

April 25, 2023

Re: Outing Leaders Guide and Implementation Plan

Chapters and Outing Leaders:

I am very pleased to communicate that the Board of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) has approved the enclosed Outing Leaders Guide (OLG), which includes both standards for leader certification at the various levels as well as best practices for leading an outing. The Board has asked staff to begin the approved implementation process, which is discussed below.

In order for ADK to continue to be a leader in responsible outdoor education, it is necessary to maintain common values, standards, and practices, whether an outing is being led in the Adirondacks, the Catskills, or Long Island. The proposed OLG, while not perfect, represents an excellent first step in adopting common protocols to ensure that outing participants have a safe and enjoyable experience that includes valuable educational components that make our organization unique and help cultivate a next generation of environmental stewards. Over time, we will continue to revise this document to align ADK protocols with best practices in the field of outdoor recreation and education.

To create this document, ADK relied on a rather robust and inclusive deliberative process. More than a year ago, the ADK Board asked the Advisory Council, chaired by Ned Gardner, to pull together a draft document that includes both a standard for certifying outing leaders as well as best practices for leading an outing, with a focus on hiking and paddling. The Advisory Council, in turn, delegated this task to its Outings & Meetings Committee, comprised of Rich Salz as Chair (Cold River Chapter), Sally Dewes (Schenectady Chapter), Thomas Ortmeier (Laurentian Chapter), Laurie Freeman (Foothills Chapter), and Don Pachner (Hurricane Chapter).

Suffice it to say, the Committee put in a tremendous amount of work, which then went through a number of iterations and deliberations following comments and suggestions from other members of the Advisory Council before voting to send the document to the Board of Directors. Upon receipt, the Board requested that ADK Education Staff review and make suggestions to the document. Given the overall quality of the draft document, only minimal substantive recommendations were made, together with some editing and formatting to eliminate redundancies and maintain consistency throughout, before it was once again presented to the Board. The ADK Board then approved both the document and plan for implementation on April 19, 2023.

Implementation will be phased and will require a combination of trainings offered by ADK and other organizations, some online and some in-person. There are multiple options available for the required training and, to account for what is being required, there will be a grace period of six months for Level One trainings, which are free, online, and can be done at any time. In addition,

there will be a grace period of eighteen months for Level Two and Three trainings, which are a combination of online or in-person, offered both locally and through our Education Department at Heart Lake. During the grace period, outing leaders may continue to lead outings under existing protocols.

All trainings are either available for free, at a minimal cost, or are reimbursable by the chapter to the individual leader. Most of these trainings need only be taken once; only Wilderness First Aid and Sexual Harassment training require regular updates to stay current. There are multiple opportunities to attend trainings, including weekends at Heart Lake with all needed trainings for Level Two and Three presented, except for Wilderness First Aid. The OLG and full implementation plan can be found at:

<https://adk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Outings-Guide-and-Implementation.pdf>

On behalf of ADK's Board of Directors, I'd like to thank the Advisory Council for its work and, in particular, the members of its Outings and Meetings Committee.



Tom Andrews
ADK President