

## Field Trip Guide for Naturalists

### Introduction

The *Field Trip Guide for Naturalists* is designed as a ready reference for leaders when planning and leading daylong to multi-day field trips outside of urban areas, and for the naturalist clubs' Boards of Directors when organizing a field trip.

The guide includes checklists for field trip leaders and trip participants, and lists some of the factors that the Boards of Directors should consider when they establish a risk management scheme for their clubs. This guide does not attempt to address the risks associated with cycling, boating or kayaking trips; this type of activity must be sanctioned in advance for insurance coverage.

We suggest that directors and field trip leaders keep the guide handy and add to it from their experiences.

### General Principles

Primary considerations for a successful field trip are:

1. The safety and wellbeing of the participants.
2. The preservation of the area visited.

It is recommended that participants:

1. Tread lightly: Keep the number of plant samples to a minimum, refrain from taking/disturbing animals, birds or other creatures and stay on roads or trails to the extent possible.
2. Respect all signage and private property and be aware of local laws and regulations.
3. Inform other users of natural areas of the need to practice these principles. If necessary, ask them to modify their conduct.

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## FIELD TRIP LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

### Planning the trip

- Learn about the area by studying maps and past trip reports.
- Carry out a reconnaissance trip before attempting the trip.
- For trip details, measure distance and elevation changes to provide a difficulty rating and estimated trip duration (*See Appendix A*).
- Note any requirements for reservations (i.e. fee collections or trespass releases).
- Create an emergency plan in case a participant has taken ill, or is injured.
- A *Wilderness First Aid* course is highly recommended for trip leaders.
- Carry a current map of the area weather protected. Do not count on using Google Maps.

### Before the trip begins

- Keep up to date with weather, fire hazards, trail closures, road conditions, ferry schedules and changes to park regulations.
- Keep a list of persons and agencies to contact to keep information current.
- It is important to carry a map of the trip area, a First Aid kit, handbook, and noisemakers. Carry a cellphone in addition to personal essentials.
- Be prepared to indicate the estimated trip duration to potential participants.
- Choose a safe meeting place to congregate.
- Have knowledge of any existing conditions with participants (hearing impediments, osteoporosis, etc.) in order to stay attentive to them

### At the meeting place

- Arrive early to direct participants to the parking area.
- Make introductions, distribute plant and bird lists if available.
- When all participants have assembled, explain estimated distance, altitude gain, trail conditions and difficulty rating of the trip.
- Ensure participants are members of BC Nature and have signed the required annual "*Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk*" or the "*Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims*", as recommended. Other legally sound acknowledgements that they are aware they are participating at their own risk can be used in place of claim and waiver forms.
  - If a club allows non-members to join in an outing, then the non-member must sign the "*Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims*" or other such stand-alone waivers. A payment of \$1 may be required to cover insurance.
- Record a list of participants and their emergency contacts.
- Make sure each participant has the minimum personal essentials (*See Appendix B*).
- Describe possible hazards that may be encountered, including local seasonal hazards such as ticks, rattlesnakes, etc.

- Explain trail procedures:
  - Advise participants that if separated/lost, they must stay where they are until found.
  - Advise participants that they must stay with the group and ahead of the end person unless the leader gives permission for them to separate.
- Arrange carpooling and describe club policy for reimbursing drivers.
- Ensure to answer any questions.
- **Reminder:** Sign all participants in with cellphone numbers and take a head count before starting out.

### **On the trail**

- Designate an end-person (sweeper) to make sure no one falls behind and exchange contact info. The end-person must be prepared to stay behind with slow members of the group on the return leg if necessary.
- Communicate with the sweeper and set a pace that the slowest member finds comfortable, and advise participants to speak out if the pace is too fast for them.
- Take rest stops as needed and make sure slower members have equal rest time. Count heads periodically.
- If there is a wide variation in pacing within the group, divide participants into a fast and slow group with a leader and end-person for each.
- When traversing steep slopes with loose rocks, ensure that no one below is in a position to be hit by falling rocks.
- Minimize interference with vehicle traffic when walking on roads.
- The leader has the final word on any changes in the plan and has the responsibility to alter or abort the trip if deemed advisable.
- Anyone leaving early must sign out with the leader.

