

**COLD RIVER CAMP, A.M.C.  
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## **Trip Leader Program**

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#### 1. Introduction

The main mission of Cold River Camp AMC is offering naturalist and hiking activities for paying guests. In support of those activities, the Camp maintains a program to train and sustain a cadre of Trip Leaders—Naturalists and Hike Leaders—who serve during the summer season and the two weeks of Extension after Labor Day.

Two Coordinators—one for Naturalists, the other for Hike Leaders—are in charge of the Camp’s Trip Leader Program, reporting on their activities to the Camp Committee.

The Coordinators, singly and in collaboration:

- make Naturalist and Hike Leader assignments;
- keep Trip Leaders informed of all requirements and expectations;
- recruit new Trip Leaders;
- evaluate trip-leader performance; and
- oversee the training of Trip Leaders.

For each week during the regular summer season (July-August), the Hike Leader Coordinator designates one leader (Naturalist or Hike Leader) as Weekly Trip Leader Coordinator. A weekly coordinator’s primary duties are to make sure that the set of trips for the week is varied and interesting, and matches Camp guests’ needs and interests; and

(in consultation with the other leaders) to adapt the program of trips over the course of the week as the weather changes and leaders learn more about guests' interests and abilities. The weekly coordinator also oversees the evening programs for the week.

## 2. Requirements for a Trip Leader

As a prerequisite to leading, Trip Leaders normally serve for a week as interns, unless exempted by the respective Coordinator (see section 5).

A Trip Leader at CRC must be conversant with the current editions of the AMC's *Outdoor Leader Handbook*, especially the Leadership Requirements and Guidelines; and the *CRC Supplement to the AMC Outdoor Leader Handbook*. Trip Leaders are expected to comply with policies described in these documents and to maintain a high standard of performance and behavior (see section 7).

The AMC requires that all Trip Leaders hold valid certifications in AMC Leadership, Wilderness First Aid and CPR plus membership in AMC. In addition, they must pass an annual background check.

## 3. Criteria for Selecting Trip Leaders

Relevant training and experience are vital to Camp guests' safety and enjoyment on led trips. For that reason, they are primary considerations in selecting and assigning Trip Leaders. Other criteria for selecting Naturalists and Hike Leaders include:

- physical and mental capability to lead groups of Camp guests on day-long trips;
- interpersonal skills to lead safe as well as enjoyable trips;
- outdoor skills and knowledge, including knowledge of trails and awareness of particular trip risks;
- willingness and ability to provide advice to Camp guests on self led hikes and excursions;
- willingness and ability to perform the administrative duties of trip leading;
- willingness and ability to work with other leaders in devising suitable, varied weekly trip offerings;

- recommendation by another leader, Camp Manager, or other trusted source.

#### 4. Compensation of Trip Leaders

During the regular 9-week summer season, full-time Trip Leaders earn full credit for room and board. Part-time leaders earn 1.75 days credit for room and board per led trip.

“Full-time” for *Naturalists* consists of 4 led trips over 6 days plus coordinating the Junior Naturalist Program. “Full-time” for *Hike Leaders* consists of 4 led trips over 6 days plus providing one evening program for guests. The evening programs offered are at the discretion of Trip Leaders and the Weekly Trip Leader Coordinator. A leader may fulfill the evening program requirement by enlisting someone else to provide an evening program on his/her behalf.

During the 2-week Extension Season, trip-leaders earn 1.167 days of credit for room and board per led trip or the level of compensation other extension volunteers receive, which ever is greater.

#### 5. Trip Leader Interns

All prospective Trip Leaders are required to serve as an intern Trip Leader for one week during the regular summer season unless the relevant Coordinator (Naturalist or Hike Leader) explicitly waives the requirement. During the week, the intern will learn trip planning, preparation, and execution specific to Cold River Camp (see section 6) The Weekly Trip Leader Coordinator will usually serve as mentor and evaluator of an intern.

An intern Trip Leader is expected to participate in all of the activities connected with the week’s trip leading, including:

- attending the Trip Leaders’ planning meeting Saturday afternoon;
- accompanying each of the three Trip Leaders on a led trip, to observe different leaders’ styles and skills and (if asked) to assist the leader on the trip (*e.g.*, as sweep or lead hiker);

- co-leading one trip during the week, including planning the trip, announcing it at breakfast (including preparing the sign-up sheet), reporting on the trip at dinner, and filling out the trip report form.

