



APOlachian Trail 2018

This document contains everything you need to know in order to put together a successful excursion with your group for the Alpha Phi Omega team-building event to raise money for Feeding America, a non-profit organization and the nation's largest hunger-relief and food-rescue organization.

Dear Brothers,

Thank you for your interest in APOLachian Trail 2018! We could not be more excited to get this whole trip under way. Before hitting the trail, there are a few things you need to plan for in order to have a rewarding experience with your brothers.

Much of the information in this packet can be found at the following website: <http://appalachiantrail.org/home/explore-the-trail/hiking-basics>. Please explore this website thoroughly and use this welcome packet to guide your planning and participation in the event. As you read through these materials and do the research on your section of the hike, write down any questions or concerns you may have and contact us at: info.apolachiantrail@gmail.com.

Thank you, and we are looking forward to an amazing event!

Yours in Leadership, Friendship and Service,

-The APOLachian Trail 2018 Committee

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
FUNDRAISING	5
YOUR ADVENTURE	6
HOW WILL THE EVENT BE SCHEDULED?	6
DAY 0 - FRIDAY	6
DAY 1 - SATURDAY	6
DAY 2 - SUNDAY	6
HEALTH ON THE TRAIL	7
DO YOUR RESEARCH	7
SANITATION	7
DISEASE	8
BLISTERS	9
HIKING SAFETY	10
SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION	10
FLORA AND FAUNA	10
EMERGENCIES	10
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	11
HUNTING	12
FOOD, WATER, & GEAR	13
FOOD	13
GEAR	13
DAY HIKES:	14
LONGER HIKES (ESPECIALLY IN REMOTE OR RUGGED TERRAIN):	14
OVERNIGHT HIKES:	14
WATER	15
HOW ARE HIKING TRAILS MARKED?	16
SINGLE WHITE BLAZES	17
DOUBLE WHITE BLAZES	17
ROCK CAIRNS	17

	3
GROUP CAMPING... LEAVE NO TRACE!	18
PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE.....	18
TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES.....	18
DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY	18
LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND	19
MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS	19
RESPECT WILDLIFE	20
BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS.....	20
RISK MANAGEMENT	22
RULES/REGULATIONS	23
GROUP SIZE	23
EXPERIENCE.....	23
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	23
GENERAL PREPAREDNESS	23
PASSING THE TORCH	24

INTRODUCTION

On the surface, this is a fundraiser for charity. However, as you look at it through the lens of our fraternity, you will see that APOlachian Trail 2018 is much more than a fundraiser. The event is named after the Appalachian Trail, which is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world, ranging across 14 states from Maine to Georgia. It attracts approximately 3 million visitors per year. Last year, that included hikers for APOlachian Trail 2017, who raised over \$3,200 for Feeding America. That adds up to almost 36,000 meals for the hungry. This year, the event is growing beyond the AT to allow brothers everywhere to participate on whatever trail is convenient to them.

The benefits of this hike far surpass that of a charity event. While it will be incumbent on each “team” to raise funds, other benefits include: experiencing the beauty of the world around you, building comradery with brothers, and practicing your leadership skills as the group organizes and assigns roles and responsibilities. You will build identity of self and identity of fraternity on a national level, earning pride and building momentum as the event is communicated across social media. You will learn many new skills that will empower you to take action when it counts the most. Finally, that feeling of accomplishment when you complete your section of the hike may only be rivaled by the shared feeling of accomplishment when our fraternity comes together to support a worthy cause.

Indeed, the timing of APOlachian Trail 2018 could not be more perfect. A huge event to build up hype for APO is exactly what we need in order to ramp up our recruitment efforts across the nation. Using the tools we learned to use during virtual marathon, we will all be able to cherish each mile a fellow brother hikes. And we will show the world what a strong, driven organization can accomplish from a simple idea: hike for charity. When your chapter enters into Rush season in the fall semester, they’ll be able to say, “When you join APO, you don’t just join one chapter. You join a network of tremendous people across the nation that can achieve things the likes of which others can only dream!” New brothers and pledges can be encouraged to take part in the hike, but no one should be required to participate.

There are many challenges that lie ahead. Many obstacles must be overcome before reaching the trailhead, not to mention the challenges of harsh terrain and unpredictable weather patterns. They will call into question our resolve and determination to accomplish the task. When these things happen, just remember: there are over 400,000 members of Alpha Phi Omega who believe in you, and believe in our cause. And when we work together, nothing can stand in our way. I’ll see you out on the trail.