### **After the trip**

- Make sure all participants are accounted for.
- Complete an Incident Report if an accident has occurred (*See list of requirements in Risk Management section*).
- Make sure all vehicles are in running order and that the last vehicles leave together.
- Drivers may accept remuneration from riders on completion of the trip in accordance with club policy.
- Encourage comments and suggestions for future trips.
- Note any changes of procedure or equipment for future trips in the area.
- Prepare an article for the club newsletter with photos if desired.

*\*All participants play a role in and have responsibility in regards to the success of a field trip\**

## SPECIAL SITUATIONS IN THE FIELD

### Lost persons

If a missing person has not been found after an immediate search, contact the RCMP by any means possible.

- Continue a thorough group search based on the last known contact while waiting for help.
- The leader should attempt to maintain contact with both the main group and search group.
- Maximize search and rescue activity before dark.
- The lost person should stay in one place and build a shelter before dark.

*\*Note that animals will always fiercely protect their young. You should never approach one as the mother is always nearby. Only observe from afar\**

### Bears

A bear will act in self-defense if it feels threatened. All bears have the potential to be dangerous and their reaction to any given situation are unpredictable. Knowledge, alertness and good judgment can help you to avoid dangerous encounters.

- Always hike with a group when possible.
- Try to stay in open area as much as possible and avoid berry patches, animal carcasses, and well-used bear trails.
- Stay alert for signs such as fresh tracks, scat, trampled vegetation, diggings, overturned rocks and claw marks on trees.
- Bears feel threatened if surprised, so whistle, talk, sing, or use a noisemaker to alert them to your presence.
  - Most bears will leave the area if made aware of the presence of people, but near dense brush or running water, your noises can become ineffective.
- Do not take a dog into bear country. The sight and smell of a dog may provoke an attack.
- Never feed or approach a bear, especially cubs, and do not get between a cub and its mother.
- Don't attract bears by improper food storage or poor clean-up (*See Appendix B*)
- If you sight a bear, keep your distance and make a wide detour. If you enter the range where it feels threatened, it may attack.
  - Keep calm and do not run. Bears run faster than humans do, and sudden movements may trigger an attack.
  - Speak softly, back away slowly. Avoid eye contact as bears interpret eye contact as a sign of aggression.
  - A bear rearing on its hind legs may be trying to get your scent or focus his eyes on you. It does not necessarily pose a threat.

- A cornered bear may charge and veer away, or jump forward, slam a paw on the ground while snorting loudly. These are defensive behaviors so resume backing away.
- A bear can be diverted with a dropped pack, allowing you to safely back off and retreat.
- **Grizzly Bears:** Climbing as high up a tree as possible can put some distance between you and the bear. A larger grizzly may not be able to climb trees, but it can shake one with significant force.
- **Black Bears:** If one acts aggressively towards you, shout and make yourself look as large as possible, wave your arms and stomp your feet. Climbing is not advisable as they are good tree climbers.
- It is extremely unlikely that a bear will physically attack you, but how to respond depends upon the kind of bear.
  - **Black Bears:** Most experts recommend fighting back – kick, punch and aim for the face, nose and eyes.
  - **Grizzly Bears:** Most experts recommend never fighting back. Most grizzly attacks are defensive and fighting may confirm to the bear that you are indeed a threat. In turn, it may intensify its attack. Drop to the ground and play dead.
    - Pull your knees to your chest to protect your vital organs. Clasp your hands behind your neck to protect your face and neck. Wearing your pack can help shield your body.
    - If the attack continues, experts recommend that you remain on your side in a fetal ball position with knees drawn up. Some other experts recommend lying face down with legs apart and cover your neck with your hands.
- Most leading bear authorities recommend bear spray as a **last resort** in the event of an attack. Bear spray should be used with caution, following training to ensure it is used as recommended by the manufacturer, including distance from bear and wind direction.
  - Trip leaders may carry or use bear spray at their discretion and should never discourage a participant from carrying bear spray.

## Cougars

Cougar encounters are rare but do occur. The number of encounters has increased in recent years, but there is little understanding on what triggers an attack. Safety precautions recommended for bears apply to cougars as well.

- Always hike with a group. Cougars generally stalk from behind and may target any hiker separated from the group.
- Stay alert for signs like tracks and claw marks.

