Identify and Plan for Key Risks	
	D. Prepare an Overall Safety Plan	
	E. Prepare and Distribute a Safety Management Plan (SMP)	
	F. Prepare Leader Resource Packets	
VII.	Day Hike	22
VIII.	Training Trip Planning	24
IX.	Pre-Trip Meeting	25
X.	Council Gear Rental Management	28
XI.	Pack Checks	28
XII.	Trip	32
XIII.	Post-Trip Evaluation & Wrap-Up	33

### Appendices

1. Backpack Training Expectations
2. Sample Backpack Training Schedule
3. Cost for Basic Backpacking Training
4. Comprehensive Gear list
5. Menu Planner
6. Course Evaluations
7. Safety Management Plan

# BASIC BACKPACKING COURSE

## Girl Scout Trainer's Notebook

### I. THE BASIC BACKPACKING COURSE

The Basic Backpacking Course (BBC) is designed to teach girls and adults the fundamentals of backpacking, and the essential skills and knowledge for successful and safe backcountry multi-night adventures. The course consists of one day of classroom training, a day hike, a planning meeting, pack check, and a 1-2 night backpacking trip.

#### **Mandatory components of the complete training:**

- **1-day classroom training:** This 8-hour class instructs participants in the bulk of the preparatory skills and knowledge necessary for the basic backpack experience. Additionally, the trainer begins her relationship with her group: assessing their incoming capabilities, providing insight into the culture of GS backpacking, and laying a foundation for the high standard we cultivate in our program.
- **Day hike:** The length of the hike should be commensurate with the level of difficulty of the trip itself. Whether half-day or all-day, the hike allows the trainer to assess the physical capabilities of her participants. Additionally, the time should be used to build trust and develop rapport among the members of the group, use the Backpacker Bee to spot and correct training deficits from the classroom training, and assess the overall readiness of each trainee for the upcoming trip with regards to gear, clothes, and mindset.
- **Pre-trip Meeting:** Whether it is tacked onto the day hike, or scheduled on a separate day, this meeting allows you and your group to organize gear and cook groups, and discuss itinerary and travel plans for the trip.
- **Pack Checks:** Examining the contents of each trainee's pack, weighing the pack to meet our ideal pack weight, and adjusting packs prior to hitting the trail is essential to the success of your trip.

### II. PROGRAM CULTURE AND TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

**The Council Trainer and Adult Volunteers must be immersed in the culture of our program. We are:**

- Developing competent, self-sufficient and independent backpackers of all ages
- Embracing the GS Leadership Experience -- helping girls develop into leaders by giving them many opportunities to lead -- training, taking charge, being self-responsible, being excellent mentors
- Understanding we are training girls to lead, not just follow
- Connecting the dots: while we're training adults to backpack, we are simultaneously teaching them how to lead their girls.
- Teaching The Wilderness Ethic -- the way we look after each other in the wilderness and ensure the physical and emotional safety of our group
- Teaching -- and practicing -- Leave No Trace principles
- Leading trips for girls, not ourselves -- those would be personal trips. Our adult volunteers need to be full-on participants, not just passengers on a trip
- Practicing Safety First, and understanding prevention is key to our safety, and safety is a group ethic

## The Trainer's Responsibility

A Council Backpack Trainer's role is complex -- you're an educator, a guide and a backpacker -- all of your skills in all three areas need to be top-notch to be successful.

**As an educator**, you are responsible for delivering accurate and up-to-date skills and knowledge. The adults who take your class are receiving a Girl Scout-recognized backpacking certification. Your class needs to reflect the standard of excellence necessary for a Girl Scout leader to finish your course, then turn around and lead her girls effectively on a backpacking trip. Or, leave her with the understanding that she needs more on-the-ground experience before she does take her own girls out into the wilderness.

The Girl Scouts that complete your class will be eligible for Advanced Trips. The leaders of those advanced trips will be expecting their participants to have received all the training outlined in the curriculum.

**As a guide**, you are in the position of not only leading people you don't know through the wilderness, but also helping them understand the culture of our program. You're a leader and an interpreter, a hostess and a teacher. And as the coordinator of multiple Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers, you need to stay engaged as the adult leader in charge, the person who is responsible for the health, welfare and safety of the entire group.

**As a backpacker**, it is the happy obligation for you to improve your skills and knowledge. Being a highly experienced backpacker doesn't necessarily make you a good teacher, but it can certainly give you credibility, and skillful on-the-ground experience certainly translates into sound knowledge. Take the time to build your skills, increase your knowledge and advance your abilities in the wilderness. This in turn will provide you with the confidence and scope to be an effective backpack trainer. Stay within the culture of the program: allow girls to lead, understand that you really don't know it all and are open to learning, and realize that this program is all about the girls and advancing their experience outdoors.

Remember to be patient with your role, and your own progression as a trainer.

## III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Council Trainer:** A council-approved trainer of WHC/BBC/ADV trips who has met the training requirements and is leading her/his own classes.

**ADV Trip leader:** A council trainer who teaches all levels: WHC, BBC & ADV backpacking, has superior wilderness skills, and has demonstrated an ability to guide girls and adults safely on BBC backpack trips. Has experience addressing safety issues in the field.

**Co-leader:** A role with expanded and more extensive duties than an Adult Volunteer. A co-leader serves as 2<sup>nd</sup> in command on BBC/ADV trips. This individual is capable of leading the trip without the trip leader, should an emergency situation arise that takes the trip leader off the trip. This individual possesses superior wilderness savvy, and can take over the responsibility of maintaining the safety of each individual on the trip. Ideally, this individual is WFA certified.

**First Aider:** The individual responsible for managing participant health & welfare on hikes or trips.

**Youth Leader (YL):** The young women in our program who help us train and lead, and serve as mentors to the participants in our classes.

**Adult Volunteer:** An adult who assists with the training of WHC/BBC, with increasing responsibility loads.

**Mentor Trainer:** The Council Trainer who assists a **New Trainer** with the entire process of teaching her/his own class, whether it is WHC, BBC, or ADV trip.

**New Trainer:** The individual who has completed all prerequisites for becoming a Council Trainer

- WHC Trainer
  - Completed WHC & BBC
  - Has served as an adult volunteer in WHC & BBC, with increased responsibilities
- BBC Trainer
  - Completed WHC, BBC, and ADV w/girls present
  - Has served as an adult volunteer in WHC & BBC, with increased responsibilities
  - Has served as a co-leader/first aider for BBC
  - Wilderness First Aid or higher certified
- ADV Trip Leader
  - Is a current Council Trainer for WHC & BBC
  - Has served as co-leader/first aider on ADV trips with girls multiple times
  - Has demonstrated wilderness and backpacking savvy
  - Has demonstrated safe, calm and competent outdoor guiding skills
  - Wilderness First Aid or higher certified

**Reference Words:**

**Training:** represents all the activities associated with executing and completing a WHC, or a BBC (from the pre-planning to execution of trip phases to equipment return to evaluations)

**WHC:** Wilderness Hiking Class (Level 1)

**BBC:** Basic Backpacking Class (Level 2)

**ADV:** Advanced Backpacking Class (Level 3, which typically includes a trip at higher elevation, typically 9000' or higher for at least 2 nights)

**Wilderness First Aid (WFA)** - a (typically) 16-hour certification class that allows the 1st aider to provide emergency care up to 8 hours from definitive medical care.

**Wilderness First Responder (WFR)** - an 80-hour certification class that allows the 1st aider to provide emergency care (and expanded skills) at any distance from definitive medical care.

**Leave No Trace (LNT):** a set of outdoor ethics promoting conservation in the outdoors

## IV. BASIC BACKPACKING COURSE CURRICULUM

All the BBC curriculum must be covered by the end of the combined training session -- in the classroom, on the day hike, or on the trip.

### A. Overview

- ☐ Boots & Socks
  - ☐ Upgraded for backpacking needs (no low-cut trail shoes, and why)
  - ☐ Boot Jeopardy Game meets the desired outcomes
- ☐ Clothing
  - ☐ Vocab Review: Layering, Wicking, Fabrics
  - ☐ Selecting the best backpacking wardrobe, 2 days = 1 week
    - ☐ Breakout groups—2 or 3 baskets of outdoor clothes (all good, *too many*; a tub representing 'saving money', 'REI-addict', different styles); pointing out that clothing is the same for a week-long trip; group discussion of choices.
- ☐ Leave No Trace
  - ☐ Understanding how to practice the 7 Principles of LNT, how LNT applies to backpacking, and connecting the dots between training topics and LNT
  - ☐ Game: Coupons, Cupcakes, and Connection
- ☐ Tents
  - ☐ Types (3- and 4-season), tents parts, distributing the weight between partners, proper care, proper set-up, sites, LNT
  - ☐ Breakout Session: group participation in set-up and breakdown
- ☐ Sleeping bags & pads
  - ☐ Down & synthetic bags — pros and cons, temp rating, weight, size and features
  - ☐ Pads: closed cell foam, self-inflating, newer air mattresses (pros, cons, weight differences)
  - ☐ Visuals: demos of different types of bags and pads
- ☐ Wilderness Sanitation
  - ☐ Q & A review from WHC
  - ☐ LNT, personal waste, managing your period, achieving personal cleanliness
  - ☐ Laundry on longer trips
  - ☐ Trowel as a hall pass & Respect The Trowel
  - ☐ Visuals: bucket, pack towel, hygiene kit, campsuds
- ☐ Water & Filtration with hands-on demo
  - ☐ Giardia, crypto, *e. coli* and viruses
  - ☐ Visuals: (show and tell w/ Parasite Pals)
  - ☐ Methods of filtering/purifying & pros and cons of each; show different models
  - ☐ LNT near water sources
  - ☐ Assembly, storage and proper usage of the Katadyn pump we use at Council
  - ☐ Breakout: pump water
- ☐ Water Receptacles, Cooking Kits, Mess kits
  - ☐ Show & tell the options: the good and bad
- ☐ Stoves & Cooking
  - ☐ Types of stoves -- good features, canister fuel only
  - ☐ Fuel -- 13 oz. size most practical, how much to bring? How much is left over?

