

# Fox Cities Backpackers Meetup

## Rules and Policies

---

### Liability:

---

Please re-read (or read if you just skipped past it) the Meetup.com terms of service. Pay particular attention to Section 6 and the part that reads: "...you agree that you bear all risk and you agree to release us ... and Organizers and Creators or Hosts and their designees from claims, demands, and damages (actual and consequential) of every kind and nature, known and unknown, suspected and unsuspected, disclosed and undisclosed, now and in the future, arising out of or in any way connected with your use of the Platform, your Third Party Transactions, our resolution of any disputes among users, and/or your transportation to or from, attendance at, or the actions of you or other persons at, a Meetup Gathering."

By joining meetup.com, you have already agreed to this and you must understand that participation in the Fox Cities Backpackers Meetup is at your own risk. You are responsible for your own actions.

### Membership:

---

Membership is open to anyone who wishes to join and we hope that you will remain somewhat engaged in meetup activities.

#### Removal from the group for inactivity:

In order to keep our membership roles trimmed down to only people who actively participate, we are implementing the following two rules:

1. If a person has not visited the Meetup site in a year, they will be removed from the group.
2. If a person has not attended an event in two years, they will be removed from the group.

#### Removal from the group for cause:

There are only a couple of ways a person may otherwise be removed from the group

1. **If a member conducts themselves in an unsafe manner putting themselves and/or other members at risk of harm.** To do so willfully is cause for immediate removal. To do with, without intent, on more than one occasion, after being duly warned, is cause for immediate removal.
2. **If a member conducts themselves in a way that is disruptive to the group.** In these cases, the leadership team must vote unanimously to remove the member.

## Rules of Conduct:

1. Be safe
2. Conduct yourself as a responsible adult
3. Have fun
4. Don't sign up for a trip unless you expect to attend. Don't sign up just to 'hold a spot'
5. Be safe!!!!

We're not here to dictate how you participate in the group. You'll find that we're open and accommodating to people of all types, skill levels, abilities, etc. Beyond the safety issue, pretty much the only thing we won't tolerate is intolerance. We're all adults. Conduct yourself as one and we'll all be fine.

## Leadership:

---

The leaders of the Fox Cities Backpackers Meetup are working on a volunteer basis. No one is compensated in any way. They do this because they love backpacking and they love to help folks get into the sport. By doing this, they are taking on a lot of responsibility and committing a lot of time. The Meetup leaders expect that members will respect this and follow the rules and guidelines outlined here. In exchange, the leaders promise to do their best to help members meet great people and get out in the woods more!

In order to keep the club active and moving forward, a leadership structure has been implemented. While somewhat informal, it is intended to provide for some degree of responsibility at each position. The leadership team will attempt to lead by consensus, but in the event that consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority will rule.

The leadership team consists of the following positions and responsibilities:

### Organizer:

- This person is the official cat-herder, enforcing what few rules there are with the assistance of the assistant organizers and trip leaders. This person is the tie-breaker in any leadership voting matters.
- Pays the bills and keeps financial records
- Must plan and lead at least three trips each calendar year.
- Schedules and runs the monthly club meeting/social

### Assistant Organizer:

- May vote on leadership matters.
- With the Organizer, will set club policy and direction, resolve membership issues, and manage club finances.
- Must plan and lead at least two trips each calendar year.

## Event Organizer:

- Non-voting
- Has the full trust and faith of the organizer and assistant organizers and may post and lead trips
- Must plan and lead at least one trip each calendar year

## Eligibility:

Any person who has completed an advanced-level trip (or has equivalent experience, see “Trip Skill Rating” section) and with approval of the leadership team can become an Event Organizer. Simply say you want to be one and it’s likely to happen. We can use all the event organizers we can get!

Any person who has been an Event Organizer for at least one year is eligible to become an Assistant Organizer with a unanimous vote of the leadership team. A trip-leader must be nominated by the Organizer or an Assistant Organizer to initiate a vote and the nominee must, obviously, be interested in being an Assistant Organizer. This can happen at any time. At no point can there be more than 5 Assistant Organizers.

Every year at the November club meeting/social, nominations will be taken for the Organizer position and a vote will be taken during the December meeting of all present club members of all the nominated persons by an online survey. To be nominated a person must already be an Organizer or Assistant Organizer.

# Trip Skill Ratings

---

We have, in the past, had issues with members coming on trips that they were unprepared for, either with their gear, their knowledge, their mindset or their ability. We want members to push themselves and take on new challenges, but we want everyone to stay safe, too. We can’t always prevent these situations, but we would like to minimize the likelihood of members getting themselves in over their heads as best we can without being too nanny-like. With that in mind, we’re going to begin a trip ranking system. Each posted trip will have an associated skill ranking.

In order to participate in a trip with a ranking higher than beginner, you must either:

- Successfully complete two trips of the next lowest ranking
- Demonstrate previous experience/skill to an organizer

Any new members must, then, either complete two beginners-level trips or contact an organizer to demonstrate prior experience before signing up an intermediate-level trip. Likewise a member must either complete two intermediate-level trips or contact an organizer to demonstrate prior experience before signing up for an advanced-level trip.

How do you demonstrate prior-skill to skip a level? It’s pretty simple really. Call or email the Organizer or an Assistant Organizer and talk to them. We’ll ask some questions about prior non-meetup trips you’ve been on, ask a few technical questions, and in some cases may ask for photographic proof of the trips

you've claimed to be on. It may seem onerous, but we want to avoid requiring all members to go through a boot-camp-style trip if they already have experience on the trail. At the same time, we want to ensure that anyone who is on an intermediate or advanced level trip won't end up in over their head or wind up taking care of someone who is in over their head.

How will trips be ranked?