- Keep children nearby and in sight, do not let them wander. Their small size and high voices can cause cougars to mistake them for prey.
- Avoid surprising a cougar by alerting them to your presence via whistling, talking, singing, noise makers, etc.
- Pets are not to be taken as they can lure cougars or provoke an attack.
- If you encounter kittens, leave the area immediately in case you encounter the female.
- Store and manage food properly to avoid attracting cougars (*See Appendix B*).
- In the event you encounter a cougar:
  - Stay calm and do not run. Sudden movements may trigger an attack. Never turn your back on a cougar.
  - Maintain eye contact with and slowly back away while making yourself look big. Speak softly.
  - If it shows interest or tries to follow, bare your teeth and arm yourself with rocks and sticks.
- Should a cougar attack, experts recommend fighting back. Aim for the eyes and nose, and use anything you can as a weapon. Never expose your neck, especially the nape.

### **Lightning strikes**

Watch for any significant build-up of massive cumulonimbus clouds (the main source of lightning), heavy rains and high winds.

- If you hear thunder or see lightning, you are at risk of being struck. The presence or lack of rain is not a reliable indicator.
  - o Stay off high places and open slopes. Put as much distance as possible between you and the nearest tree.
  - o If exposed in a high-risk area, insulate yourself from the ground with anything available such as a pack. Alpine meadows provide good insulation underfoot but a dry talus slope with its many air pockets can also provide good insulation.
- If someone is struck by lightning, immediately check him or her for injuries. Victims are not dangerous to touch.
  - o If the victim has no pulse or respiration, administer CPR right away.
  - o Cardiac arrest is the main cause of death from lightning strikes. Other injuries include vision and hearing loss, tinnitus (ears ringing), memory loss, confusion and cardiac arrhythmia. Serious burns are uncommon.

## FIRST AID AND SURVIVAL

### First Aid and Injuries

It is highly recommended that all persons planning to lead field trips take a *Wilderness First Aid* course. Whenever possible a qualified first aid person should participate in the trip. If there is an injury during a trip, take the following steps:

1. Secure the site and prevent further injury to the victim and others.
2. Evaluate the victims condition and decide whether outside help is required.
3. If outside help is required and a cell phone is available within service range, call 911.
  - If a cell phone cannot be used, send at least two people with coinage to find help. Ensure they can provide a clear account of location, condition of the victim and number in the group, or write a note of these details for them. One person should wait at the phone as a communication link. The other should return should to the group and inform the leader that help is on the way.
4. Make the victim as comfortable as possible and provide shelter until help has arrived.

### Accidents in the Field

- Check for hazards. If possible, clear them to ensure no accidents occur.
- If there is a lack of response from an injured person immediately use the **ABC Rule**.
  - **ABC Rule:** Check Airway/Breathing/Cardio. Make sure the airway is open and free of debris, apply rescue breathing and begin CPR. The leader should ask if anyone has had training in CPR. If there is no pulse, weak pulse or if you are uncertain, CPR is better than rescue breathing alone.
- Control any heavy bleeding.
- If an accident occurs, record its time, nature/details, victims condition, and first aid applied.

### Treatment of Shock

- Correct the cause of the shock.
- Apply the **ABC Rule** - keep the victim flat unless they have a breathing or heart problem. Ensure they stay warm and comfortable.

### Heat Stroke

Caused by dehydration, the victim's skin may become hot and dry and the victim may become unconscious.

- Provide shade, loosen or remove victim's clothing, sponge or wet down victim especially groin, armpits and behind neck and fan victim.
- Check temperature and cool until normal.



- Do not give fluids unless conscious, no drugs.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Caused by a loss of electrolytes and inability to dissipate heat. Symptoms include fatigue, faintness, dizziness and nausea leading to vomiting.

- Make the victim rest, give fluids with electrolytes if possible (e.g. Gatorade). As with heat stroke, keep the victim cool.

### **Frostbite**

Frostbite occurs when the upper surface of the skin becomes frozen. The affected area turns white and a tingling sensation may be experienced. The victim may not notice due to the resulting loss of sensation.

- Slowly warm affected area and keep body warm. Never rub snow on affected area.

### **Hypothermia**

General cooling of the body's core temperature to the point where it can no longer generate its own heat.

