

QUICK GUIDE for High School Leaders

Welcome student leaders!

High Trails welcomes you to the mountains for a few days of adventure, learning, hiking, bonding, leadership and fun!!! First, the staff here at High Trails wants to Thank You for devoting your time to the younger students and our program. The students totally look up to you! They will listen to your stories, cherish your friendship and appreciate that you care. You will have several training sessions once you get to High Trails, but before you arrive, YES BEFORE!, you need to read this guide cover to cover. Then all you need to bring with you (beside the long list of stuff in the back) is: a desire to work with children, an open mind and boundless energy!

Did you know?...

- 100,000 students and teachers have participated in the High Trails program since 1967.
- High Trails is located 35 miles west of Colorado Springs on 6000 acres of private land.
- We are bordered by the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and Pike National Forest.
- At 8600' elevation, High Trails is in the Montane Life Zone.
- The mountainous landscape is dominated by forests of Aspen, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine.
- You will likely see a variety of wildlife – elk, deer, porcupine, badger, coyote, and eagles!

Words of Wisdom...."Save the Earth, we need a place to boogie!" – bumper sticker

What is the job? High school leaders....

- o **Live in a cabin** with a group of students and help them develop into a cohesive living unit.
 - Talk to students and get to know each one by name.
 - Help students be prepared for the hikes.
 - Work with the student's teacher and High Trails staff person to build a healthy living community in the cabins.

- o **Assist and Teach** discovery groups.
 - Inspire interest and enthusiasm in the subjects you are teaching
 - Use the role-playing curriculum to make history and natural sciences come alive!
 - Be prepared!

- o **Lead** evening programs, morning hikes, recreational activities.

- o **Work** on the kitchen crew for some meals.

- o **Participate** in leadership seminars and training sessions.

- o **Help** in every way you can to make the program run smoothly.

Words of Wisdom.... "I'd rather wake up in the middle of nowhere, than in any city on earth."

— Steve McQueen

WHY ARE WE HERE?...

Educational Goals of High Trails

At High Trails, we want students to learn through a hands-on, experiential approach. By sharpening the senses nature has handed us, we develop the more complex senses all society strives for...

Sense of the Earth

Learning the wonders of the world and gaining an understanding of the oneness of nature should be a part of everyone's experience. To feel and know the life history of rocks, to understand the functions of trees and flowers, to run soil through our fingers and delight in seeing it as a slice of time. We are dependent on one another, all related in the movement of the whole, always on the way to becoming something else.

Sense of Community

The residential experience at High Trails emphasizes the art of living with other people – how to work with them and for them, knowing when to lead and follow and how to share experiences in the outdoors. These and other social skills are best learned through experience, and the community situations at High Trails catalyze this experience.

Sense of Self

Away from home, each student has a chance to develop further independence and self-confidence. The program at High Trails should give everyone time to examine individual life styles, feelings and value systems – time to think about life itself.

Words of Wisdom – “Even after the heaviest storm, the birds come out singing” – Rose Kennedy

As part of the human community, we each have a responsibility to take care of the Earth and each other. The first step to caring is the recognition that everything is connected. To understand the BIG picture we must be able to see the little things. Take the time to look around. Notice the small, intricate wings of insects and the faint sounds of the leaves in the trees.

The BIG picture

Think about how nature is a model for efficient and cooperative communities, then think about how you as an individual, are related to different parts of nature. Can you think of anything in nature that is not within 5 degrees of separation from you!? Challenge yourself to question everything, explore the cultural and natural world with intense curiosity and share your findings in fun and interesting ways with others.

The High Trails Teaching Model

What is a discovery group?

An outdoor class or field seminar is what we call a discovery group. Each thematic discovery group follows a story from a particular era in United States history. Within the framework of the history, the students will participate in several science-based lessons and activities. Each discovery group lasts for 2.5 hours and hikes approximately 1-2 miles one of several learning centers with stops along the way for learning. For example, students that are in the Prospectors discovery group ‘become’ miners during the 1800’s, learning the rock cycle and other geology concepts along the trail. Role Playing

What are learning centers?

The most unique aspect of coming to High Trails is the amazing learning centers!

Quicks Homestead – go back in time to the restored 1890’s homestead.

Witcher Ranch – “get ‘er done” at the 100 year old working cattle ranch.

Tipi Village – experience how the Ute Indians lived at this simulated encampment.

Sawmill – figure out how many board feet you can get out of one log.

Geologic Sites – dig for quartz crystals, jasper and copper.