FUNDRAISING

APolachian Trail 2018 is not just an epic challenge to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood; it is also a fundraiser for *Feeding America*. Participants will raise money on an individual per mile basis, with a recommended fundraising goal of \$5 per mile per hiker.

Feeding America spends 98.5 cents of every dollar raised directly fighting hunger, and each dollar donated is estimated to provide 11 meals. The success of *APolachian Trail 2017* provided upwards of 35,000 meals – with only 28 participants covering 161 miles! Brothers will fundraise directly through *Feeding America* using their *Set the Table*™ program, simplifying the process. *Set the Table*™ provides organizations like ours a way to raise funds.

Please feel free to visit the *Feeding America* website by going to this link: www.feedingamerica.org.

You can visit the event donation page using the following link:

A link will be provided once the event details have been finalized.

This is the website that you would send donors to, in order to support the event. They can even list which group they are supporting in the additional notes section of their donation. You can also remind donors that donations to Feeding America are tax deductible.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at: info@apolachiantrail.com.

YOUR ADVENTURE

➤ HOW WILL THE EVENT BE SCHEDULED?

The hike will occur over a single weekend in the summer. This will enable brothers who are taking classes or working full time during the summer, to participate equally. Saturday will be the main day of hiking. However, the more miles your group can hike, the more funds your group can raise. Therefore, we heartily encourage those who have the experience and confidence to camp overnight, to consider doing so. Hikes will be separated into three different ability levels:

Beginner: 5-10 miles on Saturday.

Experienced: 10-15 miles starting Saturday and camping overnight into Sunday.

Challenge Mode: 15-25 miles starting Friday and camping two overnights into Sunday.

NOTE: When choosing your team's ability level, don't be a hero. It is far better to hike 5 miles safely than to endanger fellow brothers who may not be at the same fitness or ability level. A possible solution could be to split your chapter into two separate groups and meet up together on Saturday for some fellowship hiking, or even reach out to another chapter and turn it into an interchapter event with multiple hiking.

➤ DAY 0 - FRIDAY

For those groups confident in their ability to accomplish a challenging hike, Friday will be the day you step out onto the trail. Plan a small hike to a campsite Friday evening after your team gets organized from classes or work. Be sure to get an early night tonight because tomorrow is a big day! Make some noise on social media to let folks know what you're doing, and engage the fraternity in preparation for tomorrow.

➤ DAY 1 - SATURDAY

Today is the main event! All hikers will be out on the trail today, hiking for the hungry. Have a great time, and remember to engage social media. The more people who see that you are getting out into nature for a worthy cause, the more people will donate!

➤ DAY 2 - SUNDAY

Sunday, the final day of hiking, will be the last day for those experienced level and challenge mode hiking teams. Finish your excursion strong, and get in those final miles! Each step you take is another step towards our ultimate goal to help those in need.

HEALTH ON THE TRAIL

➤ DO YOUR RESEARCH

In this section we will provide some basic information on situations that most hikers will encounter during their hikes. The situation will vary widely based on your location. It is up to each team to research the trail they'll be hiking to determine what resources will be available to them. They must also review local hiking regulations, especially regarding waste.

➤ SANITATION

As far as sanitation, don't expect flushing toilets. Some trails may have privies or latrines. However, every group on the trail should travel with a trowel in order to dig a 6- to 8-inch deep "cat-hole" to bury waste. This isn't just for human waste, either. When you brush your teeth in the morning, you should spit into a sump hole. If there is any leftover organic matter from cooking your meal that night (which is strongly discouraged – you should finish all the food you cook), it goes in the sump hole. This hole should be at least 200 feet (about 80 paces) away from your campsite. This is important for two reasons. First, animals will smell the organic matter and want to take a closer look. Making a cat-hole away from your campsite (or the trail) keeps curious critters away from you and those hikers who come after you. Second, campsites often have a water source of some kind, and there may also be streams, creeks, and rivers along the trail. Making a cat-hole at least 200 feet away will keep vital water sources from getting contaminated, which would make you sick, as well as all the wildlife you are out there to enjoy.

Always wash your hands before cooking, eating, and after toileting. It's always a good idea to use biodegradable soap and water; *hand sanitizers kill some germs but are not as effective against norovirus.*

Showers will, of course, be unavailable on most trails. The only kind of shower you'll be getting is if it rains. If you are so dirty you feel you must bathe, carry water 200 feet from the water source in a container and rinse or wash yourself away from streams, springs, and ponds.

Sanitation guidelines for females who may be menstruating can be found at the following link: <http://www.blog.rei.com/hike/girl-talk-part-2-handling-your-period-in-the-backcountry/>. Basically, you have to pack out used tampons or pads as you would anything else. Make sure you specifically label and double-bag a bio-hazard sign on a Ziploc bag or something of that nature (you may want to use an opaque bag for privacy) just in case it gets misplaced.