- ☐ Kitchen safety
- ☐ Set-up how-to demo & practice in groups, especially lighting with a buddy and by oneself
- ☐ Backpack Food and Nutrition, Storage & Clean-up:
  - ☐ Types of food & nutrition
  - ☐ Dehydrating food, and saving money at the grocery store (non-Mountain House)
  - ☐ Menu planner (w/ sample menu handout)
  - ☐ Repackaging
  - ☐ Bear cans/hanging
  - ☐ LNT & Clean-up
  - ☐ Supplemental: demos to taste (everyone contributes)
- ☐ Identifying Key Risks & Concerns, and Injury Prevention
  - ☐ Share, Prepare, Be Aware -- should be a quick WHC Review of knowledge
  - ☐ No-penalty approach
  - ☐ Off button
  - ☐ Health history updates
- ☐ When Help Is Delayed
  - ☐ First Aid Certs (when leading trips, at the Council level, on Advanced trips)
  - ☐ First Aid kit contents summary
  - ☐ Check, Call & Care
- ☐ First Aid Scenarios & Review
  - ☐ Dehydration, Hypothermia, Heat Exhaustion, Bum Knee and Altitude Sickness
  - ☐ As scenarios, can be done in a big circle with trainees rotating in to be the 1st Aider. Facilitator encourages discussion of symptoms, treatment and prevention. Anecdotes from the trail are illuminating.
- ☐ Staying Found
  - ☐ Use Staying Found picture worksheet and script
- ☐ If You're Lost (multiple choice with discussion)
  - ☐ Review of key concepts
  - ☐ Application of topic to backpacking
- ☐ Permits & Ranger Station
  - ☐ LNT: Plan Ahead & Prepare
  - ☐ Panel discussion -- to illustrate Good & Bad rangers, need and value for ranger questions
  - ☐ Visuals: 2 - 3 Youth Leader/Adult Volunteer "rangers" provide answers to the questions posed by girl trainees. Being able to see the 2 rangers -- and compare -- helps illustrate the value of questioning and pursuing one's needs regardless of how pro-active or negative a ranger might be.
- ☐ Backpacks
  - ☐ Internal/external packs: difference, pros & cons
  - ☐ Fitting basics demo (order of adjustments)
    - ☐ Hip belt, shoulder harness, load lifters, sternum strap
    - ☐ What a good fit looks like
  - ☐ Activity: measuring torsos with tape measure AND Osprey measure
  - ☐ Visual: Pack list overview w/ Comprehensive Gear List and two trainers
    - ☐ Sample pack check between two trainers sharing community gear
    - ☐ Reviews pack list, reinforces how a pack is packed, and how to share gear

- ☐ Packing your backpack
  - ☐ Activity: 4 groups & 4 packs to load
  - ☐ We want them to see all the gear spread out, and how it all goes together into the pack with the trailhead clothes & boots in a separate bag: what they'll wear the first day.

## **B. Additional Training Topics**

- ☐ Adults: Girl Scout Protocol: insurance, paperwork
- ☐ All: Safety Management Plan

## **C. Supplemental Curriculum**

- ☐ Leadership, trip leading, extension of safety management skills
- ☐ Advancing map & compass skills
- ☐ Safety Management tea & roundtable for adults
- ☐ Improving knot tying skills
- ☐ Enjoying a Night Sky Star Party
- ☐ Songs and other Girl Scout lore

# **V. PLANNING AND EXECUTING BBC CLASS AND TRIP - CALENDAR CHECKLIST**

Key milestones from early planning through the training day, day hike, and completion of your trip. All checkpoints are in advance of the training date.

## **A. 1+ Year in Advance**

1. Choose Class, Hike and Trip Dates and Locations
2. Select Pre-trip Meeting and Pack Check Dates
3. Schedule Dates with Council
4. Find your Co-leader/First-aider
5. Obtain Training Materials

### **1. Choose Class, Hike and Trip Dates and Locations**

- ☐ Select your trip location -- this will help you understand what time of year is best for this particular locale, with regards to key risks (weather, water levels, trail conditions)
  - ☐ Hike/backpack this trail so you are familiar with and have a complete understanding of the logistics necessary to take beginners on their first trip to this location.
  - ☐ Analyze the key risks for this trip location -- stream crossings, early season snow, rattlesnakes, poison oak, etc.
  - ☐ Create -- or locate -- a topo map for this trip.
- ☐ Select a hike that is commensurate with the difficulty of your trip. Consider similar mileage and terrain, so that after the day hike participants have a good understanding of what level of fitness is required for the trip, and what kind of conditioning they need to do.



- ☐ Hike this trail so you are familiar with and have a complete understanding of the logistics necessary to take beginners on a day hike to this location.
- ☐ Analyze for key risks.
- ☐ Create -- or locate -- a topo map for this trip.
  - ☐ Supplemental: add compass bearings to each of the trail junctions. Your hikers can practice their compass skills by loading these bearings into their compass and finding their way on the hike.
- ☐ Select a class date at least 4 weeks before your trip date. Scheduling the hike the day after your classroom training allows participants to complete this portion of the training in one weekend. The 4-week interim allows participants enough time to gather gear and get in shape.
- ☐ Determine the number of girls, adults and leaders for total capacity based on permit allowances.

## **2. Select Pre-trip Meeting and Pack Check Dates**

- ☐ The pre-trip meeting is for creating cook groups, planning meals, dividing up community gear and possibly distributing Council-loaned gear. This meeting can be held after a shorter day hike, or on a separate evening. Other discussions might include:
  - Reviewing/highlighting the trip map
  - Discussing/evaluating current trail conditions for your trip
  - Discussing key risks and safety management for your trip
  - Reviewing the trip itinerary
  - Creating carpools
  - Collecting any money required (for example, tram)
- ☐ Pack Checks are best done the week prior to your trip. Expect each pack check to take a minimum of a ½-hour. You will need sufficient Adult Volunteers/Youth Leader help to complete pack checks in a timely manner.

## **3. Schedule these dates with Council *by the required deadline* so the training is included in Council registration and fliers**

- ☐ Ensure class information is available for Council registration
- ☐ Make classroom facility reservations

## **4. Find Your Co-leader/First-aider**

- ☐ Ideally, you will select your co-leader/first aider a year in advance, so she/he can reserve your BBC dates on her/his calendar. Your co-leader is your 2nd in command -- she/he should be able to take over the trip if you are unable to follow through. If she/he is also your 1st Aider, she/he needs to be WFA certified.
- ☐ If you are a New Trainer, your Mentor will be your co-leader/first aider

## **5. Obtain Training Materials**

- ☐ BBC Training Notebook -- will help guide you through the entire BBC process
- ☐ Nuts & Bolts -- will help you familiarize yourself with the breadth of BBC curriculum

## **B. 6 Months to 1 Year in Advance**

1. Create the Confirmation Packet
2. Submit Confirmation Packet to Council

## 1. Create Confirmation Packet

- ☐ Ask Council Support to send you a template or find in Google docs
- ☐ The Confirmation Packet Contains
  - ☐ A cover letter, which includes
    - ☐ Class, hike and trip dates
    - ☐ Paperwork reminder -- which forms, how many copies, when to bring
    - ☐ Class location
    - ☐ Class Arrival, Start & End time (recommend 15 minutes prior to class start)
    - ☐ Contact information for trainer, registrar, and program specialist
  - ☐ A letter from your trainer -- this gives you the chance to personalize your training and expectations. Include dates & times for all portions of the training -- classroom, day hike, pre-trip meeting, pack checks and backpack trip.
  - ☐ Day hike information sheet -- all the driving, parking, and shuttling information for your hike. Include a timeline and information about the Adventure Pass for parking (if necessary). Include the list of 10+2 Essentials
  - ☐ Optional: Agenda for pre-trip meeting -- time, date, location, topics to be discussed
  - ☐ Optional: Backpack Trip Itinerary (can also be handed out at the pre-trip meeting)
  - ☐ Optional: Comprehensive Gear List
  - ☐ Forms: (these should be included in the template from Council)
    - ☐ Separate Trip-Specific Permission Forms for Classroom, Day Hike and Backpack Trip
    - ☐ General Council Permission and Health History Form (contains OTC Meds)
    - ☐ High Adventure Health History
    - ☐ Participant Commitment

## 2. Submit Confirmation Packet to Council at least 6 months prior to your class and verify room reservation

### Confirmation Packet Supplemental

This packet is sent to the participants by Council, usually about 1 month before the class.

- You will want a copy of the confirmation packet to send to your classroom adult volunteers and youth leaders.
- You will also find that some participants can't find their packet in their email -- it's helpful to send it to them when you send a welcome email.
- Ask all participants to print AND READ their confirmation packet prior to class. For girls whose parents receive the packet, request that they print the packet for their daughter, so they both can read it prior to class
- You can request that participants email you their paperwork in advance of the class. This saves you -- and your adult volunteers -- a lot of time. You can process and review the forms at your leisure, as well as make as many copies of their forms as you need.

## C. 3-6 Months in Advance

1. Obtain Wilderness Permit Reservation
2. Check Participant/Course Roster

## 1. Obtain Wilderness Permit Reservation

Reserving and paying for your permit must be done in advance of your trip. Depending on the location, you may be able to get your permit the week before your trip (Cleveland National Forest), but it's always best to Plan Ahead & Prepare by reserving your permit as early as possible, especially in areas of high demand (e.g. San Jacinto State Wilderness -- 8 weeks in advance).

- ☐ Contact the agency responsible for issuing wilderness permits
  - ☐ This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the area -- check for quotas, group size limits, camping and fire restrictions, and permit/parking fees
  - ☐ Call the agency and ask questions
  - ☐ Print and send permit request
    - ☐ Save receipt to be reimbursed by Council OR
    - ☐ Ask Council to issue the checks for the permit in advance, and send them into the agency on the necessary day

## 2. Check Course Roster

- ☐ Request your roster from Council.
- ☐ Check to see if there's still room in your class for more girls/adults, and if so, request that WHC-trained Girl Scouts are sent an announcement
- ☐ Consider increasing your group size and adding from your waitlist. Take into consideration that you will also have youth leaders and adult volunteers affecting your permit/group size.

## D. 2-3 Months in Advance

1. Secure Your Team - Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers for all 3 sections of the training
2. Identify equipment coordinator for the overnight gear. Make clear arrangements of how, when and where you will give them the equipment.
3. Schedule Pre-Training Planning Meeting with Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
4. Send Confirmation Packet to Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
5. Check Roster

### 1. Secure Your Team - Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers for all 3 sections of the training.

- ☐ Contact your potential Youth Leader & Adult Volunteers and request help with your class
  - ☐ You can ask your mentor and fellow trainers for references. Your own experience working with others will help you develop a team of Youth Leader/AVs that you'd like to work with.
  - ☐ After your Basic Backpack Class, use the evaluation to ask about interest in becoming a Youth Leader/Adult Volunteer. Keep a list of potential volunteers, and invite them the following year to help you train.
  - ☐ Cultivating Youth Leader/AVs is a constant process of developing new leaders, utilizing the experience of 'the old hands' and allowing both youth and Adult Volunteers to take on increasing -- an appropriate -- responsibility as they progress

with the program.