- Get victim into warm dry environment, remove wet clothing, protect from further heat loss and feed warm liquids (but not alcohol).

### **Survival**

As soon as it is evident that the survival of the group has become an issue, stop, consult those with appropriate skills and plan a survival strategy that takes account of the terrain, the weather and the situation.

- Ask the group if anyone has any survival experience. Should there be someone with experience, work together with them to create a plan and allow them to take charge where necessary.
- Communicate the plan to the group and stick to it.
- Take steps to prevent falls, hypothermia, frostbite and interaction with dangerous wildlife.
- Consider whether to build an emergency shelter.
- Keep the group informed about progress to avoid panic and keep up morale.

### **Hantavirus**

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) is a deadly disease transmitted by infected rodents through urine or droppings. Humans may contract HPS if they breathe in the aerosolized virus.

- Avoid coming into contact with rodents or their burrows.
- Disinfect and air out cabins before using them.
- Do not pitch tents near rodent droppings, burrows or woodpiles.
- Avoid sleeping on bare ground.

## RISK MANAGEMENT - DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

### Development of an effective field trip organization

The Board of Directors responsibility is to ensure that the club has an effective organization in place for the planning, scheduling and leadership of any club-authorized field trips. These should be clearly distinguished from trips that individual members may undertake that the club will not be responsible for.

- One individual should be designated to coordinate the field trip organization and to implement the club's field trip policies.
- Both Directors and the field trip coordinator (if designated) should take steps to satisfy themselves that trip leaders have basic outdoor skills and experience in the areas they lead.
- The Board of Directors should ensure that the club publishes its policy for field trip procedures and makes it available to field trip leaders. The policy should include a description of the recommended *Informed Consent & Assumption of Risk* form, and/or the recommended *Release of Liability & Waiver of Claims* form, or other legally sound form authorized for club use. They should also include procedures that ensure trip participants have signed the form.
- BC Nature recommends that non-members wishing to participate in any outing join the club as a *Day Member* with payment of a nominal fee and that they read and sign the *Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims Agreement* or other such stand-alone waivers.
- The Board of Directors should arrange for the details of any field trips authorized by the club, be published with sufficient information so that prospective participants can judge whether it is appropriate for their experience and physical ability. Prospective participants not be suited for a particular trip will then be dissuaded from participating before they make travel arrangements.
- It is recommended that the Board of Directors introduce a difficulty rating system for trips to help prospective participants to decide their suitability (*See Appendix A*).
- Publication of field trips should be accompanied by a general cautionary statement alerting prospective participants to the potential hazards of hiking in British Columbia. A sample statement is set out below:

*“Be prepared for the weather in the trip area. It is often very different from where you live. Depending on the destination and season, bring suitable clothing including boots with good ankle support, rain gear and a hat. Also bring food, plenty of water and insect repellent and sunscreen when appropriate. A basic First Aid kit is also recommended.”*

## **Avoiding negligence**

The Board of Directors must ensure that any member it designates to be responsible for field trips, whether directly or indirectly, makes decisions based on experience, competence and sound judgment. This will reduce the possibility of accidents and injuries to occurring or of allegations that responsible individuals have shown negligence in their decision-making.

## **The use of Informed Consent and Release of Liability forms**

BC Nature recommends that all club members sign annually the *Informed Consent & Assumption of Risk* form. A parent/guardian should sign for a minor (under 19 years) with this form.

- For more strenuous or trips of longer duration, BC Nature recommends that each participant sign the *Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims* form, which would be specific to that trip.
- By signing one of these forms the participant acknowledges that they are aware of and have considered the possible risks of personal injury, death, property damage or financial loss that could result from the activity.

## **The role of liability insurance**

Liability insurance is only one defense against damage suits brought against the club and its members if there is an accident on a field trip or work party organized by a club. Insurance is not a substitute for sound management of field outings, including proper trip records and use of waivers.

