



*Vistoso Hiking Club*

## **HIKER'S HANDBOOK**

***This handbook provides valuable information for both experienced hikers and those new to hiking.***

***The purpose is to assure that VHC hikes are safe and enjoyable for everyone.***

***All hikers should read this completely and contact any club officer or hiking guide with any questions.***



## **HIKE DESCRIPTION**

A sample of a typical hike description follows:

***Romero Pools, Lower [C/6mi/1400'/\$2/8am]** From Catalina State Park, hike Romero Canyon Trail to lower pools for snack or lunch; return by the same route; Romero Trail is rugged in some sections. Joe Guide 520-555-1234*

Note the information in the brackets:

*[ hike rating/total distance/elevation gain/\$'s contributed to driver/departure time ]*

The person named is the Guide with the contact information.

## **HIKE RATINGS**

- D:** less than 4 miles or less than 500 feet total elevation gain.
- C:** 4-8 miles or 500-1500 feet total elevation gain.
- B:** 8-16 miles or 1500-3500 feet total elevation gain.
- A:** over 16 miles or over 3500 feet total elevation gain.  
(distance is total for out and back)  
(elevation gain is cumulative)

## **CHOOSING A HIKE**

- Select a hike from the current list based on your realistic capabilities to handle the distance, elevation gain, degree of difficulty, and your ability to maintain a reasonable pace.
- A detailed trail map is a valuable reference for choosing a hike (e.g., "Green Trails Maps"\* and others).
- Contact the Guide to register for a hike (see hike description for contact information).
- The latest time to register for a hike is 4:00pm on the day before the hike (unless otherwise specified).
- Discuss with the Guide the degree of difficulty if you are unfamiliar with the selected hike.
- Ask the Guide for the expected return time to S.C.O.V.
- Do not schedule any other appointments for the day of the hike since return times are rough estimates (especially for longer hikes).
- Tell the Guide if you are available to be a driver and the seating capacity of your vehicle.
- Privately inform the Guide, when you register for a hike, about any physical limitations or medical conditions that you have.
- The Guide has the discretion to accept or reject a hiker based on the Guide's determination of the hiker's capability to do the hike. Please accept the Guide's decision as final.
- The Guide may cancel a hike for weather or other considerations. Please accept the Guide's decision as final.

\*"Green Trails Maps" may be purchased at Catalina State Park, Sabino Canyon, Summit Hut, REI, and web sites.

## **HIKE PREPARATION**

- If you have a medical condition and/or are taking prescribed medications, please fill out the Emergency Medical Card and carry it in your pack while hiking (see "Documents" tab for form).
- A medical I.D. wrist band, if updated, is recommended for hikers with a medical condition (from RoadID.com, other web sites, and most pharmacies).
- Have proper equipment: hiking boots, hiking socks (wool blend type), wide-brim hat, layered clothing, hiking poles (optional), light-weight poncho (if rain is forecasted), sunglasses, name tag, sweat towel (optional).
- Use sunblock and lip protection with sunblock.
- Do not use any fragrances (e.g., perfume or cologne).
- Bring adequate water for the duration of the hike and the temperatures expected.  
*[a minimum of 1 liter (34 oz.) for every 5 miles]*
- Water should be accessible without having to remove backpack or fanny-pack.
- Bring adequate food and/or snacks to sustain your energy including a salty snack (as appropriate for this hike).
- Bring electrolyte drink for higher temperatures (or electrolyte powder or tablets) and a carbohydrate snack to take with the electrolyte drink.
- Bring your medications; a first-aid kit; and, if applicable, a bee sting allergy kit.
- Recommended to bring: moleskin, compass, knife, whistle, fine tooth comb, tweezers, duct tape (last 3 for cactus needles).
- A cell phone is recommended (for emergencies only); also, the Guide usually carries a cell phone for emergencies.
- A GPS unit is informational but not required.
- Bring toilet paper and a zip-lock bag for disposal of the used toilet paper (carry-out).
- Extra socks are useful for hikes with stream crossings or long hikes in higher temperatures.
- Cameras may be used but without slowing the pace of the group (see "While On A Hike" in this handbook).
- A backpack or fanny-pack is required for the carried items.
- Bring after-hike clothing and shoes if desired (leave in the vehicle).
- Pets, firearms, and smoking are not allowed on VHC hikes.

## **PERMITS**

- An Arizona State Parks permit or a National Parks permit is the responsibility of each driver (each of these permits covers the driver and three passengers). See other tab for "Permits" for sources.
- An Arizona State Trust Land permit is the responsibility of each individual hiker (see other tab for "Permits" for source).
- An Aravaipa Canyon permit is the responsibility of the Hiking Guide (see other tab for "Permits" for source).

## **RIDES TO TRAILHEAD**

- Hikers meet in the parking lot behind the SCOV Welcome Center (administration building), arriving 10 to 15 minutes before the departure time (unless otherwise specified).
- Carpooling will be arranged by the Hiking Guide.
- Hikers may drive separately and meet at the trail head; tell Guide ahead of time for this arrangement.
- Drivers are providing a voluntary service and are recognized by the riders as private individuals.
- Drivers are responsible for the vehicle insurance coverage.
- Please contribute the designated \$'s to the driver (see hike description)
- Hikers will sign the "Trail Sign-In" sheet prior to the hike.
- A personal waiver, hold harmless, and unconditional release form will be included with the "Trail Sign-In" sheet or with the annual membership form; hiker's signature is required in order to hike with the club.
- The Guide has the discretion to disallow a person to go on the hike if he/she does not have the basic items required for this hike (i.e., gear, clothing or supplies).

## **WHILE ON A HIKE**

- Drink water frequently to ensure proper hydration.  
(*drink before becoming thirsty!*)
- Do not avoid drinking water in order to avoid outdoor bathroom breaks.
- Request a "Separation Break" if you need to use the outdoor bathroom.
- Stay within the hiking group (between Guide and Tail Guide).
- Maintain a reasonable distance between hikers to avoid swinging hiking poles or sudden stops.
- Hikers who use poles should remember to point them towards the ground and not towards the back.
- Cell phone usage is not permitted (*emergencies only!*).
- If you want to use a camera frequently, position yourself last in line and then catch-up with the group; tell your Guide or other hiker of your plan.
- Watch for snakes; not all rattle; if you do hear a rattle, locate and avoid the snake.
- Do not place your hands in unseen places (e.g., under edges of rocks).
- Step aside to allow other hikers, horses, or bikers to pass.
- Hiking etiquette calls for downhill hikers to step aside for uphill hikers.
- What you carry in, you carry out.