- ☐ The size of your Youth Leader/VL group will depend on:
  - ☐ How many volunteers you feel comfortable organizing
  - ☐ Your permit size -- how many volunteers can you accommodate along with having enough room for class participants
- ☐ Confirm your co-leader and/or 1st Aider, plus any other helpful supplemental roles: gear equipment coordinator, carpool coordinator, etc.
- ☐ Create a trainer/volunteer spreadsheet so you can keep track of paperwork, first aid certifications and who is available for which portions of the BBC training. All volunteers should be included on your spreadsheet.

## 2. Secure Equipment Coordinator

## 3. Schedule Pre-Training Planning Meeting with Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers

- ☐ Pick your planning date and send this date to your training crew.

## 4. Send Confirmation Packet to Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers

- ☐ Request that they bring copies of their paperwork/forms to your Pre-Training Planning Meeting. Or, if you prefer, have them email them to you in advance.

## 5. Check Roster

- ☐ Get an updated roster and review for class breakdown -- how many girls, adults, troops, single participants. This will inform your training crew of how many breakout groups you need, tubs of clothes to bring for relays, etc.

## Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers Supplemental

Our **Youth Leaders** are the best representatives of our program. They are capable & vibrant, and giving them the opportunity to progress into training develops their leadership skills and reinforces their backpack knowledge and skills. Their involvement -- teaching, mentoring, leading -- is what dovetails the backpacking program with the Girl Scout Mission, the GS Leadership Experience, and the concept of developing girls of Courage, Confidence and Character.

Our **Adult Volunteers** are on a parallel progression: regardless of age, being involved at this training level improves skills, knowledge, public speaking, confidence, leadership ability and credibility. All of our youth and Adult Volunteers have the potential to progress into hiking and backpack trainers and trip co-leaders or trip leaders.

From a Council Trainer's standpoint, utilizing Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers makes a training dynamic, and underlines the deep camaraderie we all share within this program. Coordinating a training team requires organization and a watchful eye & ear. As Council Trainers, we are ultimately responsible for all the information that is disseminated at our training. We need to reinforce accuracy, keep arrogance at bay, set an inclusive tone, help a nervous presenter, stay on schedule — all while managing the training itself and the class participants.

Being **well organized** is key to utilizing Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers. Preparing your crew in advance -- with your expectations, the schedule, the topics, the needs -- will give you a top-notch training team that helps you deliver a high quality, world class program.

Delivering a superb training also advances the abilities of your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers, helping them progress into more skillful leaders and trainers.

## **E. 3-4 Weeks in Advance**

1. Conduct Pre-Training Planning Meeting with Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
2. Ensure All Youth Leaders/Adult Volunteers have Training Shirts/Green Bandanas
3. Send Planning Meeting Follow-up Email to Team
4. Review Updated Roster

### **1. Conduct Pre-Training Planning Meeting to Plan Training Day and Day Hike**

Our Youth Leaders/Adult Volunteers need to appreciate that they are upholding the high standards of our program. The girls, especially, are significant role models for youthful trainees. The Youth Leader's respectful and knowledgeable demeanor says so much about our program: that Girl Scout backpackers are professional, credible, and safe, and that our girls are leaders, not followers.

- ☐ **Prepare Planning Meeting Handouts:** Included in Appendix
  - ☐ **Class Planner**
    - ☐ This handout helps them organize their day with you and prepare with their topic buddies
  - ☐ **Training Calendar**
    - ☐ Pass a spreadsheet with all your trainers' names and all your training dates to your group. Have them check their availability for all the dates so you know who you have for each component of the training, including pack checks.
  - ☐ **BBC Training Curriculum**
    - ☐ This outlines each topic and the expected outcomes. Your volunteers need to know the depth of each topic they are presenting
  - ☐ **Sample Schedule**
    - ☐ Fill in the blanks on who is covering what topic
    - ☐ Consider topic buddies -- a concept which provides moral support and double strength on a topic, especially teaming the more experienced with the newbies.
  - ☐ **Topic Outlines** -- to hand out to individuals training each topic
    - ☐ Help your volunteers brainstorm new ideas for good interactive presentations
    - ☐ Who's bringing what?
      - ☐ List every prop necessary to each topic (e.g. tents, stoves, water filters, sleeping bags/pads, backpacks, tape measures, mess kits, bear canister, backpack food....), and who is responsible for bringing it. It generally requires a group effort to have examples of different types of gear. Your roster size will determine how many stoves or water filters you need for group practice.

## ☐ **Expectations**

- ☐ Review these with your group. You can have your experienced volunteers each take a section to encourage group involvement and interest in this discussion.
- ☐ Outlining *your* responsibility to your Youth Leaders/AVs is crucial -- develop a good rapport with your group and let them know you won't let them down or let them fail. The fact that you have high expectations of yourself as a Council Trainer sets a standard of excellence from the top down.
- ☐ Spending 15 minutes outlining your expectations puts the whole group in a performance frame of mind: we're asking for your best work. New Youth/Adult Volunteers will be able to appreciate your standards, and the experienced will be able to help you set the tone of excellence. This level of organization gives the whole group a template to work from, and a sense of security.
- ☐ Asking for input: "What do you need from me?" or "How do you view your role in this training?" invites excellent processing among your team members, and reinforces that you are counting on their high standards and diligence for the training to be successful.
- ☐ No one wants to feel like they've been thrown to the wolves, especially if it involves public speaking. As lead trainer, you should be ready to help any presenter out of a jam, answer a difficult question from a trainee, and tactfully and diplomatically divert awkwardness away from your trainers, and help 'make it work'. You're there to help your people at all times.

## ☐ **Day Hike Information (from the confirmation packet) and Map**

- ☐ Review any general hike expectations you might have for your adult volunteers and youth leaders.
- ☐ You can create hike groups after the classroom training day when you have a better picture of group dynamics.
- ☐ Discuss Backpacker Bee and hike schedule
- ☐ Highlight the map -- or do this as a group activity at your backpack training
- ☐ Adventure pass and parking logistics - consider if need to notify others, especially if pass purchase is required
- ☐ Consider discussing your Safety Plan (see Safety Management), or postponing to a later date.

## **Supplemental**

- ☐ If you're playing a group introduction game, this is a good time to get your trainer's fun fact.
- ☐ Introduction Game: Each class participant gets a bio and has to find that trainer. At the start of class, each trainer introduces the participant, and vice versa.

## **Adjunct Duties**

Your Adult Volunteers and Youth Leaders can be of tremendous service to you by taking full or partial responsibility for certain tasks throughout your training. Consider delegating these types of jobs:

- ☐ Paperwork coordinator: reviewing and organizing all the health forms into leader/co-leader/1st aider packets
- ☐ Spreadsheet recording: paperwork, carpool / pack check sign-ups, money collection, gear rental
- ☐ Carpool coordinator
- ☐ Equipment Coordinator -- Council rental gear coordinator (or even portions of this job:

passing out gear, cleaning gear, returning gear to Council

## **2. Ensure All Youth Leaders/Adult Volunteers have Training Shirt/Green Bandana**

- ☐ Make a note of sizes
- ☐ Pick up tee shirts in the Resource Center (backpack gear shelves) and make sure each volunteer pays \$10/shirts

## **3. Send Planning Meeting Follow-up Email to your Training Team**

- ☐ Include a list of who is covering which topics
- ☐ Include a list of who is bringing which props
- ☐ Share list of names and numbers so people can work together directly
- ☐ Use this as your training day pack list

## **4. Review Updated Participant Roster from Council**

- ☐ Send an email to participants to verify they are committed and will be there for the entire training. This helps weed out those who are no longer able to participate, creates room for those on the waitlist, and eliminates no-shows.

## **F. 2 Weeks In Advance**

1. Submit Completed Training Handouts to Council for Printing
2. Prepare Supplemental Items
3. Coordinate transfer of council gear to next trip leader, if necessary

### **1. Submit Completed Training Handouts to Council for Printing**

- ☐ Training Day Schedule/Agenda
- ☐ Comprehensive Gear List
- ☐ Backpacking Nuts & Bolts (Council provided)
  - ☐ There are 2 sizes -- be sure to request your preference, if you have one
- ☐ Day hike maps
- ☐ Participant Commitment Form
- ☐ Topic Handouts
  - ☐ Sample Menu
  - ☐ Staying Found Worksheet

### **2. Prepare Supplemental Items**

- ☐ Evaluations - provide link to Council online evaluation/survey
- ☐ Rental Prices (REI, A16)
- ☐ Table placards -- Name recognition is better than sticker nametags, though the nametags are highly beneficial when you're away from the tables.

### **3. Coordinate transfer of Council gear**

- ☐ Your training or trip might either overlap another class, or be scheduled in close succession. Be sure to discuss gear needs with the other trainer:
  - ☐ What gear needs to be transferred
  - ☐ When will the gear be exchanged

- ☐ Where will the gear be dropped off -- at the Council Resource Center, or passed directly from one trainer to the next.

## **G. 1 - 2 Weeks in Advance**

1. Gather Materials
2. Create Spreadsheet for Paperwork Collection
3. Send Welcome Email to Participants

### **1. Gather Materials**

- ☐ Props for the training day
- ☐ Collect BBC badges for class graduates
- ☐ Update and include AV PowerPoint, computer, flash drive

### **2. Create a Spreadsheet for Paperwork Collection based on your roster**

- ☐ Include fields for each form, carpool sign-ups, pack check sign-ups
- ☐ Create a second spreadsheet for your Youth Leaders/ Adult Volunteers

### **3. Send Welcome Email to Participants**

- ☐ This email is your first opportunity to welcome all those on your roster who have committed to your class. By reaching out, you have an opportunity to project your professionalism and organization. You can set a tone of efficiency and friendliness, troubleshoot as needed, as well as develop a foundation of trust with your trainees.
- ☐ Ensure that they've received your confirmation packet.
- ☐ Possibly request they scan and email their health forms to you ahead of time. This allows you to collate and review the forms prior to your classroom training and hike.
- ☐ Possibly request an on-time arrival to class.

