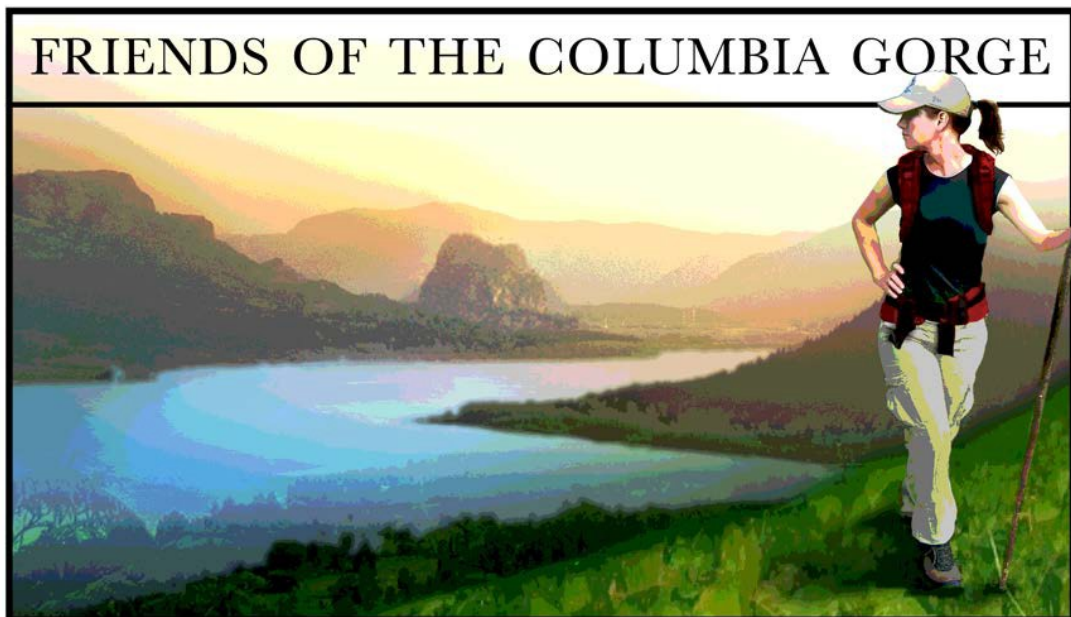


Friends of the Columbia Gorge Hike Leader & Shepherd Handbook



Friends of the Columbia Gorge Hiking Program

The purpose of this handbook is to help guide hike leaders and shepherds through the guidelines of the FOCG Hike Program

History

Friends of the Columbia Gorge's hikes have been a springtime tradition since their inception in 1980. Our first Gorge Hiking Weekend was on the third weekend in June when experienced hike leaders from a variety of outdoor groups and clubs lead as many as a thousand hiking enthusiasts on dozens of hikes, bike rides, horse trips and rafting adventures throughout the Gorge.

These continued until the early 1990's when Friends developed the spring wildflower hikes which follow the spectacular Gorge wildflower display from east to west through the blooming season. Wildflower experts and native plant enthusiasts lead these increasingly popular hikes to popular vistas that overlook the Gorge.

In 2000, Friends added a new element to our hiking program: hike shepherds. The fall hiking series began the next year, highlighting the fall colors in the Gorge. The hike challenges were started in 2011 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Scenic Area Act and have occurred every year since. In 2013, a new twist was added to the hiking season with the introduction of our *Play and Stay* program, which is part of the *Gorge Towns to Trails* project.

Today, we lead over 100 outings a year inspiring over 1,200 participants. People who participate in our hikes can't help but recognize the Gorge as a national treasure, a gem to be protected and enjoyed for generations to come.

Hike Leader Expectations:

Hike Leaders: Guide the hike, are responsible for the overall safety of the hiking party, and educate along the way. Expected to know the route well and have hiking experience. Willing to share your knowledge and expertise about the Gorge. *CPR and 1st Aid certified highly encouraged.*

The hike leader has the ultimate say. Hike leaders and shepherds should discuss topics in advance of the hike. If a discrepancy arises between the hike leader and shepherd, the hike leader has final say on the matter.

- Coordinate** with the shepherd regarding who will be meeting at the 1st and 2nd meeting locations.
- Review roster** and note where hikers will be meeting the group. The roster will be sent to you a

day or two prior to hike via email (unless otherwise requested).

☐ **Have with you day-of:**

- Sign-in sheet/liability waiver. Have hikers have printed a name and email.
 - Emergency safety runner card, provided by Friends
 - Several printed directions to trailhead, handed out at 1st meeting location
 - Camera to capture the day
 - **Address** group at trailhead about becoming a member of Friends (or if a members-only hike, thank them for their support) and hand out any Friends membership materials and hike brochures, if requested. **Please see attached script for guidance on how to introduce the hike as a Friends' sponsored event.**
 - Hike leaders are expected to wait at all junctions to assure the group stays together.
 - All Hike Leader/Shepherd documents can be found online:
 - <https://gorgefriends.org/hike-the-gorge/hike-leader-shepherd-documents.html>
-

Shepherd Expectations:

Shepherds (aka “sweeps”): Stay in the back of the group ensuring hikers have a safe and enjoyable experience. Assists hike leader as needed. Was added to our hiking program in 2005 to provide a better “link” to the Friends organization. Passionate about the Gorge and strong hiker. *CPR and 1stAid certified highly encouraged.*

- ☐ **Assist in greeting hikers** and helping people sign-in. *Occasionally, the shepherd plays a bigger role when shepherding hikes that are being led by a guest hike leader. You will be notified of these specific hikes. In this case, it is the shepherd's responsibility to sign-in hikers and talk to attendees about Friends.*
- ☐ Assist hike leader in keeping track of hikers and **stay at the back of the group.**
-

Before the Hike/Outing

- ☐ Hike leaders and shepherds **need to communicate ahead of time (phone call is best)** to plan for your day together. This ensures that the hike will go more smoothly. Decide how tasks will be divided up and coordinate who will say what at the trailhead briefing. Discuss meet up locations/times, sign in process, flow of hike and talking points, lunch time, and returning to trailhead.
- ☐ **Scout** out the hike so you know what conditions to expect:
- Designate a bathroom stop prior to trailhead, if one is not available at trailhead.
 - Know conditions and timing (driving and hiking) required for hike.
 - Think about places to stop for breaks, lunch and interpretive talks.
 - Verify driving directions and if there is road construction.
- ☐ **Check forecast** for day of hike and alert Friends' staff if information needs to be included in the 5-day reminder email sent to participants.

