

Amdg

Dear A Block Turaco Trailers

I thought it might be appropriate for me to write to each of you and give you some insight into your FAR and WIDE Leadership Experience on the Turaco Trail, expectations, goals and some advice.

From my point of view I would like it to be a celebration as well as an enjoyable albeit challenging learning experience that equips you with some real leadership skills that will enable you to lead the school in your senior years both confidently and competently.

You will be hiking the entire Turaco Trail in a group of 12 people... walking about 6 hours each day. **Under no circumstances are you allowed to change groups or split from your group.** Resist the temptation of rushing to the next camp. Take your time. Enjoy. Take in the views, the challenge. Plan your day. Break it up into sections, smaller steps or goals. Calculate, using Naismiths Rule (google it!) how long it will take your group to accomplish each stage. E.g. If we leave camp at 8am we should reach the confluence by 10am.

Safety and Responsibility

You will be given a safety briefing before you start. However being a leadership programme you are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to look after yourself and your team mates. **Get with a buddy and know at all times where your buddy is.**

Have a thorough look at www.turacotrail.co.zw

A lot of safety has to do with common sense but some specific rules:

- *Although camping in the same vicinity as other groups is allowed. No girls may enter boys' cabins or tents and vice versa.
- *When in a group, always keep together.
- *In an emergency stay where you are and sound the emergency whistle.
- *Protect yourself from the sun by wearing hats, sunscreen.
- *Drink water often. Note on day 5 there is no water along the way!
- *Never go near the edge of cliffs or waterfalls to get a better view.
- *Stand still and back away slowly from all wildlife.
- *Do not camp near rivers in case of flash floods.
- *Do not camp on exposed ridges, trees or in the open if there is the chance of lightning. If walking in an exposed area and a storm approaches quickly move to lower ground and wait for the storm to pass before continuing.
- *In misty conditions wait for the mist to clear unless you are certain you are on the right trail.
- *Stay on the trail at all times.
- *Swimming:
 - *Do not swim at night.
 - *Always swim with friends.
 - *Do not dive or jump into rivers even if it looks deep.
 - *If you cannot swim stay well away from the river's edge.
- *Cross rivers carefully at designated crossing places and never when in flood.
- *Use stoves with extreme care. Refill fuel only when burner is cold. **Always** completely empty burner when finished cooking and pack it away in plastic bag.

Good luck and remember the more you put in the more you get out.

Bernie

How to Enjoy FAR and WIDE's Turaco Trail

The Turaco Trail is set in a pristine wilderness area of the Mutarazi Falls and Nyanga National Parks in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands. Your behavior on the Turaco Trail can help maintain the beauty, ecology and water production ability of the Nyanga National Park.

Litter

Please take all litter out with you. Do not throw away any items even if they break down quickly. Help us by picking up any litter you see.

Graffiti

Don't be tempted to leave your name, messages or arrows on any rocks or trees.

Toilets

Please consider other users of the Turaco Trail. Preferably defecate in the grasslands, at least five minutes walk away from streams, caves, paths and forests. Dig a hole at least 20cm deep and bury faeces.

Fires

Fires are devastating to animals and plants: to reduce risk of accidents, no fires are allowed, except in designated areas. Only the use of camping stoves is allowed.

Trails

Stick to the trails constructed for your use. Leaving them will cause unnecessary erosion and is unsafe: please do not take short cuts.

Flowers

Do not pick the flowers – enable everyone to enjoy them and produce seeds.

Noise

Most people hike the Turaco Trail to enjoy the peace it offers. Shouting, whistling and loud music shatter this peace.

Rocks

Take extreme care not to dislodge rocks as they endanger the lives of others, damage vegetation and even start erosion.

General

*Remember to tell someone who knows you where you are going. Fill in the trail register at FAR and WIDE.

*Watch the weather as it can change quickly. Do not attempt to summit Mt Nyangani in misty conditions or if there is any risk of the weather changing.

*Always carry water and warm waterproof clothing. Perennial water points are marked on the map.

*Don't feed any wild animals as this makes them problem animals which may have to be destroyed. Stand still and back away slowly from animals.

*Report all emergencies to FAR and WIDE.