## **H. The Week Before**

- ☐ Print table place cards (unless Council is doing this for you)
- ☐ Pick up Q & A candy
- ☐ Pick up Backpacker Bee prize
- ☐ Pick up room key and handouts from Council
- ☐ Gather registration materials
  - ☐ extra permission slips and health forms
  - ☐ name tags
  - ☐ pens (plus red pen for health forms)
  - ☐ highlighters
  - ☐ scissors
  - ☐ stapler
  - ☐ **ROSTER** on a clipboard
  - ☐ Spreadsheets
- ☐ Collate training packets



- ☐ Insert all handouts in the Nuts & Bolts
- ☐ Use name placard to “wrap” the Nuts & Bolts

## I. Training Day

### **Pack your car the night before:**

- ☐ Registration materials: roster, paperwork spreadsheet, pens, name tags, name placards
- ☐ Room/facility key
- ☐ Topic Props
- ☐ Q & A candy
- ☐ Picture display boards/books from GS Backpack Trips
- ☐ Topic outlines (all of them, in case of sick trainer)
- ☐ Training Day Collated Handouts:
  - ☐ Training Schedule
  - ☐ Nuts & Bolts
  - ☐ Day hike topo map
  - ☐ Comprehensive Gear List
  - ☐ Participant Commitment Form
  - ☐ Topic Handouts
    - ☐ Sample Menu
    - ☐ Staying Found Worksheet
- ☐ Supplemental:
  - ☐ Evaluations
  - ☐ Rental Prices (REI, A16)
  - ☐ Table placards -- Name recognition is better than sticker nametags, though the nametags are highly beneficial when you're away from the tables.
  - ☐ Any training bios (for introduction game), LNT cupcake coupons, or other fun stuff
  - ☐ Backpacker's Cookbook

### **Arrive Early:**

Give yourself at *least* one hour to set up so you aren't frazzled. Don't go it alone: your entire group can help you set up the room, organize your registration table, put up picture boards, and get ready for the sequence of topics with their corresponding props. Delegate, but don't micromanage. Be a hero: provide donuts for your crew.

### **Powwow:**

Gather your trainers together about 30 minutes before the curtain goes up. Walk through the schedule and ask each person what they need for their topic in terms of props, help, setting up, breaking down, etc. Reinforce your ethic of support. Point out your needs and delegate tasks:

- ☐ Clean up and put away props after each topic
- ☐ Be ready to jump in and help
- ☐ Breakout group help needed -- lighting stoves, pumping water, etc.
- ☐ Delegate: greeters, registration, health form processors, prepping sample backpack food

### **Collect Trainee and Volunteer Paperwork:**

Delegate this job to an Adult Volunteer. Or two. The permissions slips, OTC meds and health history forms for the classroom training, day hike and trip should be collected from each

participant, and recorded on a spreadsheet—that way you can clearly see who is missing paperwork. Stacking them alphabetically, and stapling the girls' forms together helps keep your paperwork organized and easy to locate in an emergency.

Each health history should be scanned for health issues, concerns and allergies that could either hinder a person's participation in the trip, be a safety issue, or become life threatening. Examples: recently sprained ankle, bee sting allergies, OTC meds allergies, diabetes, deaf, asthma, etc.—highlight these in yellow. Make a note of any life-threatening condition in red at the top of the form.

### **Welcome Table:**

Ask one or two of your volunteers (adult or youth) to help the participants with sign-in, picking up handouts, making a name tag, etc.

### **Start on Time:**

Make a commitment to begin and end your training on time. Share this with your trainees, so that they know you respect their time and your own training schedule. Your commitment to ensuring a timely and enjoyable training helps build that foundation of trust and appreciation between you and your group.

### **Group Introductions:**

Play a quick introduction game to start the getting-to-know-you process. You're going on vacation with these people, and everyone needs to get to know each other.

### **Welcome:**

Fire up your group and fill them with enthusiasm for all things backpacking: the training, the trip, the ideals, the progression, the youth leaders, and our ethic of respecting and looking after one another.

#### ☐ Consider:

- ☐ Discuss Participant Commitment form: this has 3 essential components -- "Be Here", "Be Here Now", and "Electronics Off". Discussing these concepts before you start ensures there's an agreement being made to attend all sections of the training, to pay attention and be respectful during the training, and to minimize phones in backpacking.
- ☐ Survey your group: do you have beginners, people with some experience, or expert backpackers in your training? Acknowledging that we are training all levels, and developing new skills at all levels, sends a powerful message. Beginners need a starting place; moderately experienced backpackers will want to augment their skills; experts will want to learn Girl Scout protocols, and how we develop our girls into such fine leaders. Message received: we all have something to learn.
- ☐ Three themes that run through all our trainings:
  - ☐ Separation of girls and adults -- to build girl self-responsibility and confidence
  - ☐ Safety First! And prevention is the key to our safety.
  - ☐ The Wilderness Ethic -- we look after our fellow hikers

### **Designate a Timekeeper:**

Someone needs to keep their eye on the clock. Some topics might run overtime, and that might be okay. An important and valuable group discussion is sometimes worth an extra 5 minutes. Don't let your time disappear on you, though. Keep moving your topics forward. Give the speaker a high sign that it's time to wrap up.

### **Listen to all Presentations:**

You are ultimately responsible for all the information disseminated at a training. Mutual trust and respect are key to helping your Adult Volunteers and Youth Leaders present material. Listen to all your presenters for quality and clarity of information. It takes some tact to clarify accuracy without potentially embarrassing your volunteers. If information is incomplete, you might ask the presenter if she cares to elaborate, or would she like you to do that. You need to be prepared to step into any topic, but without stepping on your trainers' toes. Ultimately, you want your presenters to feel supported, not overwhelmed. They need to know you are there to back them up at all times.

### **Evaluations:**

At the end of the day, relax together for a debrief and mocha. The extra hour on the day is worth the time and small effort, to ensure your group has a chance to review what went well, what went wrong, what felt right, and what didn't work for them. Some of the best ideas result from this gathering, and having the chance to ***review helps detach from the rigors of the day and transition to a fresher mind set.***

### **Day Hike Preparation for Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers:**

Take an extra 10 minutes and confirm your volunteers all have a ride to the day hike trailhead, that they have a map (highlighted) and understand your needs and expectations for the hike. Discuss key risks, considering the location, weather, and other physical features that might present a hazard to your group.

### **Celebrate:**

What an accomplishment!!

## **VI. SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

1. Manage Health and Permission Forms
2. Transporting Girl Scouts -- A Message to Volunteer Drivers Form
3. Discuss Health & Welfare and Key Concerns
4. Identify and Plan for Key Risks
5. Prepare an Overall Safety Plan
6. Prepare and Distribute a Safety Management Plan (SMP)
7. Prepare Leader Resource Packets
8. Configure & Test SOS device

### **1. Manage Health and Permission Forms**

Excellent safety management begins with the information on your trainees' permission forms, Over The Counter Medications Forms, and the most current High Adventure Health History Forms.

#### **☐ Copy Permission Slips and Form for Leaders**

Create a permission slip/health history packet for every hiking group. If your group size is 15 or less, two packets (one carried by the leader, one packet for the 1<sup>st</sup> aider) should be sufficient. The bigger your group, the more hiking groups you will need, and each hiking group leader should carry a paperwork packet. That way, hikers can move from group to group without having to re-shuffle forms.

Each minor will have a Trip or Event Permission Form (for the trip), Girl Health History and Annual Permission form and a Health History High Adventure / Wilderness Hiking / Backpacking Form. Staple all three together, and arrange all participants' paperwork alphabetically in one packet. Store in a Ziplock bag for travel.

Each Adult will have a Health History High Adventure / Wilderness Hiking / Backpacking form and Transporting Girl Scouts -- A Message to Volunteer Drivers Form.

### ☐ **Preview Thoroughly**

Read each form thoroughly (and cross check forms for accuracy), looking for:

- Life-threatening/severe allergies or conditions
- Physical conditions that might affect the person's ability to participate
- Medications that might affect performance, behavior, or health on the trip
- Outdoor concerns that might be an issue on the trip

Any concerns you have after reading these forms need to be addressed. Call the individual (or her parents) and discuss any issue that has raised a red flag for you, or you don't understand.

Any life threatening or severe condition should be written in red on top of the health history. That way, anyone picking up that form will immediately see that information.

### ☐ **Obtain Updated Information**

At your pre-trip meeting, ask your participants if any information needs to be updated on their forms. Reiterate the need for thoroughness. The group's safety depends on each individual's commitment to prioritizing good health practices.

### ☐ **Maintain Privacy and Trust**

As a leader, you have to balance respecting each person's health privacy with managing your group's safety. Creating trust between you and each participant, as well as *among* participants, is crucial for the sharing process to take place. An effective leader can respect each person's privacy while encouraging each individual to share any important health issues/concerns with the group. Train your group to share pertinent health information, and to value the health & welfare discussions before each hike/trip.

## **2. Discuss Health & Welfare and Key Concerns**

### ☐ **Begin Trip or Hike with Group Discussion**

Begin very trip or day hike with a group discussion of any health issues or concerns each person might have. The leader should initiate the discussion, and underscore the importance of sharing this information. The farther progressed the various members of your group, the more effective the discussion. Youth and Adult Volunteers serve a great purpose here in demonstrating a relaxed, honest and frank health & welfare talk.

### ☐ **Ask Key Questions**

Ideally you've had a chance to call anyone you have concerns about, but sometimes you've collected all your paperwork on Training Saturday, and your hike is Sunday. The H & W discussion allows you ask a few questions or follow up with concerns of your own:

- "You have asthma: what triggers your asthma attacks?" "Where in your pack to you keep your inhaler?" "When was the last time you used your inhaler?"
- "You carry two EpiPens — that's great. Show us where you keep those."
- "Your knee gets sore hiking downhill; do you wear a brace or wrap?" "Let me know if that

gets sore today, so we can keep an eye on it.” “Feel free to borrow my trekking poles.”

- “You’re allergic to peanuts. How severe is your reaction? Do we need to have a peanut free zone on our hike/ in our camp?”

### 3. Identify and Plan for Key Risks

#### ☐ Review key risks

Prior to every day hike or trip, engage your group in a discussion of the expected key risks (physical features that pose a hazard for your group). Analyzing risks in the expected trail conditions, weather, stream crossings, and local flora and fauna help your group with the proper preparation, as well as how you expect to deal with these risks in the field. Reviewing key risks in advance is helpful because your group can then be prepared with the correct gear, if necessary. Reviewing at the trailhead will certainly suffice, if the opportunity to do it sooner doesn’t present itself.

### 4. Prepare an Overall Safety Plan

Having an overall safety plan that you can present to your leaders and your participants helps everyone -- including yourself -- during a backcountry emergency. A clearly defined plan helps you and your group visualize and understand the expectations and needs that arise during an emergency, and as a result, your group members can effectively respond and help right alongside you.

