

Suggestions for ADK Mohican Hike Leaders

These guidelines are not hard and fast. Actual situations and conditions require good judgment on the part of the leader.

1. Choose a location you have already hiked and know well. Or choose an interesting looking route and scout it with a friend before leading it for the chapter. Part of planning and scouting is to locate alternate routes or bail out points in case someone is having difficulty or the weather turns bad.
2. Have and use a current map. Maps for trails in Harriman, the Hudson Highlands, and many other places we hike may be obtained through the NYNJ Trail Conference. Smaller parks such as Pound Ridge and Teatown have their own maps available at the site.
3. Have participants contact you to sign up rather than listing the meeting place and time. This allows you to screen participants. If you do not know people, ask them about their experience and make sure they have the necessary equipment (such as boots and raingear.) If your hike does not seem like a good fit, steer the caller to another outing on the schedule.
4. The leader should go first and set the pace, or appoint someone who will set a good pace and stop at all trail junctions. The leader also needs to appoint a sweep and everyone should know who the sweep is.
5. Assessing the group is the leader's responsibility and is a continuous process. Stop as appropriate to let people get water, adjust clothing, or just catch their breath. Do not let the group become strung out.
6. Carry a first aid kit and have an understanding of basic first aid.
7. You should have time estimates along the way and check to see that you are meeting them. If not, adjust appropriately. (A rule of thumb is 2 miles an hour plus ½ hour for every 1000 feet of elevation gain. Add in time for lunch and rest stops.) Do not promise anyone that you will be back at a specific time as this can put undue stress on the group.
8. It is a good idea to share with the hikers when and where you are planning the lunch break and how many snack/rest breaks there will be. A lunch spot with a view is always appreciated.
9. Be sure to allow for separation breaks in a spot with some cover if possible. One early in the hike is a good idea since some people may have had a long drive.
10. If you intend to bushwhack, this should be included in your hike description. The party should be limited in size and must remain in sight of each other.
11. Hiking in the winter requires specific skills and equipment. Do not lead winter hikes unless you are very experienced in that season.
12. When in doubt think – SAFETY FIRST! Good leadership skills will prevent participants from becoming injured or lost.