- First line of defense is always safety awareness. Whether you are a club director, a trip leader or participant, there is always the possibility that you and your club could be held responsible for causing an accident with significant consequences for a participant. Any one of you can be sued for causing physical damage, consequent loss of livelihood or property damage.
- BC Nature's insurance scheme provides liability insurance of up to \$2 million per occurrence for claims related to bodily injury or property damage, when such claims are made against the club, or one or more of its directors, officers, members, designated volunteers and employees.
- BC Nature's insurance scheme also provides insurance of up to \$1 million for claims made against directors and officers of clubs arising from errors and omissions made by them. It would be unfair to expect members to serve in these positions of responsibility without making sure they have this type of protection.
- In the event that a claim is made against the club or one of the parties listed above, BC Nature's insurance company is likely to get involved at an early stage to protect its interests.
  - One of the first questions it will ask is whether the activity in question was covered by the policy. The insurance company has stated that coverage is for "naturalist activities" such as field trips, outings, walking, hiking,

snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, camps (residential and tent), meetings and banquets. Bicycling, canoeing, and kayaking are covered but must be sanctioned in advance.

- Travel in your own vehicle is not covered by BC Nature's liability insurance. Your automobile insurance provides that coverage.
- The insurer will make sure that the club sanctioned the activity. The word "sanctioned" means that the club must have approved of the activity in question, either by publicizing it as a club sponsored event or because the organizer routinely organizes activities of that type.
- It is important to emphasize that BC Nature's insurance is liability insurance only. It is **not** a substitute for or a supplement to your regular medical or accident coverage, whether inside or outside Canada, for which you are individually responsible.

### **Incident report**

The Board of Directors and the designated field trip coordinator should make sure that full details are recorded for any incident that results in personal injury or property damage. It is recommended that the following information be recorded:

- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident, including trip description and specific details
- Name of injured person and contact details
- Details of injury or property damage
- Details of first aid given and by whom
- Comments by injured person
- Name and contact information of supplier of treatment
- Description of trip
- Name and contact details of trip leader
- Report by trip leader
- Witness names and contact details

The trip leader and club executive sign the incident report before mailing to the BC Nature office as soon as possible.

## APPENDIX A – RATING FIELD TRIPS FOR DIFFICULTY

Distance, duration, altitude gain and difficulty rating can classify trips involving a significant element of hiking. Such a system can help members to decide whether they are sufficiently fit and have the right equipment to enjoy the trip safely.

### **Distance and duration**

The trip leader is responsible for estimating the trip distance to the destination and overall duration. It is customary to add one hour for a lunch break to the estimated times for day trips when publishing these details.

### **Altitude gain**

If the trip involves more than one ascent and descent, the cumulative altitude gain should be published.

### **Difficulty ratings**

**Easy:** Trail may have some short uphill/downhill sections, a good walking surface and good clearance from overhanging and side branches. Navigational difficulties are minimal. Light hiking shoes are generally sufficient, can wear running shoes if the trail is dry.

**Moderate:** Trail has moderate slopes with switchbacks and generally solid trail surfaces. Some rough sections and creek crossings may be encountered. There may be a few minor navigational difficulties due to side trails. Elevation change around 200-300 m. Light hiking boots with ankle support are highly recommended.

**Difficult:** Trail may be narrow with long uphill and downhill sections. Some sections may have a rough, uneven surface with protruding rocks and tree roots. Other sections may have a loose surface requiring care to avoid slipping. Trails may follow the fall line of a slope rather than having switchbacks across the slope. Running water may have eroded the trail. Wading of shallow creeks may be required. Some sections present significant navigational problems such as a poorly defined route. Elevation change around 500-600 m and can take 4-5 hours. Boots with good ankle support and a more aggressive tread are required.

**Very difficult:** Trails may have long, steep, rough sections with loose and uneven footing, may be poorly defined with little or no prepared walking surface and fallen trees; branches and vegetation may be dense. Trail can have sections of possible navigational hazards and reduced visibility from unfavorable weather. Elevation change around 1,000 m and can take 5-6 hours. Hiking boots with good ankle support and aggressive tread are essential. A walking stick may help with balance.