➤ DISEASE

Depending on geographic region, there are often risks associated with exposure to ticks, mice, wild animals, and viruses. Make sure to do your homework on what risks there are in your area and take appropriate precautions – most of the diseases you may be exposed to can be found on the CDC's website, where there is information on how to prevent or handle them.

In regards to ticks, precautionary measures will significantly decrease your chances of getting bitten. Prime tick habitat is grassy, brushy, or woodland areas below 2,000ft elevation. Use these precautions: wear insect repellent with 20-30 percent DEET on exposed skin, treat clothing, packs, and tents with permethrin, wear light-colored clothing to easily spot ticks, wear long pants and a long-sleeved hiking shirt to decrease skin exposure, and do a full body-check for ticks at least once per day. When you get home from your hike, put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks. If you discover a tick bite, remove the embedded tick within 24-hours to reduce risk of illness. Use tweezers or a tick key to lift under the mouthparts in a slow, steady pull. Save the tick body in a plastic bag, duct tape, or vile and have it examined by a medical laboratory for any diseases once you get back from your hike.

Precautionary measures against ticks are the most important to remember. HPS is an extremely rare condition that can be prevented by first inspecting shelters for mice or mouse droppings; avoiding contact with droppings is the easiest prevention method. There are different types of animals which may have rabies in the wild. The easiest prevention method is not to approach wild animals, period. Enjoy their beauty from a distance, take a few pictures, and then continue along the trail. Never instigate conflict with wildlife – remember, this is their home. Animal bites are very rare, but should be considered serious and medical attention should be called immediately.

Norovirus is a highly contagious stomach virus, has a 12-24 hour incubation period and lasts 24-60 hours. Infected hikers may still be contagious for up to two weeks after symptoms subside. Because of this, it is important to follow these precautionary guidelines: do not eat out of the same food bag, share utensils, or drink from other water bottles other than your own; wash your hands with biodegradable soap (200 feet away from waters sources) before eating, cooking, and after toileting, *remember hand-sanitizers are not effective against norovirus*, properly sanitize all water (even water obtained from campsite sources), follow Leave No Trace guidelines for disposal of human waste, and be sure to report instances of vomiting or diarrhea to the local health department and at stomachbug@appalachiantrail.org. Your prompt report will help stop potential outbreaks.

This may not have covered all the risks in your area. Do your research, and don't hike unprepared.

➤ **BLISTERS**

Blisters are the most common ailment you will encounter on the trail. The easiest way to prevent blisters is to break in new shoes or boots gradually before you begin your hike. Pay attention to how your feet feel as you proceed on the Trail. If you begin to feel any "hot-spots", have your group take a quick water break, and remove your shoes and socks. Apply moleskin or duct tape over the areas to reduce friction and pressure. Keep your feet as dry as possible while hiking, air out your feet as much as possible on the trail, and do not wait for a blister to develop before treating. If you develop a blister, do not pop it unless you feel you have no other alternative. Use a sterilized needle, clean and disinfect the area, and apply antibiotic ointment.

By following these precautionary measures, you will ensure that you and your group have a rewarding time on the trail, filled with brotherhood and good memories! Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Go to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website for more information on health on the trail:

<http://appalachiantrail.org/home/explore-the-trail/hiking-basics/health>.

HIKING SAFETY

➤ SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Practice common-sense just like you would if on vacation or going out on the town with your friends. Be wary of strangers, and don't tell them specifics of your plan. Be friendly, but cautious. You may encounter different cultural norms on the trail than those of your local community. Be respectful and accepting of others. Avoid hitchhiking or accepting rides. Be sure to follow the "buddy system" instituted in both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts: do not wander anywhere alone. Not only is it a good way to get lost, but if something detrimental should happen, such as you slip and roll your ankle, there would be no one there to treat you and bring you back to camp.

A good practice is to leave your hiking plans with someone at home, and try to check in with them once per day. Let your family know when you plan to be stepping out onto the trail, and when you expect to end your trip. Then, check in with your family at those times so they know you're alright. Use Trail registers, which may be spaced along your trail. These are notebooks, usually stored in shelters, which are the first thing authorities look at in order to track someone down who may be missing or hasn't checked in with their family. Also, we would strongly encourage you to submit positive media to the *APOlachian Trail 2018* blog. The page will be password protected and run by an administrator, so that event staff can keep track of progress, help authorities in case of emergency, and update the national fraternity accordingly, while also sharing posts in a constructive way on the internet.