*Report any misbehavior and offences to FAR and WIDE or National Parks.

Hiking the Turaco Trail Safely

The Turaco Trail offers superb hiking and backpacking, but it also has many dangers. Here are some guidelines which should be observed for your own safety.

Mountain Register

*Always take time to complete the mountain register correctly and in detail.

*It is very often the only information the rescue team has to go on if you have an accident or get lost. Your life may depend on this information.

*The register is kept at the trail head at FAR and WIDE.

Remember to:

*Avoid an unnecessary search by reporting your return.

*Stick to your planned route

*Tell a close friend or family member when you expect to arrive back home

Security:

You should not meet anyone on your hike on the trail as it is a National Park and entry is strictly prohibited without a permit. However, never leave any equipment unattended and place belongings inside your tent at night. Please report any loiterers.

Equipment:

*Always carry a tent that is designed for mountainous conditions especially high winds.

*Temperatures at night are often below zero, even in October. A good sleeping bag is therefore very important, even in summer.

*Take extra food as it may save your life if the weather turns bad and you have to stay longer than intended.

*Sturdy, comfortable and waterproof hiking boots are essential. Running shoes offer no protection against rough ground or wet conditions.

*Take enough spare warm clothing, including water- and windproof jacket and over-trousers. A jersey is useless in cold, windy conditions unless worn under a jacket.

*Remember it can rain in any month of the year in Nyanga and snow has been recorded on Mt Nyangani.

*It is essential to carry the trail map and knowing how to use it is vital. Although the Turaco Trail is clearly marked on the map, not all game trails and traditional footpaths are.

*Always carry a whistle to use for signalling emergencies.

Whistle signals:

Help: Series of six long blasts in quick succession with one minute intervals between each series.

Reply to help call: Series of three long blasts in quick succession with one minute intervals between series.

Recall searchers: Many short blasts in quick succession continuously.

*When walking in a group never split your group. **STAY TOGETHER. WALK AT THE PACE OF THE SLOWEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM.**

*Drink water often... do not wait until you are thirsty as this means you are already dehydrated. All water along the trail is safe to drink

*Torch with spare batteries and dry matches or a lighter are essential. Keep them in a waterproof container.

*A comfortable rucksack to carry all your equipment. Put all your essential items in plastic bags. As additional insurance a waterproof pack cover is suggested.

*Carry a trowel to bury your faeces. Don't bury your rubbish, please carry it out (the pack it in, pack it out principle).

*Remember you must be self-reliant – there is no-one up there to help you.

Ethics:

*Respect other hikers' privacy and behave responsibly.

*Never roll rocks down hills or over cliffs – one day you may be the unfortunate person below.

*Leave campsites as you would like to find them, and always bring all your litter back with you.

*Don't pick the wild flowers. Some species are extremely rare and you could contribute to their extinction.

*Fires are prohibited except in designated wild camp areas.

*Don't leave candle wax on rocks.

*Don't use soap in streams. Wash your dishes and yourself well away from streams.

*Defecate well away, at least five minutes walk away from streams, paths, wild camps and forests, preferably in grasslands.

Planning:

*Plan your route carefully and obtain a weather forecast before setting out on your hike. Cirrus clouds (high wispy clouds) are an indicator of bad weather coming within 48 hours.

*Plan your hike with the weakest member of your party in mind.

*Remember to ensure you reach your camp site with enough daylight hours left to set up your camp and cook before nightfall. There are considerably less daylight hours in the winter months than in summer.

*Ensure that all participants take any medication they require with them.

Camping:

*You may camp in designated camping areas as marked on the map.

*Leave no trace of your having been there.

*Camping near rivers is dangerous because of the threat of flash floods. Camping on exposed ridges and under tall trees is dangerous in thunderstorms because of lightning.

Bad Weather Situations (NB Monitor the media for weather warnings):

*Bad weather: Weather conditions can change very rapidly. Always keep together and ensure no-one falls behind.

*Mist: Misty conditions are frequent along the extent of the Turaco Trail. Seek shelter and do not move until the mist has cleared enough to see the trail. **STAY ON THE TRAIL AT ALL TIMES.** Do not take short cuts and stay together.