Astro Observatory – see the rings of Saturn or the seas on our moon.

Words of Wisdom – “Many would say, “I’m afraid,” if they had enough courage.”

The joy of learning...and teaching!

When you are:

- ⇒ imaginative
- ⇒ participating, don't just lead
- ⇒ enthusiastic
- ⇒ flexible
- ⇒ using genuine praise
- ⇒ open and honest
- ⇒ letting the kids discover
- ⇒ making use of all 5 senses
- ⇒ prepared



The result will be an:

EXCELLENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE!!

Words of Wisdom – “Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

How the discovery groups will work....

Setting the Mood:

Setting the Mood is an introductory discovery group, designed to open students minds and help them feel comfortable in an outdoor classroom. You will be trained to lead several small group activities (Nature Scavenger Hunt, Blindfold Tree Hike) with our High Trails high school supervisor after lunch your first day.

Thematic Discovery Groups:

Your role in the discovery group will change as the week progress’. The first time it is led by the High Trails staff person, who will model for you the best way to teach/lead/inspire over the 2.5 hours. That afternoon the High Trails staff will not be there, you and the teacher in charge of the group will lead the entire discovery group. The teachers will expect you to gradually take on more and more leadership and responsibility the more you teach. So be prepared! Read your curriculum guide, look online for additional tools to help you teach, and pay attention the first time it is taught by the expert High Trails staff.

Words of Wisdom – “Give a man a fish, he will eat for a day, teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.”

Cabins and the Community...

Cabin Facts:

- heated, with electricity
- divided into an east and west side.
- on each side there are 12 beds, 10 for students and 2 for student leaders.
- Teachers live in the front room of the cabin that also serves as a community room for meetings, s'mores, games and other fun times.
- A shared bathroom has 4 stalls, 3 showers and 6 sinks.

Underground, (and more important) Cabin Facts:

There will be a high trails staff person and a school teacher who will help you facilitate a healthy living community in your cabin. The opportunity to live with others and to form a cabin community are important aspects of High Trails. A great deal of individual and social growth takes place in the cabins. Here we can all learn much about cooperation and awareness, and it is a chance for students to be "on their own". Several specific times are devoted to these goals and there are many informal opportunities for cabin unity.

Words of Wisdom – "What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the winter-time; it is the little shadow that runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset"

Homer says "mmmm Donuts" ...**Life in the Lodge**

Meals are not only a time for eating, but also a time for getting to know each other better.

Strong, effective leadership from you, as the head of the table, makes the difference in whether the dining hall is a pleasant, relaxing place to eat or a mad, chaotic scene.

Each cabinside eats their meals together and you will eat with them most of time. Come to the lodge with your cabin when you hear the bell ring. After finding your table, stand for a short thought for the meal. Then it is time to sit down and enjoy an excellent meal!

ABLE WAITERS - For one meal your cabin students will go to the lodge 30 minutes early to be an Able Waiter – someone who waits on other student tables and helps the meal run smoothly. Students have a great time 'working' for a meal but it helps for you to get them excited and ready!

SITE CREW – This is a fun break and a chance to get to know other students and staff. Be at the meals an hour early to help set the tables, eat ½ hour early, then work in the kitchen with the cooks, HT staff and fun tunes!

Duties: set tables
 rack and clean dishes, scrub pots/pans
 put away dishes
 clean up

Words of Wisdom – "

Evening Programs

Nice people you'll be working with...

Teachers – Elementary school teachers accompany their students and as highly educated and enthusiastic people, are great resources for you in dealing with kids in the cabin and for learning how to teach effectively in the discovery groups. Get to know them, they will be evaluating you!

High Trails Staff – The staff at High Trails are a group of fun, interesting people dedicated to providing an excellent experience for everyone that visits. Some are experts in local botany or history, others know a lot about geology, but all the staff have reaped great personal rewards in working with kids. The staff need your help, in cabins, discovery groups, during recreation and in the lodge. We are so psyched you have decided to join us!

Cooks and Maintenance Staff – We have a full-time crew that is at High Trails to provide high quality meals and make sure everything in your cabin works. If you see them around, give them a high-five and say 'thanks'!

Interbarn

At the Nature Carnival, students choose to explore the interior of a giant walk-in plant cell or investigate furs and relics from the Trapper era. In other stations, living pond organisms are displayed on a computer projector, or students may use a telescope for starviewing. Your role will be to teach two of the three 10 minute sessions, after a High Trails staff member trains and models for you the best way to approach the material. It is way fun!!!