Eliminate opportunities for theft. Leave jewelry at home. Don't leave valuables in sight in your vehicles or out on the trail. Additionally, note that carrying firearms (with proper permits) is now legal on National Park Service lands. It is strongly discouraged by many local agencies and trail management groups, and by the APO event staff, as firearms can be turned against you, and may result in accidental shooting. They are just extra weight that most hikers find unnecessary.

➤ FLORA AND FAUNA

The best way to avoid harmful encounters with the plants and animals along the trail is to respect them from a distance. Research poisonous plants that may exist along your trail. If there are bears, snakes, or spiders in the area, find out how to identify and avoid them.

➤ EMERGENCIES

Don't Panic. Keep your pack with you, DO NOT venture off the trail, and carry a map at all times for assistance in navigation - but also to describe your location in detail to medical personnel, should an emergency occur. It is strongly encouraged that at least one member of each hiking group obtain American Red Cross Wilderness and Remote First Aid certification. This will do a lot to give your group peace of mind on the trail. A group first aid kit should be brought on the trail by each group, and smaller, personal first aid kits with individual medicines are required as well. These kits should include specific over the counter and prescription medicines and other items such as aspirin, antihistamine, and an Epi-Pen in case of severe allergic reaction. Training courses for first aid can be found on the American Red Cross website, and are usually hosted by local Boy Scout councils (at discounted rates).

➤ ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

“Sudden weather changes, river crossings, and lightning on the AT introduce environmental risks to hikers. Take sensible precautions. Walking in the open means you will be susceptible to sudden changes in weather, and traveling on foot means that it may be hard to find shelter quickly. Pay attention to the changing skies. Sudden spells of ‘off-season’ cold weather, hail, and even snow are common along many parts of the Trail. Hot weather, particularly in Virginia and the mid-Atlantic summers, poses the risk of heat-related illnesses.” Taken from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website. Though your trail may carry different risks, the weather is always a significant concern.

In particular, weather can change suddenly and drastically with elevation changes. A cold rain could cause hypothermia if the hiker is unprepared; similarly, a humid, sunny day could cause a surprising amount of sun damage. Every hiker should dress in layers of wool or synthetic clothing (anything but cotton). Every hiker should also have a set of rain gear (rain jacket and pants). What's more likely is heat exhaustion. Being dehydrated is the number one cause of heat exhaustion – *even many experienced hikers often forget to drink enough water*. You are hydrated when your urine is a clear color. If it is yellow, you are dehydrated. This can lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or even heat stroke if it is left untreated. Get in the shade, drink water, apply cool compress to the victim, and try to lower their body temperature. If you suspect heat stroke, seek emergency medical attention.

Be wary of lightning. While the odds are low of lightning striking a person, if you see a storm coming, immediately leave exposed areas. Lightning may actually flow through the ground horizontally after a strike – therefore shallow caves and rock outcroppings do not offer any real protection. Do not go inside your tent, as the poles that hold up the tent are usually made of aluminum. If you cannot enter a building or hard-roofed car, take shelter in a group of smaller trees, or in the forest. Be sure to avoid tall structures including the tallest trees, solitary rocks, and open hilltops or ridges. Remove your backpacks (hiking backpacks have internal metal frames) and squat in

the “lightning position” for as long as it takes for the storm to move a safe distance away. In this position, you squat on your toes with your heels together, elbows touch knees, and head ducked underneath forearms with hands sticking straight up. This position allows lightning to pass through you and into the ground without hitting any major organs in the body.

The most dangerous challenge hikers confront on the Trail is fording rivers and streams. “River crossings can be deceptively hazardous. Even a very shallow, swiftly flowing body of water can pack enough force to knock you off your feet. Use caution and common sense.” If a section of trail is closed or presents a serious safety hazard, take an alternate route or skip that section of the trail entirely. When crossing a river or stream, unbuckle your backpack. This way if you fall, you can shrug off the pack and pick yourself up, instead of getting pulled underwater or downstream. Use a rope to keep the group together, and keep your hands free of clutter so you can stabilize yourself.

➤ HUNTING

Hunting is permitted in many of the wildlife areas across the country, often near the sites of hiking trails. Do not interfere with hunters, as harassing a hunter in lawful pursuit of game is a violation of law in most states. Use extra caution at dawn and dusk, and near roads and valleys. Make sure you are heard – this can be easily accomplished by chatting with your group along the trail. Educate yourself on the hunting laws along your specific trail. Wear a blaze orange hat or vest that is visible on all sides. While you may not be on the trail during prime hunting season, it does not hurt to be careful.

