

How to Plan the Troop 272 Thanksgiving Weekend Backpacking Trip

1 **WHO:**

- 1.1 Since this is a COLD WEATHER TRIP which includes winter conditions for camping and possibly snow and ice on the trails, this trip is limited to First Class and up and to age 13 and up.
- 1.2 There may or may not be a Venture Crew going out the same weekend, so don't count on a lot of older scouts to carry the load.
- 1.3 Typically we have 8 to a dozen people.

2 **WHAT:**

- 2.1 Typically, we hike a total of 12 to 15 miles round trip and sleep out one night. 15 miles is recommended as that is a requirement for the backpacking merit badge. But it depends on elevation gain and how young/strong the hikers are and the expected weather.

3 **WHERE: DECIDE TRAILS and OVERNIGHT CAMPING LOCATION(S):**

- 3.1 there are many backpacking trails within a couple hours of driving. Typically we go Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon, so a two-hour drive each way is reasonable.
- 3.2 Hikes can be from one parking/access to another, but time will be needed at the start and end of the trip to "spot" cars and shuttle drivers back and forth.
- 3.3 Hikes can be a loop using two different trails that both start/end at the same parking/access. If taking a loop, usually Saturday is the longer, uphill hike and Sunday is the shorter hike.
- 3.4 Hikes can be "in and out" on the same trail.
- 3.5 Many sections of the Appalachian Trail good for overnights. Here is a map tool to see terrain, access and parking, shelters, distance between features.
<http://tnlandforms.us/at/googleat.php?lat=40.54932&lon=-76.15239&mt=3&scale=11>.
- 3.6 Other places to go: Thunder Swamp Trail in Delaware State Forest, Pinchot Trail in the Poconos. See Pa Hikes website for info and more ideas.
<https://www.pahikes.com>
- 3.7 In deciding on location, you should plan an "ESCAPE ROUTE" such as a shortcut to a highway or an easier woods road parallel to the trail in case the weather is bad or there are injuries.
- 3.8 As you research the exact overnight camping spot its good to know the following:

- 3.8.1 Where is the nearest drinking water source?
- 3.8.2 Is there a shelter? Are there picnic tables?
- 3.8.3 Is there an outhouse?
- 3.8.4 Is there a bear box?
- 3.8.5 Is there a printable map available? Copy it for all participants.

3.9 Scout out the Route: if possible, take a day-hike in to the camping location so you, as leader, are aware of any hazards or any interesting features. You will also become familiar with any twists and turns in the

4 **WHEN:** The trip is Thanksgiving Weekend, but there are other timing details to decide.

- 4.1 Take a poll and see if anyone wants a longer hike starting Friday or if people want to drive up and camp somewhere close to the trail head on Friday night to get an early start on the actual backpacking plus hang out some on Friday.
- 4.2 Decide and announce times for people to meet for carpooling depending on drive time and hiking time. Keep in mind sunrise is 7 AM and sunset is 4:30 PM at that time of year.
- 4.3 Set a firm date for when permission slips and commitments from adults are due so adequate food can be purchased. No fun hiking on an empty stomach!
- 4.4 You also need to set up a meeting for Planning (who are tent-mates, who's cooking, who's driving). Arrange to use the Old Mill via Scoutmaster. Or arrange to use PIT via Mr. Epp.
- 4.5 You also need to notify the Quartermaster of the trip so they can open the QM shed for distribution of gear. This can be at the planning meeting if the meeting is held at The Old Mill. Otherwise you need to arrange another time, such as at the Pack Check.
- 4.6 You also need to set up a "Pack Check" a half hour before the regular scheduled scout meeting before the backpacking trip.. This may also include time for the group to requisition personal gear (tent, zero-degree sleeping bags, foam pads) from the quarter master and for you to distribute troop gear (stoves, pots, fuel, water purifiers, rope for bear hang, etc.)
- 4.7 Ask scout managing the website to put details of all meetings in the CALENDAR
- 4.8 Ask the Scoutmaster to put all details in the Weekly Troop Update E-blast.

5 CREATE PERMISSION SLIP

- 5.1 Use the permission slips from previous years in the troop document library as a model.
- 5.2 Create your first draft and then show the Assistant Scout Master assigned to the trip and the Scoutmaster.
- 5.3 When approved, give to the scout maintaining the website. Be sure he gets it up on the website.
- 5.4 It should include, Who, What, When, Where, How, and ASM to contact during the trip for emergencies.
- 5.5 Also, ASM Johnson has a handout on what to bring and wear. Distribute that to anyone going.

6 MAKING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 6.1 Have the SPL call on you for announcements in October and let all scouts know about the trip. Do this at each meeting in October and November.
- 6.2 Make an announcement that they can print out the permission slip and let them know the deadline for turning it in.
- 6.3 Make an announcement about the Planning Meeting and the Pack Check.
- 6.4 Make a final reminder on the day the permission slips are due.
- 6.5 Be sure to get all the the above posted on the troop website and ask the Scoutmaster to include them in the Weekly Troop Update E-Blast.

7 CONDUCT THE PLANNING MEETING

- 7.1 FOOD:
 - 7.1.1 You will need to guide the planning meeting so that all meals and snacks are selected and decide who is buying which item.
 - 7.1.2 Freeze dried food is lightest weight the easiest to prepare for dinners. Check with the QM to see if there is a supply on hand. Pasta and rice are also easy to prepare. In both cases, there needs to be water at the campsite or people will have to carry enough for cooking as well as drinking.
 - 7.1.3 There are many light-weight, easy to prepare foods for breakfast and lunch
- 7.2 ARRANGE CARPOOLING.
 - 7.2.1 There has to be enough parents driving with space for all the scouts plus lots of gear.

7.2.2 Print out the address and/or provide a map for the drivers. Print out a map with the route and address to the second trail head if this is a point-to-point hike. Be sure you have adults to stay with the backpacking group at the start point while other adults bring cars to the endpoint

7.3 ARRANGE TENT MATES AND COOKING TEAMS

7.3.1 scout/parents will need to take responsibility to purchase group food. Best if someone arranges dinner, another team arranges cracker barrel, etc.

7.3.2 People buying food can see Mr. Hale for pre-paid gift cards for Giant and/or Acme. They can also see him for reimbursement of other food such as freeze-dried meals.

8 AT TRIP CARPOOL CHECK IN

8.1 Have a list of whom is carpooling with each driver. Reassign people if there are any last-minute changes

8.2 Make sure drivers have directions. Address, maps.

8.3 Take attendance on a WRITTEN SHEET. Keep this so we are sure everyone makes it out of the woods safely at the end of the trip.