- Be sure your backpack is ready with these essentials:**
 - Extra food/water/clothing
 - Flashlight
 - Lighter/matches in waterproof container
 - Insect repellent (suggested) / Tecnu poison oak wash
 - **First Aid kit – can check one out from Friends.**
 - Whistle
 - Pocket knife/multi-tool
 - Fire starter/candle
 - Emergency blanket
 - Sunglasses & sunscreen
 - Map & compass (suggested)
 - Toilet paper/tissue
 - Cell phone
 - Have your emergency safety runner card.
 - Carry a trash bag and set an example of being a good trail steward.
-

At the Carpool Meeting Location: Gateway Transit Center

- Arrive 20 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time.** The time indicated on the outing info. is the DEPARTURE time. Our hikers are encouraged to arrive early so you leave on time. Don't wait around longer than 5 minutes after the indicated departure time.
 - Have hikers sign in** as they arrive. Ensure all hikers are properly dressed and equipped.
 - Facilitate carpool** arrangements, thank volunteer drivers and remind riders to contribute the suggested donation.
 - Know how many cars** there are, and the types, so you can keep track.
 - Provide drivers with printed directions** and suggest a restroom stop if one is unavailable at trailhead.
 - Provide your cell phone number** to all drivers in the carpool.
-

At the Trailhead

- Gather those** waiting at the second meeting place and have them sign in.
- Circle up** and have each participant count off and introduce themselves.
- Identify and introduce shepherd.**
- Talk** about the hike/outing and conditions to be expected. Review necessary equipment, clothing, water and food with the group. Make sure everyone is fully prepared. If you identify any person you believe is not prepared or does not possess the physical stamina, please exclude them from the trip. One unprepared person can ruin the trip for everyone, and is a potential danger.
- Establish ground rules and trail protocol:**

- Notify group of first aid kit
 - Remind everyone to stay with group and on trail. No one in front of hike leader
 - and no one behind shepherd.
 - Ask those that are bringing a cell phone to silence it on the trail.
 - Do not pick flowers or plants.
 - Do not cut switchbacks.
- Announce** to the group to communicate with the leader if the pace is uncomfortable. Ask the group if anyone has a **medical condition** and be sure they have the necessary medication/equipment to deal with condition; i.e. asthma inhaler, insulin/sugar, EpiPen and Benadryl.
 - Address group** about becoming a member of Friends (or if a members only hike, thank them for their support) and hand out any Friends membership materials and hike brochures, if requested.
 - Unregistered hikers can join the hike if it does not exceed the hike maximum. Use it as an opportunity to teach them about Friends.

See separate *trailhead checklist sheet*.

On the Trail

- Stop in the first half hour** for clothing changes, water break, rest; sooner if climbing a steep grade.
 - Count hikers** several times throughout the day.
 - Communicate** occasionally between leader and shepherd to monitor the group's condition and watch for physical problems such as hypothermia or heat stroke.
 - At lunch** take the time to communicate information about the area and the importance of Friends' role in the protection of the Gorge.
 - Inform** participants to take bathroom breaks 100 feet away from water and trail.
 - Supervise** the group when passing through dangerous or precarious areas.
 - Stop** at all trail junctions and regroup before continuing.
-

After the Hike

- Send in the trip report** (mail or email), **sign-in sheet**, and other relevant paperwork from your outing as soon as possible.
-

What to Do in an Emergency

Stop, slow down and think! In an emergency situation panic can set in and distort decision making. Pull yourself together, take a deep breath and proceed with the training you have received.

Follow these steps for an ill or injured person:

1. Survey the scene. Do not put yourself or others in the party at risk to reach victim.
 2. Reassure victim and make as comfortable as possible.
 3. If a spinal injury is suspected, do not move victim unless safety requires.
 4. Determine if any participants have special medical training.
 5. Keep at least one person with victim at all times.
 6. Note time of injury.
 7. Ask victim if they have any allergies to food or medicine.
 8. Administer any first aid needed and keep assessing individual's physical/mental condition.
 9. Call 911. If a cell phone does not work, fill out Emergency Card for 2-3 people (including at least the hike leader or shepherd) to take to out to safety/communication. Be sure that those hiking out have a cell phone, money for a pay phone if necessary, car keys and information on the victim.
-

Lost Person

- 1) Attempt to make voice contact by using a group yell.
 - 2) Blow whistle, three short blasts.
 - 3) Begin search. Keep part of the group with shepherd at the site where the lost person was last seen. The other group should hike up and down the trail and around the area yelling for lost person. This group will return to the group at the first location.
 - 4) If the search is unsuccessful, leave two people at the location where the person was last seen and have the rest of the party seek assistance.
-

Communication after the Emergency

- 1) Contact Outdoor Programs Coordinator Kate Lindberg immediately after incident at 203-644-2775 (cell).
- 2) Refer all media questions to Executive Director Kevin Gorman.