

FRIENDS OF WEBSTER TRAILS

“A Safe Walk in the Woods”

June 2, 2005



1. *Why go for a walk in the woods?*

- Activity & Exercise: stretch your legs, breathe fresh air
- Explore and see things in nature (birds, trees, tracks, etc.). There is always something new to see
- Sharpens your observation skills and increases your awareness of what is around you
- Reminds you that you are part of the natural world with all its wonders
- Explore an area you haven't seen before
- Something to do
- Quality time with Family and friends
- Relaxation – decrease stress level, balance in the hectic life style, develop peace of mind

2. *Preparing for the hike*

- Learning about the trail – reading, asking
- Decide where to go
- Study a map
- How long a hike?
- Weather
- Don't go in the woods without an adult

3. *Dressing for the hike*

- Sturdy sneakers – no flip-flops or sandals
- Why not to wear cotton – becomes wet with sweat or rain, becomes heavy, keeps moisture next to skin and evaporation causes chilling. Major cause of hypothermia.
- Synthetics and wool wick moisture away from the body and they dry faster
- Socks – no cotton
- Layering
- Rain gear

4. *What to carry*

- Mandatory:
 - Whistle
 - Water
 - Sunscreen
 - Band-aid and ointment (Polysporin)
 - Hat/cap
 - Daypack (at least one person)

(over)

The information contained on this handout is a only a rough guide to walking in the woods and is not all inclusive.

What to carry (continued)

- Optional (items with * are mandatory for day long hikes)
 - Flashlight *
 - Map and compass *
 - Food/snack *
 - Toilet paper and trowel *
 - Insect repellent
 - Hand wipes
 - Camera
 - Binoculars
 - Walking stick
 - Notebook and pencil
 - Plastic bag for picking up litter
 - Matches

5. *What to do/what not to do*

- Look ahead to see where you are going and make sure you stay on the trail
- Look to the sides to enjoy nature
- Look down to make sure you don't trip on a root, rock or anything else on the trail
- Look up to watch the clouds for changes in the weather and to see the birds
- Look behind you once in awhile. Things look different on the way home.
- Don't litter
- Watch where you step
- Carry a walking stick
- Don't touch plants that you don't know
- Don't eat berries, mushrooms
- Don't disturb bee hives, nests
- No fires

6. *Getting Lost*

- What to do so you don't get lost
 - Don't run ahead of the adults
 - Stay with the group
 - Don't stop without telling someone
 - If with a large group make sure there is a leader (that person is always ahead of others) and a sweep (that person is always the last person)
 - If you don't have a map, always go the same direction when you come to a fork in the trail. Go the opposite direction on the way back. (For example, whenever you come to a fork in the trail take the right fork. Then upon your return make left turns and you will return safely.)
- What to do if get lost or separated from the others
 - Stay calm – If with a group, as soon as the others realize that you aren't with them, they are going to start looking for you. If alone, as soon as you don't return when expected, they are going to start looking for you.
 - Don't move from that spot/ hug a tree – that tree is your best friend
 - Blow your whistle (Whistle is an emergency device only and not a toy. When you hear a whistle in a woods you know someone needs help.)

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