It is your responsibility to understand what regulations are in place along your group’s chosen trail. Taking into consideration all of these safety precautions may seem like a lot of work, but keep in mind, most of this is just common sense. Don’t interfere with wildlife, don’t wander off the trail, do hang your bear bag, and do stay hydrated.

It is highly encouraged to visit the following website:

<http://appalachiantrail.org/home/explore-the-trail/hiking-basics/safety#emergencies>.

If you feel the need to practice these skills beforehand (as you rightfully should), don’t be afraid to reach out to your local Boy Scout council.

FOOD, WATER, & GEAR

➤ FOOD

Hiking through mountains is hard work, and your body will need plenty of calories and protein for the trek. For a two-to-three-day trip, you can pack any food that you like best. Focus on ease of carry/preparation and caloric intake. Breakfast can include instant oatmeal or grits, breakfast cereals that don't crush easily, or energy bars such as Clif bars or Nutri-grain bars. An easy lunch favorite is cheese and crackers; add pepperoni for saltiness and flavor. Other options include bagels, bread, and peanut butter. Throughout the day it will be beneficial to bring along snacks that can fit in your pockets, so you can eat as you get hungry. Make your own trail mix out of cereal, nuts, dried fruit, and maybe some M&Ms. As for dinner, dried foods such as pasta/ramen noodles that only require boiled water are best.

Do not take too much food with you. If your food is high in calories, you should only need 1.5-2 pounds of food per day. Avoid canned food, or foods high in water weight. There are prepared "backpacking food" options sold at camping stores which can offer convenience and variety, and shouldn't be too expensive for a short hike. That said, your local grocery store should carry many lightweight backpacking food essentials.

Do not plan on having a campfire every night, and do not plan on cooking over the fire. Use of lightweight stoves for cooking minimizes the time it takes to cook, and your impact on the environment. Not to mention the chance that it rains and there is no dry firewood. Additionally, fires may not be permitted along your trail, or at the time of year you're hiking depending on forest fire risk. Finally, be sure to pack out all your garbage, including organic matter such as apple cores and orange peels. These items are indeed biodegradable; but they will attract wildlife to the trail, which could lead to hazardous conditions for those who hike the trail after you. Do not burn garbage in a campfire either, as this releases harmful fumes into the environment.

➤ GEAR

Each individual will be expected to bring with them the necessary gear for backpacking on their own. Ideally, each chapter of Alpha Phi Omega should have a handful of Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Venturing or Explorer Scouts or outdoor enthusiasts who have experience with camping. If such a brother doesn't exist in your chapter, try asking around with friends and family. A good "how-to" guidebook could also be used in lieu of a brother with first-hand experience. The following gear list was taken from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website, and can be found at the following link: <http://appalachiantrail.org/home/explore-the-trail/hiking-basics/food-water-and-gear>.

➤ **DAY HIKES:**

- A map and compass (learn to use them first!)
- Water (at least 1 quart, and 2 to 3 quarts on longer hikes in hot weather)
- Warm clothing, rain gear, and a hat
- Food (including extra high-energy snacks)
- A trowel for burying human waste and toilet paper
- A first-aid kit with blister treatments
- A whistle (three blasts is the international signal for help)
- A garbage bag to carry out trash
- Sunglasses and sunscreen, especially when leaf cover is gone
- A blaze-orange vest or hat during hunting season

➤ **LONGER HIKES (ESPECIALLY IN REMOTE OR RUGGED TERRAIN):**

- All essentials listed under “Day Hike”
- A flashlight with extra batteries and bulb
- A heavy-duty garbage bag to use as an emergency tarp or to insulate a hypothermia victim
- A sharp knife
- A fire starter, such as a candle, and waterproof matches

➤ **OVERNIGHT HIKES:**

- All essentials listed under “Longer Hikes”
- Shelter, such as a tent or tarp
- A lightweight pot and cooking utensils
- A stove and fuel
- Medium-sized backpack (big "expedition-size" packs are usually overkill)
- A pack cover or plastic bag for rainy weather
- A sleeping pad to insulate you from the cold ground
- A sleeping bag of appropriate warmth for the season
- Additional food and clothing
- 50 feet of rope or cord to hang your food at night
- Water filter or another method of treating water

When it comes to clothing, hope for the best weather but be prepared for the worst. Good rain gear will be essential to keeping you comfortable on the trail. Avoid cotton clothes, because cotton will

actually sap the warmth from you once it gets wet and it takes forever to dry. *Layer your clothes properly – hiking will make you sweat no matter the weather*, so a good moisture-wicking material will be ideal as a base layer. Add a synthetic fleece and breathable rain gear, and you should stay as warm and dry as anybody out on the trail. Make sure your shoes fit well and are broken-in. Blistered feet are the most common ailment for hikers, and will slow your group down considerably.