### **Beginner-level trips (all of the following must apply):**

- No more than 2 nights
- Fairly easy, non-technical terrain
- < 10 miles covered per day
- Expected temps to remain above freezing if camping without permanent shelter (unheated cabin, adirondack-style shelter, or yurt), more than ½ mile from our cars.
- Expected temps to remain above 0F if camping in a permanent shelter (unheated cabin, Adirondack-style shelter or yurt) or camping within ½ mile of our cars
- Group to remain fewer than 5 miles from a road or other 'bail out' point

### **Intermediate-level trips (all of the following must apply):**

- No more than 4 nights without resupply
- Easy to challenging, but not technical terrain (no fast-water river crossings, ropes not required, etc)
- < 20 miles covered per day
- Expected temps to remain above 0F if camping without permanent shelter (unheated cabin, adirondack-style shelter, or yurt), more than ½ mile from our cars.
- Expected temps to reach below 0F if camping in a permanent shelter (unheated cabin, Adirondack-style shelter or yurt) or camping within ½ mile of our cars
- Group to remain fewer than 10 miles from a road or other 'bail out' point

### **Advanced-level trips (if *any* of the following apply):**

- 5 or more nights without resupply
- Technical terrain (deep snow, fast-water, rope necessary, full-day climbs, etc)
- > 20 miles covered per day
- Expected temps to reach below 0F and is camping without permanent shelter (unheated cabin, adirondack-style shelter, or yurt) and more than ½ mile from our cars.
- Group to be beyond 10 miles from a road or other 'bail out' point

### **Special Notes on cold Weather Trips:**

For the temperature requirements, the temperature is based on average low temperature for the location of the trip (as listed on <http://www.weatherbase.com/>). 7 days prior to the trip, the forecast will be checked (as published by the National Weather Service or a commercial service that uses their data such as <http://www.wunderground.com/>) and a final determination of expected temperature will be made and the final trip rating determined. If a person is no longer qualified for the trip based on the

forecast, they will be issued an automatic refund by the Trip Leader. If the forecast should change by more than 10 degrees after that final determination has been made, the Trip Leader can make an additional change to the trip rating for safety reasons, at their discretion.

## Finances

---

This Meetup exists simply to bring people together to do what we love. No one is doing this to make money. Effective immediately, we will begin keeping detailed records of all the club finances. If any member would like to see these records at any time, simply contact the organizer and they will be happy to share them with you. We are investigating seeking official non-profit status but we have not yet done so.

### Fees:

While we are not for profit, we do collect fees to participate on trips. What do these fees cover? In general, for any individual trip, your fee covers:

- Any accommodations not otherwise described in the trip description as being your own responsibility. For instance, a Porkies yurt trip will include the cost of renting the yurt.
- Firewood for some winter trips. If this is the case, it will say so in the description.
- Commercial shuttle services, such as with the annual Pictured Rocks trip.

Any excess money goes into the club kitty and is used for expenses such as:

- CPR and wilderness first aid training for trip organizers/leaders
- Covering the cost of maintaining the Meetup.com site
- Buying group-gear as approved by the Meetup leadership.

How much will trips cost? In general, we set the cost of a trip at \$5/night plus the cost of accommodations/shuttle services as described above, rounded to the nearest \$5. This is being done in order to avoid having to charge a membership fee or club dues. It's a pay for use system. We want to encourage new members to come to meetings and socials and get to know people and know more about backpacking before committing any money to the club.

When setting the cost of a trip, the shared costs of firewood, accommodations, transportation and such will be split based on a best guess of the number of attendees. If participation exceeds that the club will make a little extra money, if participation is under that, we'll take a loss. If we target a trip for 10 attendees and 20 show up, it may seem unfair that everyone appears to be paying more than they should, but over the course of the year, we expect things to balance out.

### Fee Collection:

We've opened a club bank account and PayPal account to assist in accepting trip payments and to make it easier to manage club finances. Our PayPal account is [FoxCitiesBackpackers@gmail.com](mailto:FoxCitiesBackpackers@gmail.com)

All trips that have either a maximum number of participants or have club costs associated with them (renting a cabin, shuttle services, etc), will **require pre-payment in order to RSVP for the trip**. We've had way too many cases of people signing up and then bailing out at the last minute. This usually means that someone who wanted to go may not have been able to since the trip spot was taken up by that person. Also, in some cases, it leaves the club having to pick up the trip expenses their fee would have helped cover. Pre-payment can be made by Pay-Pal online or you can mail or hand a check or cash to the organizer.

### **Refunds:**

If you pre-pay for a trip and find that you cannot attend after all, refunds are available only in the most extreme circumstances such as a health-related emergency. The only exception is if the trip is full. If you change your RSVP to "Not Going" and the trip winds up full anyhow, you would then be eligible for a refund as the club is in no danger of losing money on your account. Think of signing up for a trip like buying concert tickets. If you catch a cold or your work schedule changes before the concert, you need to decide whether to tough out the cold, skip work, eat the cost of the tickets, etc. You'd never expect a refund for the tickets from the venue. That said, if there's a death in the family or you are clearly too sick or injured to attend, allowances will be made at the discretion of the Organizer.

### **Waiting List Management:**

Unfortunately, our options for managing a waitlist in an automated and fair manner are limited by the meetup.com site. For events that require pre-payment, the meetup "manual waiting list" is our only option. When someone changes their RSVP to "Not Going" on a trip with a waiting list, all members of the waiting list receive an automated email and the first person to respond and pay, gets the newly vacated spot regardless of the order in which they entered the waiting list. This is, in our opinion inherently unfair, but until meetup.com changes the options available on their site, we're going to have to live with the waiting list being first-come first-served in these cases.