

INTRODUCTION

Everything in this document is specific to Meanderthals.

This orientation is a starting point based on many combined personal experiences and we hope each member will evolve/share their own variations.

However, we all must follow the set-down protocols when interacting with the CSA, Meanderthals, and general public - not least to limit liability exposure.

This session will focus on how to propose and run a trip rather than technical skills and knowledge. Everyone is quite capable of being in front at their normal participant level.

What is a Leader in context of Meanderthals? Easier to say what is not.

- Not a mountain guide, commander, medic, porter, pack-mule, caterer, host, etc.
- In summary:

“Leaders of any outdoor activity organised by the Canmore Seniors Association (CSA) are **NOT** responsible for the individual participant’s preparation for, or performance of, the activity.”

- Not an instructor - Meanderthals encourages everyone to share their experience.

Within Meanderthals everyone is a leader, one person volunteers as a "First among equals" to create a trip.

Multiple people may co-lead and divide functions as they see fit. Some prefer to research and organise while others restrict themselves to on-trail functions only.

Don't compare yourself with others, their style may be different.

Why lead? What are the trade-offs of leading?

- A day out with friends - old and new.
- Lets you choose where, when, and how fast.
- Be selfish, go where you prefer & take others along to chase the bears away.
- One person needs to resolve alternatives, set parameters, times etc.
- Meet new people, also a reason to not stack the list with old friends.
- Expand own skills and judgement.
- Above all, Have Fun!!!! Its not a job.
- You do not need to be fastest, most experienced, or most skilled. Be aware of the talents available within group, consult/delegate others when better choice.
- Leader can distribute tasks but not final decision. Votes are divisive, leader needs everyone committed to the course of action leader feels is best.

THE PROCESS

There are four parts to creating a Meanderthals trip - conception, set-up, the activity itself, and archiving. These can be undertaken by multiple people as a team.

Forming a team and brain-storming ideas are ideal ways to ease into leading.

Conception

Don't wait to be chased by Co-ordinators.

Have some ideas in the back of your mind. CSA website is one source for inspiration.

Check schedules regularly, see where gaps are, and start planning before asked.

Choosing a trip - - Confirm age & reliability of information.

- Personal curiosity, observation and exploration.
- Previous trip archives - now mostly on-line, also a book in lobby.
- Guides, Gemtrek etc maps.
- National and Provincial Parks websites and maps.
- Other Clubs eg Calgary.
- Many on-line sources - but beware of inaccuracies.

Initial Set-up

- **When**
 - **Block your preferred dates in the schedule months ahead if you like.**
Listings can be withdrawn, modified and updated as needed.
- **What**
 - Gather all the information needed to publish an **outline plan**.

Outline plan should be on website **two (2) weeks** ahead even if waiting on details or reports. A proposal can be withdrawn or postponed any time.

Detailed plan should be posted as far ahead as possible and no later than previous afternoon even if condition dependent. Be prepared to cancel some already-signed participants if difficulty increases with new information.

Submitting The Trip

We try to reduce paper use and volunteer effort whenever possible. A fillable form for submitting trips helps this. Fixed layout ensures all required information is entered, keeps items in easiest order for web editors, reduces visual clutter in email.

All proposed trips must now use this Submission Form. There are work-arounds if you experience a technical barrier to doing so. Use bug report link in form to request help.

In emergency you can cut & paste Submission Format into email from

<http://canmoreseniors.org/download/listingformat.pdf>

or as a text file if preferred from <http://canmoreseniors.org/download/listingformat.rtf>

For security reasons we do not routinely display personal phone #'s in public information.

1. Open browser and go to http://canmoreseniors.org/m_triplist.html
2. Read "Leaders Updates" in red box at top.
3. Click on link to Short Submission Form.
4. Click in first box (day of week), enter info - **Need more space? Enlarge most boxes by gripping and pulling the cross-hatched area at bottom right.** Use tab key or mouse to move to next box, repeat.
5. Click "Create email" button.
6. Your default mail application should open and create a ready addressed email to triplist@canmoreseniors.org. Note: The newly created email does not have a subject.
7. **Enter** proposed activity and date in the **subject line**.
8. Click send.

Display on Website for as long as possible. Participants need time to compare all trips offered each day before selecting one. Signing up for concurrent trips is forbidden.

One Week Before Trip

Check trail reports, and better still eye-witnesses. If necessary make a recon.

Receiving Email sign-ups

Send group updates to website (*triplist@..*) and use email or phone for individuals.

If using personal email:

use *Reply* to acknowledge ALL messages as received.

Say Confirmed, Wait list, or Full.

Don't write an essay - minimum "Confirmed. See you on ...day", then cut and paste after the first email. The advantage of using *Reply* is that the email app will usually mark the incoming email as replied to.

If using CSA corporate email:

(*sinup##@canmoreseniors.org*) mail system can automatically send reply like this:

This is an automated confirmation that your sign up email has been received by the trip inbox. See triplist page for all updates

You will only receive a personal reply if you are not accepted (eg limit has been reached) **or there are major changes requiring discussion.**

If you want to suggest additions to the trip, contact leader immediately so they can assess feasibility and adjust plans.

Please check the website for revised information.
http://canmoreseniors.org/m_triplist.html

As this auto reply states that person has been accepted unless notified otherwise, leader must immediately notify those not-accepted so they can find another trip. If you don't tell them and they show up you will have to take them.

