

# *NSSTC Overnight Trip Tips*

## **Welcome**

Thanks for your interest in leading trips for the NSSTC Club. The club would not exist without people like you who are willing to volunteer their time and talent so that other North Stars may share the outdoor places and experiences that we love.

## **Trip Planning**

- Plan in advance, a year ahead is not too soon to start making arrangements.
- Investigate a potential destination before committing to a trip. If possible, do the activity yourself to determine:
  - trip highlights
  - any potential hazards to be aware of
  - sleeping accommodations, eating facilities, etc.
  - ski ability level that is required
  - availability of other activity options
- Contact a trip coordinator before committing to a trip. If a deposit is required you may request funds via the trip coordinator. The board must approve deposits in excess of \$600.
- Negotiate the best terms possible with the resort, transportation company, restaurants, etc. Request agreements in writing for refund/cancellation policies due to poor weather conditions or if there are not enough participants to fill the trip. Be sure that you understand all agreements so that participant deposits can be set to cover expenses should a participant cancel.

## **Co-Leaders**

A co-leader can be a valuable asset to your trip. You are encouraged to choose someone who is interested in learning to be a trip leader and who may wish to lead future trips. Have him/her help with phone calls, collecting waivers and monitoring events. In addition to making your job easier, this will energize the club with new talent and ideas.

## **Trip Submission**

- The **deadline** for submitting trip activity forms is September 30th for the November LOYPE winter trip schedule and March 30th for the May LOYPE summer trip schedule. For ease of processing, please use the electronic activity form on the NSSTC web site. You can also email [schedules@north-stars.org](mailto:schedules@north-stars.org) or call the trip coordinators.
- Keep trip descriptions short and concise. Indicate who may be interested in the trip, {A} all members, {AK} all members including kids, or {S} single adults. Include contact name and phone number(s), total trip cost and what is

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included in the cost, and any trip details that may help someone decide if this is an appropriate trip for them such as recommended ability levels. Specify the person to make the deposit check out to (trip leaders cannot cash checks made out to the club), mailing address, deposit/balance amount, and due dates.

- All trips submitted before the November meeting will be provided with a participant sign-up table.
- Trips submitted after the spring and fall deadlines will be printed in the next available LOYPE that goes to press. Trips will also be updated on the club web site and the e-LOYPE.

### **Transportation**

- Car-pooling is encouraged for all trips that do not include transportation. Trips generally go unless driving conditions are too hazardous.
- If you are including ground transportation as part of the trip be aware that bus companies consider a “bus” to be a school bus type vehicle, which is very uncomfortable for longer trips. A “motor coach” is probably what you want. Prices can vary a great deal between companies so ask for several quotes and terms in writing. Negotiate terms clearly and ask for a written contract before paying a deposit. Some participants may want to save money and go on the trip without using the bus. This would make the trip more expensive for the other participants so it is only allowed for unusual circumstances such as having more participants than seats on the bus.
- Make arrangements in advance for the location to board the bus and leave cars. Let participants know that cars are left at their own risk so they may wish to have someone drop them off and pick them up. Be sure you receive permission for any overnight parking. Follow the location’s security procedures and notify local authorities if necessary.
- It is customary to tip bus drivers. The easiest way to do this is by including the tip in the trip cost.

### **Finances**

Plan realistically for all expenses including food, lodging, transportation, tips, mailing, etc. If using a bus, plan ahead for how to handle not being able to fill the trip. Be sure to set participant deposits sufficient to cover all non-refundable expenses in case of cancellation without being able to find a replacement. You may

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require the entire balance before the trip departure. See the club's Trips Policy for details on deposits and cancellations. When the trip is completed, fill out the expense form and make financial recommendations for next year.

### **Trip Reservations**

- Winter trips may be filled to 50% capacity between November 1<sup>st</sup> and the November sign-up meeting. Reservations can be accepted by mail (post marked Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>) or in-person delivery. Reservations received before November 1<sup>st</sup> cannot be processed unless the trip is not filled to 50% before the November sign-up meeting or if spaces are still available after the November meeting. If a participant wishes to reserve a space by phone, inform them of how many spaces are available and that you cannot guarantee a spot until you receive their deposit check and waiver.
- Do not accept sign-ups at the November meeting until after the announced starting time. Accept all reservations in the order in which they are received except as needed to make roommate arrangements.
- Overnight trip participants must be NSSTC members.

### **Trip letter**

Send a letter to participants describing the trip details three to four weeks before the trip departure.

Include in the letter:

- map, directions, and estimated drive time
- list of participants and suggestion that they arrange carpooling
- check-in time
- food included in trip
- instructions for payment and balance due date
- room assignments or how to locate room assignments on arrival
- list of potential of activities
- packing suggestions for appropriate clothing, food needed, bedding (if needed), safety items, equipment, etc.
- resort phone number(s) for emergencies

### **At the Destination**

A trip commences when the participant arrives at the event site and ends when the participant leaves the site.

If possible, plan to arrive early to handle any last minute arrangements or questions. Even if room assignments were mailed, post them in an easily accessible area. Post meal times and locations. Introduce yourself as people arrive and watch

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for new members to help them settle in. Check to be sure that everyone that is expected arrives safely.

Before the morning ski:

- hand out maps
- discuss trail conditions including required ability level and any hazards
- review safety policy including staying in groups of at least three
- help arrange groups for different abilities/lengths of ski and assign a leader
- be sure new members are included and have someone to ski with

### **Safety**

Before the trip, check out a first aid kit from the club Tools Supervisor or check the contents of your own first aid kit. Familiarize yourself with first aid procedures. If you have any questions contact the safety coordinator. Cross Country skiing is a relatively safe sport, but accidents do occur. Review the North Star Trip Leader Packet, read the safety articles published regularly in the LOYPE, and take advantage of the educational programs offered.

How much equipment to take on a ski depends on length of ski, how far you will be from emergency help and anticipated weather conditions. For the average ski pack:

- space blanket
- knife
- duct tape
- candle
- lighter or matches and fire starter
- compass
- extra water and high energy snacks
- moleskin
- thermos with hot drink if weather is cold or you will be some distance from emergency help
- spare clothes including hat, balaclava, warm gloves/mittens, dry socks and plastic bags, fleece jacket or vest, wind-pants (think about how fast you will chill down if you are injured or stop to help someone else)

Keep an eye out for people having problems. If someone is skiing alone stop and talk to them and if possible introduce him or her to a likely ski partner. Be sure that everyone makes it in from the ski.

### **At the End of a Trip**

- Check that the facilities are left in good condition.

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- Pay any outstanding bills.
- Communicate with participants for trip suggestions/problems.
- Mail waivers to the Trips Coordinator.
- Fill out an incident/accident report if necessary and mail to the safety chair.
- Return first aid kit to the Tools Supervisor
- Plan trip for the following year.
- Recruit someone to write a short article for the LOYPE.