#### ☐ In building and writing your plan, consider:

- ☐ In an emergency, what should the leader be doing?
- ☐ What should the first aider be doing?
- ☐ What additional resources will you have available, for example, a satellite phone, SPOT or DeLorme? Who in your group is Wilderness First Responder/First Aid, or 1st Aid & CPR?
- ☐ What are your expectations of those going for help? Should they be in a minimum group size? Should they have, at minimum, their daypack with 10+2, and be wearing boots?
- ☐ If you separate into different camp or hiking groups, how do you expect to communicate a first aid need to each other?
- ☐ If you’re in multiple campsites (like San Jacinto), identify the one camp site where everyone meets up for all information, group gatherings, etc.
- ☐ What are your emergency protocols? And how do they play out? Who do they affect?
  - ☐ Life/Limb threatening injury
    - ☐ Push SOS on PLB safety device (e.g. Spot, InReach)?
  - ☐ Evacuate the patient?
    - ☐ Notify the ranger
    - ☐ Leader/Adult hike out with the patient?
    - ☐ How do you manage the patient’s gear?
    - ☐ How do you get supplies to the patient/rescuers?
  - ☐ Treat in place
    - ☐ Plans to monitor the patient
    - ☐ Your evacuation plan if they are declining, and not waiting too late in the day to evacuate
  - ☐ Transport to a hospital?
    - ☐ Who is going to meet the patient?
    - ☐ Who is going to notify the family (and how?)

### ☐ **Communicating your Safety Plan with your Leadership Team**

Take the time to write up your plan, and communicate your needs to your leadership team. With their participation, analyze the different needs that may arise on your trip. A frank discussion of potential needs creates a calm space for you and your leaders, knowing that the resources you need are in place for your trip.

- ☐ What roles might be necessary in an emergency: messengers, runners, first aiders, hand holders, tent putter uppers, coffee/tea makers, camp chores
- ☐ Who is willing to stay at -- or return to -- camp with a sick hiker?
- ☐ Who feels comfortable with hiking out to the ranger station, or accompanying a minor to a medical facility?

### ☐ **Communicating your Safety Plan with your Participants**

You may choose to merely review your Safety Management Plan with your entire group, or spend a little time discussing the bigger picture of your Safety Plan. Giving your trainees insight on your emergency and safety considerations will help the adults be better outdoor leaders, and give your entire group a confidence that is gained by knowing that this trip is well-thought-out. And ultimately, if you put any portion of your safety plan into action, your entire group will be aligned and on board with the plan.

### ☐ **Where does the Safety Plan land in your timeline?**

You can fill out the SMP form months before your trip, but you want it complete by your pre-trip meeting.

- ☐ Give a copy (including roster w/ emergency numbers) to the Council the week before you leave.
- ☐ You can communicate your safety plan to your leadership team in a few ways:
  - ☐ Your leadership meeting a month prior to your training day
  - ☐ A 1/2 -hour meeting prior to your pre-trip planning meeting
  - ☐ Via email, especially if you're working with an established Adult and Youth leadership team.

## **4. Prepare and Distribute a Safety Management Plan (SMP) Included in Appendix**

### **Purpose**

The Safety Management Plan (SMP) is a highly useful form that helps you gather and document the principle resources available to you and your group in an emergency. The form includes basic trip data (leader, location, dates) as well as your permitting ranger station, the in-town contact and Council contact information, who/how to contact during a backcountry emergency, the closest medical care facility, your itinerary with daily evacuation plans (and location of alternative exits) for each location on your trip, and your complete roster with each individual's emergency contact information.

### **Value**

By virtue of filling out the SMP, you will become intimately acquainted with all the safety resources available to you, your in-town contact, and your participants well before the trip. During any backcountry emergency, a well-thought-out safety plan keeps your group united, working cooperatively toward similar outcomes. Your SMP is the first step in providing emergency plans for everyone who has a hand in the outcomes--the leader, the participants, the in-town contact and Council.

Filling out the daily itinerary, with an evacuation plan for each day, allows your entire group to visualize the alternative exits on your trip, as well as give them an understanding what might be expected of them in an emergency. It also takes the guesswork out of evacuation options, and -- since the plan was created with a cool head -- you just have to follow the plan, not start creating one, if an evacuation is necessary at any point in the trip.

☐ **Distribute SMP Logistics to your group and to Council**

- ☐ Hand out the SMP at the pre-trip meeting. Discuss it immediately, or alternatively, point out the crucial information and save the discussion of the finer details until you're in camp.
- ☐ Ask that each participant keep their SMP in their first aid kit (with their High Adventure Health History) and that a copy is left at home for their family.
- ☐ Provide copy of SMP to Council.

**5. Prepare Leader Resource Packets**

- ☐ Keep all your trip paperwork together, in a Ziplock bag, in your pack -- Health forms, Safety Management Plan and attached Roster with emergency phone numbers. When the heat is on during a backcountry emergency, all your resources will be together in one place -- easy to grab for you or anyone else in your group.

## **VII. DAY HIKE**

1. Utilize Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
2. Have Trip Leader Accompany Adult Hiking Group to Cover Key Topics
3. Utilize Backpacker Bee to Increase Knowledge
4. After the Hike - Address the Whole Group

**1. Utilize Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers**

- ☐ Have a plan to utilize your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers on the hike.
  - ☐ Ensure that your Youth Leaders are supervised by your Adult Volunteers if you're breaking into smaller hike groups
  - ☐ Outline your expectations: What do you need your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers to do? Conduct a backpacker bee? Lead the hike? Supervise? Conduct a Health & Welfare circle? Be the First Aider? Schmooze with the participants? Interact with solo participants?
  - ☐ Be sure at least 1 person in each of your hiking groups is familiar with the route.
  - ☐ Each group has a packet of health history/permission forms
  - ☐ Highlight map for the day
  - ☐ Review Safety Circle (Health & Welfare, Key Risks & Concerns)
  - ☐ Review orienting the map to MN at start of hike
- ☐ Follow up after the hike with your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers -- especially if you broke into smaller hiking groups -- to discuss any concerns or notable points -- health, trust, personality issues, or even special friendships -- that arose on the hike. This information might help you make your camp/cook/tent assignments for your trip

## 2. Have Trip Leader Accompany Adult Hiking Group to Cover Key Topics

- ☐ Segregating the adult participants into their own hike group with the Council Trainer gives you a chance to take adult learners behind the scenes in the WHY of what we do in our program.
- ☐ Difference between a Beginning Training Trip & and advanced trip
  - ☐ Adv—we don't dictate the terms, girl-planned itinerary
  - ☐ Beg—not enough experience yet to plan the details, plenty to do already just learning the ropes
  - ☐ Offer example situations of both kinds of trips
- ☐ Pack Checks—the value of adults getting pack checked, even though they may already be experienced, is that they get to see us *model* a good pack check. This is a skill that they can take back to their troop in the future. We don't do this to patronize or put an adult on the spot. Discussing this can take the edge off having a pack check from some of your adults.
- ☐ The adult role—learning alongside your girl
  - ☐ You're learning backpack skills, and trip leadership skills, simultaneously
  - ☐ Remember to laugh at your mistakes
- ☐ Take a vacation from your daughter -- let the Adult Volunteers / Youth Leaders remind your girls to put on sunscreen, put on their hats/sunglasses, etc. Let your daughter make mistakes, and understand that we'll keep a close eye on the girls so that they're safe. If you're concerned, say something to the leader.
- ☐ Personal vs GS trip differences
- ☐ Yesterday's long day -- de-brief, discuss needs
- ☐ Experienced participants -- demonstrate our respect for them; understanding how we utilize backpacking as a vehicle for creating these amazing youth leaders, and realizing our desired outcomes
- ☐ Answer program questions
- ☐ Build trust and openness within your group. This trust will have excellent value for all of you on the training trip.
- ☐ Encourage conditioning in preparation

## 3. Utilize Backpacker Bee to Increase Knowledge

The purpose of the Bee is to discover any training deficits from the day before. What information are the girls still missing? Be sure to fill in any gaps!

- ☐ Game: Have each girl hike group play the Bee until you have a clear winner from each group. Have a BEE-OFF (single elimination) at lunch, or the end of your hike. Give the winner a round of well-deserved applause from the whole group and a prize (a Nalgene, trekking poles from the store cupboard....)

## 4. After The Hike--Address the Whole Group

- ☐ Yesterday -- long day, go you!
  - ☐ This is an adult training attended by girls -- so much information!
  - ☐ Lifetimes of information given to you in one go. Don't expect to absorb it in 1 day. By the end of the trip, you'll have it down. On successive trips, you'll dial it in.
- ☐ Today's hike --
  - ☐ a good way to see what you need to do to be ready for our trip
  - ☐ Your clothes



- ☐ Your boots
- ☐ Your gear
- ☐ Your fitness
- ☐ See you at the Pre-Trip Meeting (reminder of date, time, and location)

## **VIII. TRIP PLANNING**

1. Review Expectations
2. Prepare Supplemental Activities
3. Review Safety Plan
4. Send Paperwork to Council
5. Organize Final Paperwork

### **1. Review Expectations**

The training trip is the best reward for all your efforts--your group is organized, packed and ready to go. Planning these last details will ensure your trip is safe, enjoyable and the perfect capstone to the entire training experience.

- ☐ Know your trail. Personally check it out (or call the ranger) for any environmental changes that require a trip adjustment (ie. water cache, snow or rain)
- ☐ If you haven't already, clearly define your expectations for your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers. What do you need people to do, and when?
  - ☐ Who is your First Aider?
  - ☐ Who is your Co-Leader?
  - ☐ Do you need an additional camp leader?
  - ☐ Are you breaking into Hike-in groups? Which Adult Volunteers and Youth Leaders are leading each group?
  - ☐ What are your expectations/needs for supervising?

### **2. Prepare Supplemental Activities**

Adding additional knowledge, skills and experiences to your training might depend on what sort of expertise you, the area--or your volunteers and participants--have to offer. Consider:

- ☐ Advancing map & compass skills
- ☐ A Safety Management tea & roundtable for adults
- ☐ Improving knot tying skills
- ☐ Doing a service project
- ☐ Enjoying a Night Sky Star Party
- ☐ Morning yoga
- ☐ Ranger/naturalist-led talk; career exploration
- ☐ Peak bagging or other day hike

### **3. Review Safety Plan**

Review your safety plan with your training team ahead of time, to take advantage of their input.