*Rain: Try to seek shelter before it rains; a combination of wet, cold and windy conditions can be fatal.

*River crossing: Extreme caution should be exercised when crossing rivers in flood. If you are in doubt as to your safety do not attempt to cross. In any case always unclip your rucksack waist strap in case you have to slip out of it. Use a river crossing technique.

*Lightning: Avoid prominent positions, isolated trees or rocky outcrops. The Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe has the highest lightning strikes frequency in the world.

*Hail: Protect your head by putting your pack on your head.

Emergency Situations:

Most of the problems encountered on the Turaco Trail are related to a physical injury, as in a fall, or to weather extremes.

Whatever the emergency, don't panic.

*Physical injury: If you have to help a casualty, ensure that the person's breathing is unobstructed, give cardiopulmonary resuscitation (C.P.R.) if necessary, stop any bleeding and dress wounds. Make the casualty safe and comfortable. If the injury appears to in any way related to the spinal column, avoid moving the patient.

*Extremes of weather: Exhaustion and exposure to cold, wet and windy weather can lead to hypothermia and eventual death. Symptoms include uncontrolled shivering, poor muscle control and a careless manner. Seek protection from wind, rain and cold. Put on dry clothes, take warm drinks but no alcohol and obtain warmth by body contact with another person. Socks can be used as gloves in cold weather. A ten, wind- and waterproof clothing used in good time will prevent a potential problem. Remember that exposure related problems can occur even in summer.

It is recommended that at least one member of your party is conversant with the accepted first aid treatment of hyperthermia and dehydration.

*Snake bite: is unlikely but can be serious.

If you have to assist a snake bite victim:

a) Keep the patient calm and relaxed – he or she is in no immediate danger.

b) Avoid any movement by the patient as this quickens the spread of the venom. If necessary carry the patient.

c) Do not apply a tourniquet. Seek medical assistance as soon as possible.

d) The rinkals is capable of spitting, in which case the eye must be rinsed immediately with water or any suitable fluid.

*Groups: it is recommended that your group consists of four to eight people and a maximum of twelve people. A minimum of four people is recommended so that one person can stay with an injured person and two can go to find help.

Raising the alarm:

*FAR and WIDE Zimbabwe Camp: Tel Bernie 0772 469 229 Chris 0783 883 150

*Messages should be written with details of the nature of the problem, the names of the party concerned, the number of person involved, the exact location of the party and the altitude. This prevents the message from being misunderstood or altered while being relayed. This is very important.

*Remember, a rescue team may have to risk their lives to save yours.

PLEASE ACT RESPONSIBLY

Programme

Wed 16th - Arrive Mutarazi Falls camp site. Full mountain safety briefing, preparation, packing.

Thur 17th - Mutarazi Falls camp to Eddy's Eddy 13km

Fri 18th - Eddy's Eddy to Golden Pools Camp via Terraces Camp (lunch) 11km

Sat 19th - Golden Pools Camp to Juliet's Camp via Mt Nyangani summit (lunch) 13km

Sunday 20th - Juliet's Camp to Turaco Camp 14km NO WATER ALONG THE WAY ON THIS DAY

Mon 21st - Turaco Camp to Aberfoyle Lodge 7km

You should aim to arrive at Aberfoyle Lodge around lunch time. After lunch you will spend the afternoon cleaning and packing up the equipment.

You will also be debriefed on your experience on the Turaco Trail and in smaller groups be asked to prepare and present leadership, team and personal development lessons from your time on the trail.

22nd Nov - Depart after final packing late morning.

FAR and WIDE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS OFFER EVERYTHING FROM WHITE-WATER RAFTING TO WILDERNESS HIKING TRIPS. BUT DO THEY REALLY TRAIN LEADERS?

If you are a real leader EVERYTHING trains you. So anything that takes you out of your comfort zone, gets you to explore challenging new situations, to open up mentally and emotionally to communicate in expanded ways, anything that brings you together with others in partnership and collaboration ... this all trains you to lead. Leaders 'suck the marrow' from every opportunity and stimulus and will frequently come back transformed. These opportunities don't train leaders, they help leaders to train themselves. Each evening during the thru hike you will be asked to undertake a group task which will be used to explore leadership and team work dynamics.