At the end of the week, the intern will meet briefly with the mentor/evaluator, who will have sought feedback from the other Trip Leaders. They will review the week's activities, discuss any problems, answer questions, and receive a summary evaluation.

The mentor/evaluator will provide a report on the internship to the relevant Coordinator as soon as possible after the week ends. At that point, the Coordinator will decide whether the intern is qualified to serve as a Trip Leader at Cold River Camp.

Interns serve for a full week. In return, they receive 50% credit toward their room and board for the week.

#### 6. Trip Leader Training Reimbursement

The Camp's policy is to support required Trip Leader training by reimbursing at least part of the cost. Trip leaders who want to be reimbursed for training must secure written approval (e-mail or hard copy) from the Naturalist or Hike Leader Coordinator *before* registering for or attending the training course. The approval must state the specific event (provider, date, and venue), the total cost of the training, and the amount of CRC reimbursement.

#### 7. Performance Review

Because led hikes and Naturalist activities are central to the mission of the Camp, it is essential that Trip Leaders competently and conscientiously perform their duties, as spelled out in the current editions of the AMC's *Outdoor Leader Handbook* and the *CRC Supplement to the AMC Outdoor Leadership Handbook*.

It is the responsibility of the Weekly Trip Leader Coordinator and Camp Manager to monitor and assess the performance of the Trip Leaders in camp. It is the responsibility of the Naturalist Coordinator and Hike Leader Coordinator, singly and together, to monitor and assess the performance of Trip Leaders assigned for the eleven weeks of camp.

## 8. Complaints about Trip Leaders

Any serious and substantive complaint (hereafter, *complaint*) about a trip leader (hereafter, the *subject*) shall be investigated and dealt with promptly and fairly, at the latest prior to the following Camp season, and with due regard for the rights of the subject to respond

A complaint about a trip leader shall be directed to the respective Coordinator (Naturalist or Hike Leader), who will conduct an investigation if deemed necessary. Complaints may come from or via the Camp Manager(s), other trip leaders, or Camp guests, and they may be oral or in writing. A Coordinator shall report the complaint received to the Chairperson of the Camp Committee, together with a recommendation about whether an investigation is warranted.

An investigation of a complaint will typically include contacting the Manager(s) and other trip leaders assigned for the same week. It may also include contacting Camp guests that week, although the subject shall be informed of the investigation before it goes beyond the Manager(s) and the other leaders.

An investigating Coordinator shall report the tentative decision to the other Coordinator and the Camp Committee Chair. The three of them together shall make the final decision on the complaint, including any discipline to be imposed. The forms of discipline are as follows: (a) a warning to the subject; (b) requiring further training; (c) putting the subject on probation for a set period of time; or (d) removing the subject from the roster of eligible trip leaders. When a decision is reached, including any discipline, the investigating Coordinator shall inform the subject in writing (including e-mail), and may also do so orally. That Coordinator shall also inform the complainant of the outcome.

The Chair of the Camp Committee shall inform the rest of the Committee at its next semiannual meeting, of any discipline imposed on a subject as a result of a complaint. The Chair may also notify Committee members by e-mail or letter prior to the meeting. The identity of the subject shall *not* be disclosed to the Committee.

As with all personnel actions, the privacy of all individuals (subjects and complainants) involved will be respected and no information about the subject, the complainant, the complaint, or the investigation will be released to individuals not

directly involved in the investigation. Information about disciplinary actions shall remain confidential, except as may be necessary for operation of camp or enforcement of discipline. All participants in the investigation and all individuals contacted during the investigation will be informed of the need to maintain confidentiality during and after the investigation.

#### 9. Program Evaluation and Review

Every three years, the Naturalist and Hike Leader Coordinators will formally review and evaluate the CRC Trip Leader Program, and report to the Camp Committee with a recommendation for any needed changes. The next scheduled review of this document will take place in 2012. The CRC Committee may request changes in the program, or consideration of changes, at any time. Following Committee approval, the changes will be incorporated into this document.