- ☐ First aider--What are your expectations? What are theirs?
- ☐ Co-leader--In an emergency, what are your expectations? What are theirs?
- ☐ Resources--

- ☐ Who has what safety/first aid gear?
- ☐ Who has the paperwork -- are there copies of paperwork packets for each hike leader?
- ☐ Who is prepared to be a 'runner' -- someone who might be needed to walk to a ranger station and get help, or walk back up the mountain to provide help in an emergency?
- ☐ Who has WFA or WFR? 1st Aid & CPR? Do you have medical professionals in your group of participants?
- ☐ Who is carrying the Safety Device? (Council will provide a SPOT device.)
- ☐ Fire evacuation plan--in Southern California, a wise discussion
  - ☐ In fire season, consider having the group pack their day packs in the evening. This serves two purposes: if there is a fire you can evacuate quickly, but the bonus (since it's likely there won't be any fires)--in the morning, the day packs are loaded (minus food and water) and your group is just that much closer to hitting the trail for their day hike.
- ☐ Emergency protocols
  - ☐ Where's your meeting spot in an emergency?
  - ☐ Review your evacuation plan (on your SMP)

#### **4. Send Paperwork to Council**

- ☐ Send a copy of your completed Safety Management Plan and Roster (with emergency contacts) to the Program Specialist at Council

#### **5. Organize Final Paperwork**

- ☐ Update your packet of participant health forms, culling those who've dropped and permission slips you no longer need. Your packet (and that of your co-leader/Mentor) should include:
  - ☐ Health forms, OTC Meds form, and Trip Permission form for each minor
  - ☐ Health forms for each adult
  - ☐ Transportation forms for all drivers
  - ☐ A copy of the SMP and Roster with emergency contact information

## **IX. PRE-TRIP MEETING**

1. Complete Preparations 1 Week in Advance of Pre-Trip Meeting
2. Prepare Meeting Handouts
3. Gather Meeting Inventory
4. Lead Meeting/Cover Pre-Trip Checkpoints
5. Break Into Camp Groups for Planning
6. Distribute Council Rental Gear
7. Utilize your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
8. Send Email Wrap-Up

#### **1. Complete Preparations 1 Week in Advance of Pre-Trip Meeting**

- ☐ Send email reminder to your entire group

- ☐ Send Handouts to Council to make copies
- ☐ Complete your Final Trip Roster (spreadsheet) -- since your group will likely have some attrition, compile this final spreadsheet the week before your meeting. This spreadsheet will be given to the Program Specialist at Council who needs to know exactly who is going on your trip.
  - ☐ List all volunteers (including you) and trip participants
  - ☐ Name, Emergency Contact, First Aid certifications, and any other information that is important to have completed (money for tram, carpool sign-up, etc.)
- ☐ Pick up Room Key & Handouts
- ☐ Pick up any Council Rental Gear

## **2. Prepare Meeting Handouts (included in the Appendix)**

- ☐ Trip Itinerary Packet
- ☐ Trip Map
- ☐ Safety Management Plan
- ☐ Blank Menu Planner
- ☐ Comprehensive Gear List
- ☐ Pack Check Handout (how to be ready)
- ☐ Gear Rental Forms
- ☐ Camplists, if you are in more than one camp -- this lists who is in each camp, who is the leader in charge of that camp, and who is the camp 1st aider. This list is helpful when you're trying to project in advance of your meeting who might tent with whom, or who would work well in a cook group together. At the planning meeting, when you break into camp groups, you and your adult volunteers can use this list to keep track of the actual tent and cook group breakdown.

## **3. Gather Meeting Inventory**

- ☐ Carpool Sign-Up sheet
- ☐ Meeting Agenda -- Council Trainer version
- ☐ Trip Roster Spreadsheet
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Council Rental Gear (if you're lending it out at your meeting)
- ☐ Gear Rental forms
- ☐ Gear Rental Master List

## **4. Lead Meeting/Cover Pre-Trip Meeting Checkpoints**

- ☐ Introductions
- ☐ Collect any money due, ensure that you have everyone's paperwork
- ☐ Trip Roster—have participants check emergency names/numbers for accuracy
- ☐ Trip Itinerary—review the day-to-day activities, mileage, whether or not you're breaking into smaller hike-in groups (and how).
- ☐ Trail Conditions Update
- ☐ Pack Checks—explanation, handout, sign-up sheet
- ☐ Carpools—driving instructions/information, sign-up sheet
  - ☐ Cross check this list later with your roster to ensure that everyone has a ride.
- ☐ Review map—have your group highlight their route on the map. Point out places of interest, or notable landmarks (like ranger stations, creek crossings, peaks)

- ☐ Review Comprehensive Gear List -- add/subtract any items, point out that community gear will be decided momentarily when you break out in camp groups
- ☐ Safety Management Plan -- pass out the SMP with a brief explanation of its purpose. You can choose to go into greater detail, or wait till the first afternoon of your trip to elaborate on this topic. The advantage of waiting is that you already have a lot to accomplish at this meeting, and you may choose to go into greater safety management with just the adults on your training trip.
  - ☐ Request that a copy be left for family at home
  - ☐ One copy in participant's first aid kit
- ☐ Key Risks

## 5. Break into Camp Groups for Planning

- ☐ Break into Camp Groups -- One Adult Volunteer can take charge of each camp group, ensuring that there are enough water filters for the entire camp group, then determining tent divisions and cook group divisions.
- ☐ Tent divisions: Girls tent with girls, women with women, men with men (though they generally prefer to tent solo)
- ☐ Cook Groups: Create girl cook groups (maybe with Youth Leaders) separate from adult cook groups. Each cook group will need its own stove & fuel.
- ☐ Meal Planning: Youth and Adult Volunteers can assist the cook groups in their planning. Use the blank menu planner to assist in the organization of meal planning.
- ☐ Determine community gear needs
- ☐ Who's bringing what community gear?

### ***Pro Tip!***

Request all cook groups send a picture or a copy of their gear division and meal plan to you. That way you have a master list of who is bringing what gear and what food. This will come in handy for pack checks, as well as in the event someone drops out.

## 6. Distribute Council Rental Gear

## 7. Utilize your Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers

- ☐ They can help you run the meeting, collect money, paperwork, sign-up sheets
- ☐ They can help you deliver information about the trip itinerary, safety -- whatever you feel comfortable unloading to others -- to help break up the one-gal show.
- ☐ They can help participants plan food & gear.
- ☐ They can help you pass out gear, as long as you give instructions regarding the Gear Master List

## 8. Send Wrap-Up Email

A written document of Carpool sign ups (note that sharing cost of gas with driver is appropriate) Pack Check sign ups, and any other follow up information is valuable for keeping you and your group organized.

# X. COUNCIL GEAR RENTAL MANAGEMENT

1. Coordinate Gear Use with Other Trainers
2. Gear Rental Framework

3. Gear Return
4. Gear Maintenance Sheets

### 1. Coordinate Gear Use with Other Trainers

It's best to schedule trainings and trips with ample time for gear pick up and return, but that's not always the case. Here are some tips:

- ☐ Contact the trainer with whom you're coordinating gear, *well in advance* of your training trips. Agree on a date/time/place to pass off gear from one training to the next.
- ☐ Be considerate of each other's needs
- ☐ Keep your gear rentals posted in the Resource Center Backpacking Supply Area, so others know where all the gear is at any given moment

#### **Pro Tip!**

Ask an adult volunteer to be your equipment coordinator -- the person in charge of Gear Rental. Be sure to define the parameters of the job. Make sure you both understand exactly what your equipment coordinator will be doing, so you know what you still need to do to complete the task of responsibly renting and returning gear to the Resource Center Backpack Stores.

### 2. Gear Rental Framework

- ☐ Distribute Gear Rental Sheets at your Pre-Trip Meeting
- ☐ Collect the sheets when you pass out gear
- ☐ Maintain a Master Gear Rental Sheet (see Appendix)
  - ☐ This sheet will be used to mark returned gear at the end of your trip
  - ☐ Keep this sheet current, marking any changes that occur at Pack Checks or before the trip
- ☐ After the trip, collect all gear and mark it on your Master Sheet as returned with a date
  - ☐ Participants can use their pack cover (trash bag) to take home all their gear
  - ☐ Decide if you are going to wash tents and sleeping bag liners, or have this done by your participants and returned to you
  - ☐ All gear gets returned to the Council Trainer, not the Resource Center

### 3. Gear Return

- ☐ All gear must be returned to the Resource center Backpack Supply Area clean, dry, and stored properly
- ☐ The Trip Leader is ultimately responsible for returning all rental gear in great condition, with all parts, or informing Council of any broken parts, missing bits and needed repairs.

### 4. Gear Maintenance Sheets

These handouts (see Appendix) can be given to your participants so that all gear is cleaned, dried and stored properly, and returned in excellent condition.

## XI. PACK CHECKS

1. Prepare for Pack Checks
2. Weigh Packs
3. Check Contents
4. Adjust Packs

## 5. Utilize Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers

### 1. Prepare for Pack Checks

#### ☐ Understand Desired Outcomes

- ☐ Appropriate pack weight for each individual
- ☐ Pack adjusted properly
- ☐ Gear checked against Comprehensive Gear List
- ☐ Food checked for amounts, weight, nutrition, group components
- ☐ Community gear cross-checked
- ☐ Role modeling a proper pack check
- ☐ Growing confidence

#### ☐ Gather Needed Equipment/Materials

- ☐ Scale (bathroom and kitchen styles)
- ☐ Blank copies of gear lists
- ☐ Pens & highlighter
- ☐ Pad of paper
- ☐ Loaner gear/clothes (if available)
- ☐ Master list of camp group community gear
- ☐ Also of value: Ziplock bags, varied sizes
- ☐ Needle nosed pliers for adjusting clevis pins on external frame packs
- ☐ Council Rental Gear, as needed

**Pro Tip:** each pack check takes about 30 minutes, but can be much longer with an ill-prepared or disorganized trainee. This disarray may reflect a training deficit, or an inattentive trainee, or possibly a parent who isn't on board with our training goals. Be prepared to completely gut a pack, weigh items to reinforce 'light is right', replace gear / clothing with better choices, and adjust -- and readjust -- a pack till you (and the trainee) get it right. Having helpers is of great benefit.

