



## Apalachee Chapter of the Florida Trail Association



### GUIDELINES for OUTING PARTICIPANTS

(revised 2/21/08)

You are encouraged to read, understand and follow these guidelines. Review them periodically. This will make for a better outing experience for all concerned. Some of these things may sound obvious but can easily be forgotten or overlooked. We expect all outing participants to come prepared and equipped. This will make your outing safer and more enjoyable. If you have any questions about what to bring, see the list on the reverse and/or ask the activity leader when you sign up for the hike.

1. Ask the activity leader questions about the hike length, time and terrain, to determine whether the hike is within your capability. If in doubt, do not sign up. The hike leader may exclude any person from a hike at his or her discretion.
2. If you would like to bring children, or a pet, ask the hike leader. Depending on circumstances, the hike might not be suitable for children, and pets may not be allowed. If pets are allowed, they must be kept on a leash *at all times* (more information on reverse side).
3. If you sign up for a hike and then find that you cannot attend as planned, call the hike leader well before they leave for the meeting place.
4. Bring water, even if it's winter or just a short hike. Your body needs water to make muscles function. In hot weather, bring at *least* two quarts for a day.
5. Be at the meeting place on time, or early, to introduce yourself, sign the participant form and ask questions. If you are allergic to stings, are diabetic, or have other medical problems that could possibly result in an emergency during the hike, inform the leader and tell them what aid you might require and where in your pack you keep your emergency medication.
6. Carpooling saves gasoline and helps if there's limited parking at the trailhead. If you are a passenger, be prepared to assist the driver with the operating expenses. If you are a driver, you must have a valid driver's license and insurance to cover passengers.
7. Respect the authority of the hike leader. During the hike, do not get ahead of the leader at the front or behind the sweep at the end. Keep a safe distance between hikers to avoid injury from swinging branches or hiking poles. If you need to go off the trail for a bathroom break, inform the sweep--who will remain behind you on the trail. If you are having *any* problem (such as blisters, or the leader going too fast for you), please do not suffer in silence--let the leader know about your difficulty so he or she can help. If you observe someone else in trouble, pass the word up the line to let the leader know to stop and help. Inform the leader if you must drop out, and sign the release form to that effect.
8. Stay *on* the trail. Go *through* mud or water, *not around* it.
9. Do not damage trees, shrubs or flowers. Do not litter. Pack out all your trash and, if possible, pick up other people's trash that you find. "Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."
10. No radios, alcohol, or drugs permitted. Smoking is discouraged; individual smokers are responsible if they cause damage. Please keep cell phones off except in case of emergency.
11. Check yourself *carefully* for ticks when you get home. Hike clothing should be left *outside* your living quarters until laundered.
12. Enjoy your time in the woods.

**Items to bring on a hike:**

day pack or fanny pack  
plenty of water (at *least* two quarts)  
snacks  
lunch, if it's an all-day hike  
toilet paper and ziploc bags  
wet wipes  
large plastic trash bag (protection from ticks and dampness when sitting on the ground)  
first aid kit [Ask activity leader if they will be carrying one; if they are, then this is optional.] (band-aids, gauze pads, neosporin, tweezers, Sting-eze, antacid, moleskin, aspirin/ibuprofen, antiseptic wipes)  
insect repellent  
sunscreen, sun glasses, sun hat  
knife  
bandana  
extra clothing (jacket, sweater, gloves, rain gear) [NOTE: In case of rain or a hike through swampy areas, you may want to have dry clothes and shoes in your car, to change into after the hike.]  
camera  
binoculars  
cell phone (for *emergency* use only)  
walking stick/trekking poles

**Clothing**

Dress in layers so that you can remove a top layer after you begin hiking and get warmed up. Shorts and a T-shirt are adequate for many Florida day hikes. A day-pack to hold a sweater and rain gear, your first aid kit, food, water, camera and perhaps dry socks will cover warm weather hiking. Long pants and long sleeves protect you from insects, thorny brush and poison ivy. Wear sturdy hiking boots or walking shoes. Gaiters help protect socks and legs from ticks and damp vegetation. If the hike will be in a swampy area, be prepared to get your feet/boots wet.

**Trash**

Don't pollute the forest. Pack out everything you bring in, and bring an extra plastic bag to pick up trash you find --including food scraps such as apple cores, orange peels, egg shells which, contrary to common belief, should *never* be left in the woods.

**Pets**

If pets are allowed on the hike, please remember that other hikers do not know your dog as well as you do. In fairness to them, and to wildlife in the area, you must keep your dog leashed while you are on the hike.

**Trail ethics for dogs and their owners**

People hiking with dogs should be aware of the impact of their animals on the Trail environment and their effect on the Trail experience of others. We require that dogs be leashed at all times, as a matter of courtesy to other hikers and to minimize stress to wildlife.

Do not allow your pet to chase wildlife.

Do not allow your dog to stand in creeks, springs or other sources of drinking water.

Be mindful of the rights of other hikers not to be bothered by even a friendly dog.

Bury your pet's waste as you would your own.