Folk Dance

The hoe-down has been a super-popular program for many years and something students always remember! Simple and traditional line dances and circle dances such as the Mexican Hat Dance and the Virginia Reel are taught by the High Trails staff. Your role is to get dressed up and be a little crazy, encourage all students to participate, and maintain a 'quiet' dance hall when the dances are being explained by the staff.

Cookout

Words of Wisdom – "I have grown taller from walking with the trees."

How you can be the best leader possible!

Tips, Tricks and Techniques...

1. Learn everyone's name on your cabin-side the first day – name games and name tags help!
2. Include everyone! Don't let anyone sit out.
3. Set boundaries – be firm on the first day and students will listen and respect you all week.
4. Be fair – listen to both sides in arguments
5. Do not allow roughhousing in the cabins or on hikes.
6. Create unity – play group games, do riddles, tell stories, share your day, make up a cabin song or chant, design a poster, write letters together
7. Ask for HELP – teachers, staff, directors are all here to help you!!!

So.....

Be Patient and Sympathetic

Be Firm in Decisions

Be Consistent

Be Informed and Cautious

Be Happy and Enthusiastic

Be Cautious

Be Prompt

Training Scenarios – Don't look at the answers first!!!

1. During the discovery group, you notice a student is distant and disengaged. How do you redirect him/her?

- a) Talk to them
- b) Ignore them
- c) Run away in fear
- d) Laugh

a)

2. In the cabin, students will not settle down when it is time to go to bed. What action can you take?

- a) Threats
- b) Make more noise
- c) Sleep outside
- d) Be proactive

3. You notice a student is bummed out. He tells you he wants to go home or call his parents. What do you do?

- a) Give him your cell
- b) Tell him to email, its fast
- c) Shout to his parents
- d) Ask for help

4. During the meal, the students at your table are out of hand; loud, downing milk, getting up, making a mess. What is the most effective way to calm them down?

- a)

- counselor instructional materials
- candy, gum, snacks
- GOOD IDEAS!!**
- books and stories to read to students
- costumes for role playing
- musical instruments

Stuff to Bring – **Feeling good is better than looking good!**

- sleeping bag or 2 sheets and 2 warm blankets and a pillow case (pillows are provided)
- warm coat or parka
- waterproof boots or hiking boots
- warm gloves/mittens and a winter hat or cap
- two pairs of jeans or long pants
- several shirts
- sweater/hoodie
- extra pair of shoes
- one pair of warm socks per day
- underwear
- camera
- warm pajamas
- stationary/stamps
- towels and washcloths
- alarm clock
- toothbrush/paste, soap, toiletries
- writing utensils
- **Water Bottle**
- day pack

Please DO NOT bring

- blindfold or bandana
- ipod, mp3 players, PSP's, cell phones

Behavior Contract – “All eyes are on you”

When you agree to come to High Trails, you are making a commitment to be the best person you can be. Every action you take should be considered in the light of what it means to the students who will imitate you. It is not a small responsibility.

The following have no place at High Trails:

Drugs and Alcohol – High Trails is required to contact the Teller County Sheriff about any incident involving possession or use of drugs or alcohol.

Smoking – Smoking is not permitted at any time. If you don't think you can give up smoking while you are here, please do not come.

Offensive language, jokes, stories, etc... - Persons who are not aware of what is offensive and inappropriate and who will not modify their language and conversation to meet standards of decency are not welcome.

Night Action – It is expected that leaders will be with the younger students at all times and will not leave the cabin at night.

Words of Wisdom – “In the woods, we return to reason and faith.” – R.W. Emerson

Map of High Trails

Checklist for Preparation

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I read this Quick Guide and I loved it!

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I went to the High Trails website (htoec.org) to find out more information about my role.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I read the curriculum guide for the discovery group I will be teaching.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I packed an extra pair of socks along with everything else on the list, just in case.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I know what time and where to catch the bus with the other students.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I attended a training meeting at school with a High Trails staff person or teacher. Also, I checked in with my high school High Trails coordinator to ensure them I will be on time and ready to go.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect I am ready to meet new people and be enthusiastic in all I do at High Trails!

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect ■ My parents and doctor have helped my **fill out my Medical Form completely**.

MACROBUTTON HTMLDirect ■ I have turned in any relevant paperwork my school may need during my absence.

Words of Wisdom – “I have often felt that to an astronomer, man is nothing more than an insignificant dot in an infinite universe. But then I realize that the insignificant dot who is the man is also the astronomer.”
