

Trip leaders-- Conducting your Field Trip in 2020

Due to the severity of the current COVID outbreak in Wisconsin, we ask that leaders and participants wear face coverings. Leaders, it's especially important you set the tone by wearing a mask as participants are arriving, and whenever the group is gathering close together. If you would like to remove your mask while giving your presentation(s), please first ask participants if they are comfortable with that.

Prior to your Field Trip:

- The State of Wisconsin does not have a standardized safety policy surrounding COVID-19, so we ask that trip leaders take responsibility for knowing and understanding any local safety orders at the county and municipality level. If a trip needs to be canceled due to COVID, please alert the Foundation so they can notify the trip participants.
- Gather to bring with you to the trip:
 1. Rosters on a clipboard that you can set out on a table or car hood for people to walk up and sign
 2. (on a hiking/ID trip) 5-6 foot walking stick or light tent pole, you can use it to illustrate social distance and point out plants from a distance.
 3. Hand sanitizer for yourself (and to share with others if you like)

At the beginning of your Field Trip:

1. Rosters: We have asked participants to bring their own pens to sign the roster. Please bring along a few disposable pens just in case, or cleaning wipes to sanitize a pen between users. We suggest putting the roster on a clip-board and setting that out on a table or car-hood and inviting each person/household to take turns.
2. Gathering the group together at the start of the trip: make a big circle with 6' distance between each household. Let everyone know that we will be practicing social distancing, and that people from different households always need to stay at least 6 feet apart. Demonstrate how far 6 feet actually is and ask everyone to please gently remind each other when they forget (as all of us tend to do at times).
3. Please wear your mask at the start of the trip, as a good example and to set expectations for participants.
4. Ask everyone to please wear masks when they are gathered together or will have difficulty staying at least 6 feet apart. Remind people that masks protect others and help everyone feel safe.
5. For hiking/ID trips: Remind people that they can use binoculars to see objects you are pointing out from a safe distance (we advised people to bring them along in the letters we sent them prior to the trip)

Social distancing tips

- It can be very helpful for the leader to carry a 5-6-foot-long walking stick, lightweight plant stake or even tent-pole. This works well as a constant reminder of the proper distance people need to stay apart. It is also very handy for pointing out interesting plants, insects, and other objects along the way from a safe distance.
- It may help to designate a couple of people to keep an eye out and remind everyone to stay apart. It seems to be very difficult to do so when we all want to look at and talk about that rare plant or insect someone just spotted, and a gentle reminder can be helpful. And/or at the start of the trip, create an agreement of participants that we can all remind one another with no shame associated (it is human nature to be social and migrating closer happens to the best of us!).
- Masks can be problematic, as they can be uncomfortable to wear on hot days, and some people are actively opposed. Remember that their primary purpose is to protect others from you, not the other way around, and wearing them can help everyone feel safe. We understand that some may want to pull them off their faces while paddling or rigorous hiking, but we strongly encourage people to wear masks whenever possible on the trip, at the very least when we are grouped together.

Sharing physical objects

Avoid exchanging physical objects (ex. pens, binoculars, spotting scopes, tools, equipment, etc.). Where this is not possible, objects should be carefully sanitized before and after use. Participants will be asked to bring along their own pens with which to sign the roster at the start of the Field Trip.

Outdoors only

We ask that the entire trip be conducted outdoors or in well ventilated shelter (like a wall-less park shelter). If indoor bathrooms are available to participants, be sure that there is proper hand-washing/sanitizing available on-site.

Vehicles

Do not share vehicles during a field trip, except between members of the same households.

NRF's Tips for Outdoor Speaking

1. **Visit field trip location beforehand.** Familiarize yourself with your surroundings. This avoids the unexpected like fallen trees or unpassable trails. This will also give you an opportunity to look for good places to address the group or take breaks.
2. **Wait to begin talking until the group has stopped walking.** This way everyone has a better chance of hearing you clearly. It will be even more difficult for your audience to hear you with social distancing and if you are wearing a mask.
3. **Keep your remarks brief—when possible.** If you are able, stop periodically throughout the trip to share interesting facts or have the audience observe something. Choose this option over talking for over 20 minutes in the beginning.
4. **Move up higher.** Sometimes the landscape will provide this for you (a raised mound; a big rock). Other times, you will need to be more creative (a picnic table; a tree stump). But please, be careful of your footing. ;))
5. **Speak loudly & slowly.** You'll need to project your voice to be heard outside. Slowing down can help you be understood more. Some participants may wear hearing aids.
6. **Use broad gestures & visuals.** There are so many moving distractions outside that you'll often need to be particularly expressive to compete with them. Use visuals when possible.
7. **Position yourself so the sun is not in your audience's eyes.** Looking into the sun is too much to ask of most audiences. Position yourself so the sun is off to the side or, if necessary, in your eyes. Hope for clouds (but not rain).

Other important things to note:

- **Never leave anyone behind!**
- **Perform a head count.**
- **Your pace may be different from participant's pace. Be mindful of all activity levels.**
- **Gently remind people about social distancing.**