### 2. Weigh Packs

- ☐ Packs should weigh 20-25% of one's body weight, and probably shouldn't exceed 35#, *especially* for a 1- to 3-day training trip. Girls' packs typically weigh 25-30 pounds on a training trip.
- ☐ Determining the pack weight at the beginning of the pack check gives you a heads up on whether you're going to want to eliminate gear as you examine the pack's contents. Conversely, a low pack weight might alert you to missing gear or not enough food.
- ☐ On a bathroom scale: weigh yourself, then weigh yourself with pack. Subtract for the difference = pack weight

Note: girls and women are often self-conscious about weighing themselves. Consider weighing all packs yourself.

### 3. Check Contents

- ☐ Using a blank Comprehensive Gear List, check off every item in the pack. Have the trainee locate each item for you. You will quickly realize if a girl packed her own pack, or her mother/father did it for her. (Something merely to observe, that's all.) Be sure to address the girl trainee, even if her parent wants to answer your questions.

- ☐ Examine all items for appropriateness, weight, and duplicity. Mark the Gear List with missing items, or items that need replacing; this list can go home with the trainee. Keep a master list of any borrowed gear/clothing to ensure you get it back at the end of the trip.
- ☐ Ensure that their hike-in clothes/boots are in a "Go Bag", whether at pack check or home.
- ☐ Use this opportunity to discuss merits (or otherwise) of gear/ clothing, in a non-confrontational way. You don't want your trainee to feel embarrassed or defensive about their choices, but you do want to educate them on goals like lighter weight or more functional items. Help her appreciate that this first pack check is part of the progression; every time she goes backpacking she'll be more confident in finding her items, and selecting the right gear.
- ☐ Review each person's community gear to ensure all members of a cook group have their stove/fuel, or tent mates have their corresponding gear. You might keep a master list of each cook/tent group's components so you can follow up at pack checks that are scheduled later.
- ☐ Review their food choices and amounts, ensuring that any shared food with a cook group is accounted for. Check, too, that their food is properly stored in a nylon stuff sack (or bear canister, if applicable).
- ☐ Adults generally appreciate a thorough pack check and fitting. Occasionally, an adult will get defensive with their gear or stubborn about their choices. Since it is a learning trip, diplomatically pointing out your observations is generally sufficient to encourage a willing frame of mind. Still, unless their choices somehow endanger them or the group, let them make their choices and learn. All adults, however, benefit from understanding that you are role modeling a pack check for them that they can ultimately reproduce if they take their girls out on trips in the future.
- ☐ Pack checks also give you another opportunity to connect with each person on a personal basis before the trip. This helps build trust and encourages confidence in your group.

#### 4. Adjust Packs

A well-fitting pack can mean the difference between a great backpacking trip and prolonged torture. Take the time to ensure that each trainee's pack fits comfortably. With an extremely poor fitting pack, you may need to encourage the participant (or parent) to rent a different pack.

Sensitivity issue: adjusting pack straps can really put you in a girl's personal space. Being respectful while trying not to touch trainees in sensitive areas requires a bit of maneuvering and a mutual sense of humor. If you need to adjust straps connected to the shoulder harness (sternum strap, load lifters), you might suggest she take the shoulder strap off the one shoulder while you work on it. Let your trainee attach her own sternum strap.

Fitting packs properly is an acquired art. The more packs you adjust, the more familiar you will become with various adjustment systems, and which adjustments have the desired results.

- ☐ Pack fitting basics:
  1. Loosen all straps
  2. Clip hip belt over hip bones, or slightly above on the iliac crest, and tighten
  3. Tighten shoulder straps
  4. Slowly draw in load lifters
  5. Attach sternum strap

Encourage your trainees to adjust their packs in order: hip belt, shoulder harness, load lifters, and finally, sternum strap. Tightening out of order is most often the cause of an ill-fitting pack.

☐ Hip belt:

Should fit securely. The belt should not be maxed out in either direction: there should be several inches of tightening room left over. And the cushioned padding should extend fully over the pelvis. Improve the fit on narrow-hipped girls by wrapping their fleece sweatshirt around their hips for extra padding.

☐ Shoulder harness:

Should have 2 - 4 inches of webbing adjustment left over after tightening.

☐ Load lifters:

Should raise the top of the shoulder harness 1 - 2 fingers above the shoulders. Aim for a 45 degree angle from the top of the shoulder to where the load lifter strap connects with the pack. Load lifters ideally lift from the top of the shoulder strap; adjusting the lifting point can often make a big improvement in comfort.

☐ Sternum strap:

☐ Optional. Make sure it is adjusted so that it doesn't ride too low over the chest, or too high near the neck.

☐ Troubleshoot as needed:

☐ Adjusting the torso length of the pack:

☐ You will quickly notice a pack that is too short in the torso. Fully loaded, it will ride up above the waistline, and/or cramp down against the shoulders. Lengthen the back panel in increments till you achieve the right fit.

☐ A pack that is too long in the torso is adjusted correctly around the hips, but rides too high above the shoulders (more than about 1 -2 fingers' width). Shorten the back panel to get the right fit.

☐ Swaying pack: might be overloaded on top, loaded off balance inside, or may just need the sternum strap tightened a little to keep the fit tight. Check to see that all compression straps are tight along the sides and inside the pack (where applicable).

☐ Hangs low on the butt: check that the hip stabilizer straps are tight, and that the pack torso is not too long.

☐ Pack slips down off the hips: try tying a fleece jacket around the waist to add bulk/padding. Then tighten the hip belt. This also helps relieve pressure on the stomach when the belt is secured.

Sometimes a pack's design is just wrong for a person's conformation -- the lumbar padding is intrusive, or the shoulder straps cut into the chest. The pack might be the correct size, but no amount of adjusting is going to make it feel right.

## **5. Utilize Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers**

Youth Leader/Adult Volunteers can help tremendously with pack checks. Learning to check packs demonstrates a thorough and deep understanding of backpacking know-how. Your volunteers need to know your expectations, as well as understand the consequences of a poorly checked pack. Pack checks are intense, so be sure your volunteers are ready for the experience of being in charge, and you're confident in their ability to do a good job

Having a task force help you with pack checks will really help you speed up the process, but also allow your helpers to learn two valuable new skills -- checking and adjusting packs. You might also want help with:

☐ Paperwork -- ask one volunteer to create your Master Gear Rental List as new gear is loaned out



- ☐ Teamwork -- team up less experienced volunteers with the old hands
- ☐ Assign one person to do pack adjustments, to speed up the process

## **XII. THE TRIP - GO HAVE FUN!!**

Your training trip will likely be the easiest part of the entire training experience -- backpacking with your trainees is so gratifying! Watching your group connect the dots, get excited, learn to be tired and still get to camp in good spirits, overcome challenges, work together as a team -- this experience will change them (and you) forever.

The girls demonstrating their backpacking skills will fill you with joy. These young girls operating independently and competently, making good decisions, and just having a great time hanging out with their friends in the wilderness is the reason you're here, volunteering a lot of time to help make their world a better place.

Good organization up front will allow you to lead this trip with a clear plan. What comes next will either be on your agenda, or it's free time (the value of which should not be overlooked. Nobody really gets enough free time.) Your ability to recognize potential difficulties will allow you to prevent problems from arising and keep your group safe. A well-coordinated trip makes your group feel secure and that they are in good hands.

### ***Pro Tips!***

- ☐ Go slow to go fast  
Don't rush your group. Take your time organizing at the trailhead and be thorough. Take time to adjust packs up front and along the way. Appreciate how new this experience is for your group, and let them make discoveries. Since this is quite a new experience for most people, going slowly allows them to process and let go of anxiety related to their speed, the weight of their pack, and just the newness of this experience -- heading into the wilderness with all their belongings on their backs.
- ☐ Visualize! Mentally review your day before you start -- how are the transitions going to look, what needs to happen, how can your helpers assist you with these steps?
- ☐ Front load your group on all plans, changes, and additions. Give them clear instructions during the transitions -- at the trailhead, when you get to camp, and so on—so they can visualize their next steps and take action. Discuss the 2nd day plans the night before (evening powwow) so your group is ready to go in the morning. If you're planning a day hike on the 2nd day, consider having your group load their day packs (minus food) the night before. That will save you a lot of time in the morning.
- ☐ Orient your group to their map, at the trailhead and along the route
- ☐ Allow time in camp just to relax. Unprogrammed time is new for many girls (and adults.)
- ☐ Check in. Find a moment each day to check on the spirit and welfare of each participant. This could be done in a wellness circle, but a kind person-to-person moment creates and underscores the trust and concern you have in each other.
- ☐ Peaches & Pits -- Verbalizing the best and worst part of a day, or an experience, is a valuable way to de-brief and bring insight and perspective to what might be stressful, or exhilarating, or new. Taking the time to quietly reflect upon one's experience is peaceful and wonderfully satisfying. It also gives you insight into what someone needs for the next day, as well as providing you with a lot of smiles.
- ☐ Recognitions  
Schedule a morning ceremony to acknowledge the success of all your participants.

Presenting each trainee with the Basic Backpacking patch gives you a chance to congratulate each individual on their success. Take a moment to recognize your adult and youth volunteers (patches for Adult Leaders and Youth Leaders can be given, or a small hiking patch from the GS Council store) and thank them for their hours of dedication to your training. You can't do it without them!

### **XIII. POST-TRIP EVALUATION & WRAP-UP**

1. Collect and Return Council Gear
2. Request Completion of Evaluations -- group, volunteers, you
3. Feel an Overwhelming Sense of Accomplishment and Fulfillment

#### **1. Collect and Return Council Gear**

It is best to have all borrowed gear returned at the trailhead, before people head home and gear disappears in car trunks and bedrooms. As the leader you are responsible for all gear being returned to Council, complete and in excellent condition.

You can ask participants to wash and dry certain gear before returning to you, but you risk the gear being lost or returned too late for the next training trip that is heading out. Use excellent judgment and discretion before farming out the cleaning to a participant.

