



# HOW TO LEAD A SUNDANCE OUTING

BASED ON AN ARTICLE BY STAN FORSYTHE

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**Why lead an Outing?** There can be great personal rewards in planning and leading a successful outing that is enjoyable both to you and your fellow club members. Sundance invites new ideas and thrives with the infusion of new leaders. Your participation contributes to the strength and vitality of the club.

**Your Qualifications:** All Sundance members are encouraged to lead or co-lead an outing. If you are a Sundance member in good standing, you qualify to co-lead an outing with an experienced leader. To qualify as an experienced leader, you only need to have co-led one previous outing.

**Getting Help.** Leading an outing is not difficult but does require some thought and planning. If you have been on at least one Sundance outing, you have some idea of what is involved, and there are many Sundance members who are willing to help new leaders. In addition, Planning Teams have been established to promote interest in their chosen activities, and you are encouraged to attend their meetings because they can provide a new leader with valuable information. Each of the teams is guided by one or more Team Captains, who are listed with their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in "Crosswinds". Team planning meetings are announced in "Crosswinds".

## 1. Selecting an Outing

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**Outing type:** The type of outing you choose to lead can relate to any of the established teams, or it may be unrelated to an existing team (in this case, contact the Outings Director). The specific outing may be one in which you previously participated yourself and that you really enjoyed, or may be an outing never before done by Sundance. Any outing that is an outdoor non-competitive activity is always welcome. You may also browse the archive to look at past outings that have been led before to get ideas.

**Travel Time to the Outing:** For day outings, travel time should not exceed two hours each way. The destination should be accessible by car or mass transit, and the outing itself should not take more than eight hours. Travel time limits are more flexible for overnight outings.

**Outing length:** Day outings are the most common in Sundance. They range from a city bike trip to a day hike in the woodlands or the mountains. Overnight outings require planning for accommodations & meals. Other outings, such as skiing or sightseeing trips, may also require advance reservations. Camping and backpacking trips generally require more preparation. For example, tents and provisions have to be considered, along with instructions to participants on what to pack in a backpack and how to erect a tent or provide first aid.

**Outing Route:** The route must be determined before the outing. The simplest route is a loop which ends where it begins. If the outing will end too far from where the cars are parked to allow you to walk back in a relatively short time, you will need to have one or two cars parked near the termination point. The drivers of the cars parked at the end point will drive the other drivers back to the initial point to pick up their cars and return for their passengers.

## 2. Scouting the Outing

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The outing co-leaders may wish to go to the site and scout the area before the actual outing. Remember you will be leading people who will be depending upon you to provide a pleasant time without getting lost. They will expect you to know the way and what needs to be done. Sometimes scouting may not be possible, such as when the outing site is at some distance from New York City. The leaders should nevertheless familiarize themselves with the details of the outing as much as possible, before the outing is underway.

## 3. Scheduling the Outing

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**Outing Approval:** Once you submit your outing, it will be pending upon approval from one of the team captains or if unavailable, by the Outings Director. Certain outings must be approved by the Board. You will be contacted if this is the case. Once your outing is approved it will appear on the calendar page immediately, and will be published in the next issue of Crosswinds, if you submit your outing by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Costs:** The participant must be made aware of the costs (s)he will incur during the trip, even if they are only estimated.

**Provisions:** Each participant should be made aware of what (s)he is expected to bring for the outing's activities. An example is "canteen, lunch, swimsuit, and towel.

**Dress:** Explain in detail what will be needed for the outing. An example is "boots and rain gear"

**Length and Difficulty Level:** Everyone should know the length of the trip and approximately how much time it will take to complete it. Inform the participants about any particular difficulties that they may encounter and indicate the overall level of difficulty.

**Weather:** Each participant should know if unfavorable weather will cancel a trip. Have each one call you on the morning of the outing, if in doubt about the weather. Otherwise, an outing leader may have to go to the meeting place to tell anyone who shows up for the trip that it has been canceled.

**Taking calls, deposits:** After the outing appears in "Crosswinds", you will be receiving calls for reservations or questions. Calls should be returned promptly. As there are often last minute cancellations, a waiting list should be kept. If deposit checks are required, they should be made payable to Sundance and mailed to the outing leader, who mails them with a note indicating the trip name and the nature of the payment to the Outings Treasurer. The Outings Treasurer then disburses the funds, as requested by the leaders.

#### **4. Transportation**

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**Public Transportation:** If the event is to begin near a train station or a bus stop, public transportation is practical. Trips to parts of the five boroughs, northern New Jersey, Long Island, the Hudson Valley and Connecticut can be planned by using just public transportation.

**Private Cars:** Fortunately, some members have cars and are willing to share them. Drivers are reimbursed at 4% of the price of the prevailing cost of a gallon of regular gasoline, per mile per passenger plus expenses, such as tolls and parking, for picking up passengers at a designated meeting place, driving to the outing site(s) and returning passengers to the initial meeting point. The number of participants on an outing may depend upon the number of available drivers.

**Car Rentals:** If a car or van is rented, the cost of the rental is shared by all members on the outing, except those drivers who brought their own cars.

**Directions:** Directions must be given to each participant on how to get to the meeting place. These directions may be published along with the event in "Crosswinds". All drivers must be given directions to the outing site.

#### **5. Leading the Outing**

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**Meeting:** Keep a list of phone numbers to contact latecomers or no-shows. Outing leaders have the authority to determine how long to wait. Waiting 15-20 minutes for latecomers is usual. If a driver does not show up, see if people are willing to squeeze into available cars or to rent a car.

**No-shows:** At best, not showing up is annoying to the leaders; at worst, it can be seriously disruptive. Cancellations should be made at least 48 hours prior to a day trip and at least seven days prior to an overnight outing. Repeated no-shows may result in disciplinary action.

**Assigning Rides:** Sometimes drivers and passengers arrange their own seating. If they do not, you must insure each person is assigned a seat.

**Guests:** Guests are considered temporary members and are subject to the same rules as members. The member who sponsors a guest should encourage the guest to become a member. Leaders may wish to have on hand extra membership application forms for this purpose.