➤ WATER

Water sources can scarcely be trusted in the backcountry, and water purification must be executed with the utmost discipline. Various methods to sanitize water include boiling water, portable water filters, UV lamps, or iodine/chlorine tablets. A combination of methods is recommended to ensure reliability. For hikers who wouldn't normally have regular hiking gear and don't go out on a regular basis, tablets are likely the most cost-effective solution. Boiling water requires extra time and fuel, and portable water filters and UV lamps can get expensive. If possible, see if you can borrow a portable water filter from a Brother or friend and family of Brothers in your chapter, as they are fairly reliable, and try to combine their use with proper use of Iodine tablets. There are many different kinds of water purification tablets out on the market. It is very important to follow the direction carefully on whichever purification method you choose to use.

HOW ARE HIKING TRAILS MARKED?

A picture is worth a thousand words, as the saying goes. The following write-up and accompanying pictures are from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy website, and detail the different markers that denote the trail. Most trails are all marked in this fashion, so if you are not planning a hike on the Appalachian Trail, this information will still prove useful to you.



shapes mark other intersecting trails.

Getting to the trailhead, you may see signs that look similar to the one at left. They are typically on roads and intersections denoting trail entry and exit points.

The A.T. is marked for daylight travel in both directions using a system of white "blazes," or a rectangle of white paint 2 inches wide and 6 inches high. Blazes are found on trees, posts and rocks. Posts and rocks called "cairns" are also used to identify the route in some places. Side trails and shelter trails use blue blazes, and blazes of other colors and

Distance between blazes varies. If you have gone as much as a quarter-mile without seeing a blaze, stop. Retrace your steps until you locate a blaze. Then, check to make sure you haven't missed a turn. When your map or guidebook indicates one route, and the blazes show another, follow the blazes.



➤ SINGLE WHITE BLAZES

White blazes mark the A.T. and may be located on trees, rocks, posts or guardrails, among other places.



➤ DOUBLE WHITE BLAZES

Two white blazes, one above the other, signal an obscure turn, route changes, an incoming side trail or other situation that requires you to be especially alert to changes in direction. Sometimes the two blazes will be offset in the direction of the turn.



➤ ROCK CAIRNS

These rock piles identify the route above treeline and where snow and fog may obscure paints blazes.

GROUP CAMPING... LEAVE NO TRACE!

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy website has video tutorials explaining the Leave No Trace principles, which every group should plan for and abide by while on their trek regardless of what trail they are hiking. If there are stricter regulations on the trail they hike, it is their responsibility to abide by those rules as well.

➤ PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Check trail guidebooks and maps for guidance and note that camping regulations vary considerably between trails.
- Travel in groups of 10 or fewer. If you are traveling in a group of more than 5, avoid using shelters, leaving them for lone hikers and smaller groups.
- Bring a lightweight trowel or wide tent stake to dig a hole for burying human waste.
- Bring a piece of screening to filter food scraps from your dishwater and pack them out with you.
- Bring a waterproof bag and at least 50 feet of rope to hang food and other scented articles. Or, carry a bear-resistant food container ("bear canister") to store these items.
- Repackage food in re-sealable bags to minimize waste.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies - especially the cold - to avoid impacts from searches, rescues, and campfires.
- Learn when areas are most crowded and try to avoid being on the trail at those times.

➤ TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Stay on the trail; never shortcut switchbacks. Take breaks off-trail on durable surfaces, such as rock or grass.
- Restrict activities to areas where vegetation is already absent.
- Avoid expanding existing trails and campsites by walking in the middle of the trail, and using the already-impacted core areas of campsites.
- If tree branches block the trail, move them off if possible, rather than going around and creating new trails.
- Wear gaiters and waterproof boots, so you may walk through puddles instead of walking around them and creating a wide spot in the trail.

➤ DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- "Pack it in, Pack it out." Don't burn, bury, or leave litter or extra food. This includes cigarette butts, fruit peels, and hygiene articles. Keep your trash bag handy so you can pick up litter left by others.