- ☐ Using your Master Gear List, check off all the gear that is returned to you at the trailhead
- ☐ Backpacks—Participants can empty their personal gear from rental backpack into the trash bag used for a rain cover. They shake out the pack, and return it to you.
- ☐ Tents—All parts need to be returned together, so people sharing tents need to coordinate the return of the entire tent. All tents need -- at the very least -- to be shaken out to remove dust and dirt. If the trip is wet/muddy, then tent must be washed and thoroughly dried (per gear care instructions) before it is returned to Council.
- ☐ Water filters  
Must be returned and dried (per gear care instructions) before returned to Council
- ☐ Sleeping bags & liners  
Check to see that the stuff sack and liner bag are also returned. Liners need to be washed before they are returned to Council.
- ☐ Cook pots & borrowed clothes— need to be washed
- ☐ Stoves, sleeping pads— no maintenance required

#### **2. Request Completion of Evaluations**

- ☐ Participants—council will send an online evaluation to each trainee. Additionally, you may choose to give your participants a small survey/evaluation. The advantage of surveying your group is that it allows you to provide some thought-provoking questions that allow you to improve your training the next time around, and allow the participants to reflect on what they'd do better or differently the next time. It also gives you a chance to request new Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers
- ☐ Youth Leaders and Adult Volunteers—creating a small survey allows you to improve the experience of your helpers, and analyze what aspects of your training, leadership and the trip itself worked and what didn't.
- ☐ You—it is important to both self-evaluate your experience as a Backpack Trainer, and to get feedback from your Mentor Trainer, fellow trainer, or Council backpack program specialist.

Observing the successes (and challenges) for your group members helps illuminate what worked in your training, and what needs refining. Leading a Basic Backpack Training is multifaceted -- there are so many angles that must be covered, so many different kinds of skills necessary to

produce this complex training. Realize it will take many training opportunities before you feel consistent and supported by a training template that is uniquely your own.

### **3. Feel an Overwhelming Sense of Accomplishment and Fulfillment!**

## **APPENDICES**

### **Need to be added here:**

Email templates

Handouts that won't copy & Paste from Microsoft Publisher:

- Sample Menu
- GS paperwork/first aid requirements
- Backpacking resources
- Topic outlines

# Backpack Training Expectations

## Overview:

Goals & Outcomes

Deliver accurate information

Promote safety & prevention & ethics

Be engaging

Interactive sessions

Respect trainees' intelligence and experience

Tying concepts together (LNT, pack weight, referencing the gear list and Nuts & Bolts)

Support other trainers

## Goals & Outcomes:

Our top goal is to train girls & adults to backpack safely, competently and confidently. After our class and training trip, we want to ensure that participants have the skills & knowledge to continue backpacking on their own, should they desire to do so.

## Outcomes include:

**Girls:** all the skills & knowledge to go backpacking safely, plus developing self-reliance, self-responsibility, independence, and good judgment. Backpacking is where we *really* grow girls of courage, confidence and character, and girls *do* grow strong. This is quintessential Girl Scouting at its best.

**Beginning adults:** all the skills and knowledge, plus the skills to lead girls on trips. And, along with...

**Experienced adults:** GS backpacking protocols; demonstrating how to encourage our girls to lead, take charge, and be self-sufficient. Helping our girls be amazing backpackers and keep them safe. How to be an effective guide in Girl Scouting.

## Accurate Information:

It is essential that the information we deliver in our program is accurate, current and thoroughly researched. Consider your knowledge a legacy: you are passing along information that will keep our trainees safe far into the future as they take our skills & knowledge into the wilderness on their own adventures. Take your topic research seriously.

## Excellent resources include:

GS Nuts & Bolts (also available online: [www.sdgirlscoutssdi.org/hiking](http://www.sdgirlscoutssdi.org/hiking))

REI website: [www.rei.com/expertadvice](http://www.rei.com/expertadvice)

Backpacker magazine online: [www.backpack.com/gear](http://www.backpack.com/gear)

Your personal experience, as long as it is backed up with facts

## Promote Safety & Prevention:

Our program begins and ends with safety first, and prevention is the key. Please emphasize safety and prevention as it applies to your topic, and as it applies to our training trip into the wilderness: Anza, Cuyamaca, Laguna Mountains or San Jacinto.

## Be Engaging

Training Day is a *Long Day*! Remember that it's the weekend, and the girls/adults have been in school or at work all week long. They don't want a lecture! They do want to learn.

**Avoid using notes**, though an occasional glance at an outline will help keep you on track so you don't lose your thread or forget to mention something.

**Be confident! You know your stuff.** You've backpacked a gazillion miles and have experienced what you're teaching. So just tell it to the crowd like you are telling a friend.

**Stay focused.** Taking a conversational birdwalk or tedious tangent will confuse and frustrate your listeners.

**Do your homework.** If you are well-researched on your topic, you will sound knowledgeable. Do a practice run-through of your topic out loud so you can identify areas where you are less secure, or where you might get side-tracked.

**Stay within your time limit. Please!**

**Be understanding:** acknowledge how long the training is, and help trainees understand the need to be learning all day long on a Saturday/Sunday.

### **Interactive Sessions**

Class evaluations have shown time and again that trainees love interactive sessions and don't like sitting and listening. Get them out of their chairs every chance you get. Find a way to get your trainees involved:

- Relays
- Q & As with candy prizes. Throw a small ball around a circle to pick the next Q. answerer.
- Help with props
- Visual aids they can touch
- Activities: setting up tents, water filters, lying on sleeping pads.

### **Respect Trainees**

Many of our trainees arrive with previous experience in the outdoors, and we need to respect that. Please remember, too, that while they may know a lot, there's always more they can learn.

People want to feel like their knowledge and individuality are being respected. There are as many ways to backpack as there are backpackers, and rarely is one way 'right.' We are teaching the Girl Scout protocol — and it is outstanding—but it isn't the only way to go.

While there are many ways to hike, we're presenting our curriculum under the Girl Scout banner — this is how Girl Scouts hike. They are free to take our information and personalize it.

Don't ever patronize. It's annoying. No one wants to feel like they've been sent back to first grade. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so. Don't ever fake it; just tell them you'll get back to them with the answer. Then, follow through!

Sometimes a trainee will throw out a 'fact' that is quirky or erroneous, absurd, or doesn't follow our GS protocol. The best approach is to say, 'In Girl Scouts, we teach....' or 'Actually, the current protocol is ....' (but you have to back it up with well-grounded facts or references.) Or, 'you are welcome to carry a 50 pound pack, and we won't tell an experienced adult no. But it's a lot more fun with a lighter pack, and we're happy to help you achieve that.' Be gracious, and don't get in a tug-o'-war.

### Tying concepts together

A lot of our information is linked to other topics. You can't talk about Wilderness Hygiene without talking about LNT. These links are important, and worth pointing out to our trainees, so that they see how all the skills & knowledge weave together to form the whole tapestry of backpacking.

**LNT** - forms an essential framework to everything we do in the wilderness

Pack weight - let's keep it as low as is safely possible. Light packs = more fun.

**Comprehensive Gear List** - referencing this list at the start of your topic helps keep all the gear in perspective, and shows how it fits into the bigger scheme.

**Nuts & Bolts** - Some people learn better seeing the material in front of them while listening to you talk. Help them out by referencing the Nuts & Bolts page number so they can follow along.

## **Support Fellow Trainers**

Remember that your lead trainer will prompt you if necessary, help you out of all jams, and back you up in every way.

Listen to all topics so that you can prompt/help, if necessary.

Careful not to add so many tidbits to another's topic that the time gets away from us.

Help with class set-up, and assist with other's topics as needed. Help clean up as we go.

Avoid side conversations that distract from the training. Head outside if you need to talk.

Find out what else you can do to help, from assisting with desk registration, to passing out handouts and materials, to setting up props for upcoming topics.

Look after your fellow trainer, just like you would on the trail.

Youth:

## **Time to Arrive**

Please arrive at \_\_\_\_\_ so we can set up room, registration materials, props for various topics and have a pre-training pow-wow w/ a cup of coffee & a donut.

## **What you need to bring?**

Props (see below)

Topic notes/outline and Q & As

Lunch & snacks

Training tee shirt, and dress for outdoors

Forms, forms, forms (3 copies of each)

## **Lead Trainer will have:**

Q & A candy, door prizes, donuts for all, handouts and registration materials.

## **My topics and props**

# Sample Backpack Training Schedule

8:15	15	Sign in, collect handouts, find your training buddy	All
8:30	15	Welcome	Lead Trainer
	10	Principles of LNT —Coupons & Cupcakes, pg. 2	e.g. Kate
	15	Boots & Socks Jeopardy, Pgs. 8 & 10	
	20	Clothing, pgs. 9 & 11 (San Jacinto trip)	
9:30	20	Water: Filtration & Hydration, pg. 22 & 23	
	10	Wilderness Sanitation, pg. 31	
	15	Sleeping Bags & Pads , pgs. 18 & 19	
BREAK			
10:20	15	Water receptacles (pg. 24), Mess Kits, Cook Kits, pgs. 47/49/50	
	20	Stoves & fuel, and Kitchen Safety, pg. 25	
	60	Backpack Food, Nutrition, pgs. 26 - 30	
		Menu planning, saving \$\$	
		Food storage, repackaging, clean up	
12:00		Lunch — sample b-pack food,	
12:30	10	Career Exploration	
	20	Tents, pgs. 20 & 21	
	15	Delayed Help, First Aid Kits &	
		Altitude Sickness, etc.	
	45	1st Aid Scenarios	
		(First Aid, pgs. 42 - 45)	
BREAK			
2:10	15	Injury Prevention, Key Risks & Concerns, pg. 41	
	15	Permits & Ranger Stations, pg. 32	
	15	Lost & Found, pgs. 39 & 40	
3:00	15	Backpacks, pgs. 12 - 17	
		New: loading packs activity	Collect torso sizes/Osprey sizes for gear
		rental later on	
	30	Pack Fitting	
	10	Pack List Overview, pg. 47	
	30	Packing Your Backpack	
4:30	15	Wrap Up	

# **Cost for Basic Backpacking Training (3 days): \$150-\$200 - Sample**

## **Equipment:**

A-16 rental

prices

Backpack – council provided (\$22)

Sleeping bag w/ pad – rent (\$35)

Water bottles/bladder – (\$10)/\$15- \$35

Pack cover (trash bag) – free

Flashlight \$10 – \$40+

Map – free

Compass -- \$10

Knife -- \$10 – 15+

First aid kit – provided (WHC)

Matches & fire starter – provided (WHC)

## **Community Gear:**

Tent – provided/ \$24 (2) or \$28 (3)

Water filter – provided

Stove – provided

Fuel –

Trowel, rope, bucket – group provided

## **Personal:**

Hygiene kit – provided (WHC)

Sunglasses, hat, etc.

Campsuds

Toilet articles

Bandana

## **Kitchen:**

Mess kit

Group: pot w/ lid

## **Clothes**

Boots (\$35+)

Socks -- \$15/pair

Poncho/waterproof jacket

Down jacket

Fleece jacket

Long pants

Tee shirt

Shorts

Underwear

Mittens/beanie

## **Registration: \$25 covers permit, insurance**

Food

Gas \$20

Tram (San Jacinto) \$22