## APPENDIX B – EQUIPMENT AND GEAR

### First Aid kit

Suggested contents of a trip leader's First Aid kit:

- Band-Aids and moleskin (duct tape can substitute for the latter)
- Pain-killer
- Triangular bandages
- Adhesive tape and tensor bandage
- Safety pins
- Tweezers
- Splints
- Folding scissors
- Compresses
- First Aid handbook

### Personal essentials for day trip

- Appropriate footwear (sturdy boots with ankle support) and clothing (suitable to the season and changing weather)
- Water and food
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- First Aid Kit and personal medication
- Noisemaker and/or whistle
- BC Services Card and ID (for emergencies)

### Survival Kit:

- Guidebook, topographic map and compass
- Hat and sunglasses
- Pocket knife
- Waterproof matches/lighter and fire starter (candle or flattened wax carton)
- Flashlight or head lamp
- Large orange garbage bag
- Strong cord
- Small folding saw
- Needle and thread
- Duct tape
- Water purification tablets or equipment
- Cell phone (if functional in the trip area)

### Repair kit

- Needle and thread

- Scissors/knife
- Wire, duct tape, rubber bands, cord
- Shoe-lace, cloth patches
- Spare parts and tools appropriate to the trip (e.g. spare ski tip)

## **Clothing**

In every season, provide for layering.

- Windbreaker and warm jacket
- Rain gear and gaiters
- Gloves and mitts
- Toque or hat
- Shorts and long pants
- Vest and sweater
- Spare shirt, blouse, socks and/or underwear
- Thermal underwear

## **Food storage tips (for overnight trips)**

The following guidelines were developed with bears in mind, but also works with most other animals, exceptions include mice and squirrels.

- Ideally, lock food in the trunk of your car. If far away from a parking lot, store the food safely out of reach in a stack.
- Away from your tent, find a tree with a branch around 6 m from the ground, 10 cm in diameter at the trunk, and 2.5 cm branch diameter at the point where you will hang your food. The hanging point should be 3 m from the trunk and any other point.
- Throw a line over the branch at a point where the branch will support the sack, pull the sack up towards the branch to a height of at least 4 m from the ground and secure the rope to the tree to hold it in place.
- It is a good idea to store soap, toothpaste and cosmetics with the food.
- Food lost to animals is your responsibility. When it is safe to do so, clean up any food scattered by animals.
- Be aware of health hazards (HPS, West Nile fever, beaver fever, ticks, etc.).
- Keep your campsite clean.
- Don't cook, eat or store food in your tent. Consider a temporary, vegetarian diet to avoid meat odors while outdoors.
- Dispose of dishwater in accordance with park regulations if applicable. Screen grey water for food particles. Treat them as above and scatter water over a wide area.
- Sleep at least 30 m (and upwind if possible) from cooking area and food cache.
- Leave oven mitts, aprons, etc in the cooking area. If you get food splatters on clothing, wash it and keep it away from your tent.

**CLUB - INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT****WARNING!**

**By signing this document you will waive certain legal rights, including the right to sue. Please read carefully.**

**DISCLAIMER**

This is a binding legal agreement. As a Participant in the programs, activities and events of the (club name) and the Federation of BC Naturalists, the undersigned acknowledges and agrees to the following terms:

The (club name) and the Federation of BC Naturalists and their respective directors, officers, committee members, direct members, employees, volunteers, participants, agents and representatives (collectively the "Organization") are not responsible for any injury, personal injury, damage, property damage, expense, loss of income or loss of any kind suffered by a Participant during, or as a result of, any program, activity or event of the Organization, caused by the risks, dangers and hazards associated with the programs, activities and events of the Organization.

**DESCRIPTION OF RISKS**

I am participating voluntarily in these activities, events and programs of the Organization. In consideration of my participation in the programs, activities and events of the Organization, I hereby acknowledge that I am aware of the risks, dangers and hazards associated with or related to any such programs, activities and events of the Organization and may be exposed to such risks, dangers and hazards. The risks, dangers and hazards include, but are not limited to, injuries from:

- Field trips, outings and nature walks;
- Bird counts and watching;
- Road cleanup and restoration work;
- Animal attacks, including but not limited to, bears, cougars and snakes;
- Bites from insects, including ticks with possibility of leading to Lyme Disease;
- Extreme weather conditions which may result in heatstroke, sunstroke, hypothermia, frostbite, or lightning strikes;
- Inhalation of viruses or infections including but not limited to, Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome;
- Executing strenuous and demanding physical techniques including climbing and hiking;
- Vigorous physical exertion;
- Grass, turf and other surfaces including bacterial infections and rashes;
- Falling to the ground due to uneven, slippery, steep, rocky or irregular terrain or surfaces;
- Failure to properly use any piece of equipment or from the mechanical failure of any piece of equipment;
- Spinal cord injuries which may render me permanently paralyzed; and
- Travel to and from activities, events and programs.