- Use the privy for human waste only (feces). Do not add trash. If there is no privy, dispose of human waste by burying it in a "cat-hole," a hole 6-8 inches deep, 4-6 inches wide and at least 200 feet (80 steps) from campsites, water sources and shelters, and well away from trails. Add dirt to the hole, and stir with a stick to promote decomposition. Push toilet paper to the bottom of the hole, and leave your stick in the hole. Don't hide your waste under a rock - this slows its decomposition.
- Note that most disposable wipes are made from non-biodegradable material that must be carried out rather than buried, burned, or left in privies. For those willing to go the extra mile, consider packing out your toilet paper too. Animals' curiosity often brings toilet paper and other trash to the surface, where it's left for volunteers and other hikers to deal with.
- Wash dishes, bodies, and clothing 200 feet away from water sources. Use biodegradable soap sparingly. Avoid polluting the water by rinsing off at a distance to remove your excess sunscreen, bug repellent, etc., before going for a swim in a lake or stream.
- Disperse dishwater and toothpaste, and urinate well away (at least 100 feet) from shelters and popular campsites. In this way, wildlife is not attracted close to camp. Animals sometimes defoliate plants to consume the salt in urine, so urinate on rocks or bare ground rather than on the vegetation. Where water is plentiful, consider diluting the urine by adding water to the site.
- If you wish to donate items to other hikers (food, extra gear, clothing, books, etc.), don't leave them at shelters - where they can attract wildlife and become an eyesore - use the hiker donation boxes at motels and hostels.

➤ LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Leave plants, cultural artifacts and other natural objects where you found them for others to enjoy.
- Do not "tag" shelters, signs or trees with graffiti or carvings.
- Don't build structures or dig trenches around tents.
- Do not damage live trees or plants; green wood burns poorly. Collect only firewood that is dead, down, and no larger than your wrist. Leave dead standing trees and dead limbs on standing trees for the wildlife.
- Consider using rubber tips on the bottom of your trekking poles to avoid scratch marks on rocks, "clicking" sounds, and leaving holes along the trail.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species by checking your boots, socks, packs, tents, and clothing for non-native seeds that you could remove before hitting the trail.

➤ MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Use stoves for cooking - if you need a fire, build one only where it's legal and in an existing fire ring. Leave hatchets and saws at home - collect dead and downed wood that you can break by hand. Burn all wood to ash.
- Do not try to burn trash, including foil, plastic, glass, cans, tea bags, food, or anything with food on it. These items do not burn thoroughly. They create noxious fumes, attract wildlife like skunks and bears, and make the area unsightly.
- Where campfires are permitted, leave the fire ring clean by removing others' trash and scattering unused wood, cold coals, and ashes 200 feet away from camp after the fire is cold and completely out.

➤ RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Bears inhabit or travel through much of the country. Even small food rewards teach bears to associate humans with food. When that happens, they often have to be killed to protect human safety.
- Dropped, spilled, or improperly stored food also attracts rodents to shelters. Even a few noodles or pieces of granola are a large meal for mice. Clean up spills completely and pack out all food scraps.
- Store your food according to local regulations. Store all food, trash, and other scented articles (toothpaste, sunscreen, insect repellent, water purification chemicals, balm, etc.) out of reach of bears and other animals. A safe distance is 12 feet from the ground and 6 feet from a limb or trunk.
- Protect wildlife by keeping a respectful distance so as not to cause a change in their behavior. If you are hiking with a dog, keep it on a short leash. Do not follow or approach animals. Particularly avoid wildlife during sensitive times, i.e., when mating, nesting, raising young, or during winter.

➤ BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Let nature's sounds prevail. Respect others by keeping loud voices and noise to a minimum. Do not use cell phones or audio equipment within sight or sound of other hikers, and turn ringers off.
- If there are shelters, they may run based on a reservation system, or first-come first-served. Determine in advance what the regulations are on your trail and respect them. There may be a limit of stay at shelters along your trail.
- If you are hiking with a dog, be aware of its potential impact on animals and other hikers. Keep your dog leashed and under control at all times, and learn where dogs are prohibited. Ask permission of other hikers before bringing your dog into a shelter. If you find the

shelter is crowded, be considerate and tent with your dog. Keep your dog away from springs and other drinking water sources. Bury your dog's waste as you would your own.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Hiking in the mountains comes with some hazards. Per our Fraternity's national risk management policy:

“All activities planned in conjunction with Alpha Phi Omega shall take into account the health and safety of all participants. Planning... will include appropriate personal safety equipment, training, and supervision. All equipment to be used in conjunction with Alpha Phi Omega activities will be in good working condition and will be used in a safe manner.”

We must follow the national risk management policy of our Fraternity in addition to each chapter's own risk management policy. Remember that this is not just a romp through the woods with your friends. You will be representing the Fraternity with every step you take on the trail.