Auto reply can be deactivated by leader once trip is filled as individual responses will be needed. **Remember to reactivate for next trip.**

Individual leaders can decide **if, how & when** they want to communicate directly with participants.

This is the time to give out your personal phone number but **ONLY IF** you are prepared to accept phone calls. Many leaders are not so inclined.

If your reply is *Wait List* or *Full*, you may choose to invite the later applicants to lead a sub-group of the trip or post a new trip. You could offer to help them set it up.

When your trip is full (or almost), send an email to *triplist @..* asking that the listing be marked **Full**. The first web editor to read the request will usually upload this immediately.

Any member is free to email a leader and request additional information.

If you receive a request asking who has already signed up please accommodate the sender with a brief list in whatever way is simplest for you. Some like to know who they are sharing the day with before signing up.

Tell them you consider their initial request as **conditional only and they must confirm their application still stands** after reviewing the list. Set a time limit on their response so you can give space to others.

24 Hrs Before Trip

Check weather and trail reports.

If really bad, consider cancelling now.

If you are hiking out of cell phone range, pick up **Locator Beacon** from the CSA office,

Evening before trip

Still time for early cancellation and sleep-in.
Confirm trail reports, maps, GPS files etc. On the day

Day Of Trip

07:00 Confirm Go/No-go decision.

If No-go, send a CANCELLATION email to triplist@canmoreseniors.org before 07:30 (:45 at latest). Web editors may be leaving early on trips!

You may also choose to telephone group.
Always phone any participants who did not sign up by email.

If conditions still ambiguous, meet with group as planned and discuss alternatives.

At The Meeting Place

Leaders stay separate from crowd, be visible, attract attention (Whistle, Flag, etc).

If there are multiple groups with over-lapping starts, move away from melee.

- **No-one** leaves parking lot before leader - in case last minute information affects meeting plans (eg highway just closed) - then all leave at same time.
- Roll-call.
- Get missing CSA member #s. NO proof of membership = Cannot go.
- Check for any medical problems that could affect successful completion of the hike.
- Final Go/No-go decision.
- Identify drivers, confirm everyone has a ride.
- Gather drivers together and make sure everyone understands travel plan - exact location of trailhead, are we meeting somewhere on way eg information centre, gas station, coffee shop, etc. Assume nothing.
- Equipment reminder. Its individual's responsibility, but a generic nudge doesn't hurt.
- **Do NOT leave vehicles all day in Save-On's overflow. They will be towed.**

At The Trailhead And On The Trail

- **No-one** leaves trailhead before leader.
Leader must deal with individual questions, concerns, needs of participants and often can't sort own gear until group dealt with. Participants need to be patient, they might need leader's time another day.
- Involve group in leader function so all learn by osmosis. Collect input, summarise, think aloud, relay thought process and decisions. Make sure people heard what you meant to say. Not all communication is verbal, observe as well as listen.
- Ask participants with medical concerns to confidentially warn if may affect ability.
- Check who has bear spray, noise makers, first-aid kit, cell-phone, locator beacon.

- Reiterate plan for day.
- Appoint sweep.
- Repeat Roll-call - confirm no-one lost or in bathroom.
- Final equipment reminder.
- Confirm no-one is behind sweep.
- Depart.

At End Of Activity

- **No-one** drives away until all participants are back and accounted for.
- Anyone who needs to leave the activity in progress or drive away early must communicate with Leader before leaving. Have witness or ask for signed note.
- Request feedback or updates that should be included in the trip report.
- Collect any incident details while witnesses still present.
- Discuss possible stops on drive back - coffee, ice cream, viewpoints etc.

When You Get Home

Update web listing and Participant Record Form with **actual parameters and any useful comments**. Complete Incident Report Form if necessary.

Leave in folder at Seniors Centre or send as a pdf to meanderstats@canmoreseniors.org

These finished-trip website documents form a reference archive for future trips and need to be accurate. Feel free to send comments to triplist@canmoreseniors.org about any physical problems encountered so they can be added to trip and trail archives.

A fully paper-free system is available, and will be demonstrated at any time to individuals who want to go that route.

NEXT

Practice the Submission System

Create and send an email labelled "TEST" to familiarise yourself with all functions before you need to submit an actual listing.

Pick a trip you like and list it.

Mentors and practical training

- Be a sweep first, then be co-Leader for the return leg of a trip.
- Offer to co-lead when signing up for a posted trip.
- Practice by leading a simple trip at a lower level than your normal.
- Ask Meanderthals Committee to organise technical courses that you feel you need, or ask more experienced members for guidance.

APPENDIX

Association Email Addresses (.....@canmoreseniors.org)

triplist@canmoreseniors.org to be used for everything related to trips listed on website, including changes, updates, corrections, cancellations. This address is monitored by several web staff, other addresses are not.

meanderstats@canmoreseniors.org to send trip reports to our Archivist.

[sinup\(#>@canmoreseniors.org](mailto:sinup(#>@canmoreseniors.org) is for sign-up and communications with a leader relating to specific trips. Leaders may request a CSA email or use their personal email. Each CSA address has a different #.
Use of association email gives enhanced security, includes an auto-reply, and reduces personal spam.

meanderthals@canmoreseniors.org Chairman and committee.

web@canmoreseniors.org is for general CSA website business eg submitting material, reporting broken links etc.

function@canmoreseniors.org CSA Board