Furthermore, I am aware:

- a) That injuries sustained can be severe;
- b) That I may experience anxiety while challenging myself during the activities, events and programs;
- c) That my risk of injury is reduced if I follow all rules established for participation; and
- d) That my risk of injury increases as I become fatigued

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

In consideration of the Organization allowing me to participate, I agree:

- a) That I do not know of any medical condition I might have that could possibly make it unwise from me to participate in the club's activities, events or programs, including but not limited to heart conditions;
- b) To freely accept and fully assume all such risks, dangers and hazards and possibility of personal injury, death, property damage, expense and related loss, including loss of income, resulting from my participation in such activities, events and programs;
- c) To forever release the Organization from any and all liability for any and all claims, demands, actions and costs that might arise out of my participation in the activities, events and programs of the Organization.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I acknowledge that I have read this agreement and understand it, that I have executed this agreement voluntarily, and that this agreement is to be binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant (19 years and older)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(OR) Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**CLUB RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF CLAIMS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT (FOR THOSE 19 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER)**

**WARNING!**

**By signing this document you will waive certain legal rights, including the right to sue. Please read carefully.**

**Disclaimer**

This is a binding legal agreement. As a Participant in the programs, activities and events of (club name) and the Federation of BC Naturalists, the undersigned acknowledges and agrees to the following terms:

The (club name) and the Federation of BC Naturalists and their respective directors, officers, committee members, direct members, employees, volunteers, participants, agents and representatives (collectively the "Organization") are not responsible for any injury, personal injury, damage, property damage, expense, loss of income or loss of any kind suffered by a Participant during, or as a result of, any program, activity or event, caused in any manner whatsoever including, but not limited to, the negligence of the Organization.

**DESCRIPTION OF RISKS**

I am participating voluntarily in these activities, events and programs of the Organization. In consideration of my participation in the programs, activities and events of the Organization, I hereby acknowledge that I am aware of the risks, dangers and hazards associated with or related to any such programs, activities and events of the Organization. The risks, dangers and hazards include, but are not limited to, injuries from:

- Field trips, outings and nature walks;
- Bird counts and watching;
- Road cleanup and restoration work;
- Animal attacks, including but not limited to, bears, cougars and snakes;
- Bites from insects, including ticks with possibility of leading to Lyme Disease;
- Extreme weather conditions which may result in heatstroke, sunstroke, hypothermia, frostbite, or lightning strikes;
- Inhalation of viruses or infections including Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome;
- Executing strenuous and demanding physical techniques including climbing and hiking;
- Vigorous physical exertion;
- Grass, turf and other surfaces including bacterial infections and rashes;
- Falling to the ground due to uneven, slippery, steep, rocky or irregular terrain or surfaces;
- Failure to properly use any piece of equipment or from the mechanical failure of any piece of equipment;
- Spinal cord injuries which may render me permanently paralyzed; and
- Travel to and from activities, events and programs.

Furthermore, I am aware:

- a) That injuries sustained can be severe;
- b) That I may experience anxiety while challenging myself during the activities, events and programs;
- c) That my risk of injury is reduced if I follow all rules established for participation; and
- d) That my risk of injury increases as I become fatigued.

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

In consideration of the Organization allowing me to participate, I agree:

- a) To the best of my knowledge, I do not have any medical condition, including heart problems, which would make it unwise for me to participate in activities;
- b) To assume all risks arising out of, associated with or related to my participation;
- c) To waive any and all claims that I may have now or in the future against the Organization;
- d) To freely accept and fully assume all such risks and possibility of personal injury, death, property damage, expense and related loss, including loss of income, resulting from my participation in such activities, events and programs; and
- e) To forever release the Organization from any and all liability for any and all claims, demands, actions and costs that might arise out of my participation in the activities, events and programs of the Organization, due to any cause whatsoever, even though such risks, injuries, loss, damage, claims, demands, actions or costs may have been caused by the negligence or breach of any duty of care of the Organization.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I acknowledge that I have read this agreement and understand it, that I have executed this agreement voluntarily, and that this agreement is to be binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant (19 years and older)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date