Equipment to be taken on the trail with you includes lighters, firestarters, flammable gas and sharp knives. The above statement of our risk management policy clearly explains that all equipment must be in good working condition, and it is our responsibility to ensure those who interact with the equipment are well trained in the safe use and storage of such equipment. Any failure to do so would be a strike against our risk management policy. Do not play games with matches or knives. Their use is to be limited strictly to what is necessary and proper. It is up to each and every one of us to enforce this rule, and ensure that everyone is educated before stepping out onto the trail.

Additionally, hazing of any kind is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment, abuse, or discrimination of any kind is strictly prohibited. This event is to be a completely DRY event; the use of alcohol or drugs of any kind, even if you are of legal age, is strictly prohibited by event staff. Impairing your senses while in the wilderness will lead to unnecessary hazardous conditions and will not be tolerated. Any failure to enforce this rule will endanger your fellow Brothers and yourself, and will result in disciplinary action.

A reminder that use of personal property of any kind is at the discretion of the individual and is strictly voluntary. “Alpha Phi Omega shall not assume liability for personal property use in conjunction with fraternity activities, nor for any damages resulting from said use.”

Risk Management is an important part of our policies, which enables us as a Fraternity to ensure that the values we live by are practiced with consistency across every chapter. By planning and executing this event in cooperation with our Risk Management Policy, we ensure that we will represent Alpha Phi Omega with pride and dignity.

RULES/REGULATIONS

In order to accomplish *APOLachian Trail 2018*, a set of requirements that must be met by each participating chapter has been established. These requirements are set to ensure the safety of all participants, to mitigate potential emergencies, and to ensure the proper use of the environment around us. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at info@apolachiantrail.com.

➤ GROUP SIZE

Each group is to have a minimum of 4 hikers. Check trail regulations regarding maximum group size.

Many trails have rules and paperwork guidelines that need to be followed with park rangers and other entities when it comes to larger groups. If your chapter sees a lot of interest, we encourage them to break the hikers into smaller groups on several different trails. Other members of the chapter are strongly encouraged to help with logistics: the hikers will need transportation to and from their starting and ending locations, and might benefit from encouragement by fellow brothers where their trail crosses roads. This will also help us keep track of our hikers in the event of emergency.

➤ EXPERIENCE

At least one member of the group shall have experience of a minimum of ten overnights while camping.

This is the equivalent of five weekend trips, or two week-long trips. Backpacking experience is strongly recommended. This experience can be obtained leading up to the group's start date.

➤ EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

At least one member of each group shall obtain CPR/AED Certification.

These courses are commonly offered in community centers by a variety of organizations. Most common may be the American Red Cross offerings. Additionally, it is encouraged for at least one member of each group to obtain Wilderness First Aid Certification. The American Red Cross, Wilderness Medical Training Center, and Wilderness Safety Council are just a few examples of organizations that offer Wilderness First Aid certification. For more information on valid courses please visit the following website, and look under section HW.2.2: <http://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/accreditation-standards/first-aid-cpr-recognized-certifications>

➤ GENERAL PREPAREDNESS

- *Each group must have a detailed hiking map of their trail.*
- *Each individual participating in the hike must have their own personal first aid kit.*
- *Each group must have at least one group first aid kit that meets Wilderness First Aid requirements.*

PASSING THE TORCH

We encourage every group who plans a hike to tell their story. Posting on social media was the number one contributor to funds raised in last year's event, and you get the added benefit of logging your memories for future endeavors. If one chapter is interested but can't find enough members to participate, they should reach out to their neighbor chapters. This is an enormous group effort, looking to gain the full involvement of the Brothers of Alpha Phi Omega.

The ultimate goal of this event is to bring the national Fraternity closer together. Last year, a totem in the form of one of our Fraternity's symbols, the Torch, was carved into a hiking stick. It started with the first chapter in New Jersey and was passed along the trail from one hiking group to the next. It summited mountain after mountain, finally reaching the end (or beginning) of the Appalachian Trail on Mount Katahdin, Maine. And on Saturday, Day 1, APOlachian Trail 2018, the Torch will once again be on the trail.

How many miles will we have hiked? Funds will we have raised? Mouths of the needy will we have fed, when the Torch makes its way to Austin, Texas this National Convention?

The answer lies within you.

Together, we aim to accomplish a daunting challenge. We look to collectively travel thousands of miles on foot. We look to climb mountains and fjord streams. And we look inward to ourselves: to find that burning desire to achieve, and turn that desire into something tangible in our world. To demonstrate to others, and ourselves, that we are a fraternity full of greatness. That we have the leadership, and the capability, to do wonderful, good things in our world - and to have fun along the way!