



## **HIKING POLICY**

The purpose of Hikeseekers is to provide a healthy avenue for recreation and fellowship through hiking in the tropical rainforests of Trinidad & Tobago. Hiking can be a strenuous exercise and you are advised to be certain of your medical condition before attempting any hike. There are risks and responsibilities involved, and each member and guest must assume these for himself/herself. Parents/guardians will be primarily responsible for any children brought on a hike. While we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any injury, we will take all necessary precautions to avoid such.

For this purpose the group has adopted the following guidelines. You are also required to follow the instructions given at the beginning of each hike.

## **GUIDELINES FOR HIKERS**

### **RATING OF HIKES**

Hikes are graded in a flexible standard that only the individual, as they experience each different grade of hike, can assess for themselves, according to their own capabilities and safety levels. Depending on the destination, some hikes may also involve swimming and/or some rock climbing using ropes.

The hikes are graded as follows:-

**EASY:**                    0-500 ft elevation gain                    Length 4-6 miles

**MODERATE:**            500 - 1000 ft elevation gain                    Length 6-10 miles

**STRENUOUS/CHALLENGING:** Over 1000 ft elevation gain                    Length 8-25 miles

## SCHEDULE OF HIKES:

A calendar of hikes will be posted on the website under the section "Schedule". Information included will be the location of the hike, hike rating for distance and terrain (see section "Hikes"), meeting place, time of departure, and name and phone number of the Leader. Hike descriptions will be brief; call the Leader if further details are needed.

## PARTICIPATION IN HIKES:

Hikers should arrive at the meeting place at least 15 minutes ahead of the designated time in order to sign in, hear the Leader's instructions, and be ready to depart on time.

All hikers are asked to print, complete and sign the Registration Form and disclaimer which is located on the website at [http://www.hikeseekers.com/schedule\\_files/Registration%20Form.pdf](http://www.hikeseekers.com/schedule_files/Registration%20Form.pdf). Each participant is required to present this to the Leader upon signing in.

If you plan to meet the group at any place other than the one on the schedule, contact the Leader for any possible change in plans.

At the start of the hike the Leader will speak to entire group and run through the terrain, possible risks, safety precautions and emphasize the need for teamwork. All hikers must confirm that they understand the hike and all the safety precautions that are associated with it before proceeding on the hike. All hikers must ensure that they can properly don all demonstrated safety devices provided.

## CANCELLATION OF HIKES:

Hikes will be cancelled at the discretion of the hike leader, if weather conditions on the day of the hike are deemed to make the hike dangerous. If in doubt, call the Hike Leader before reporting to the meeting place. Please note that if the weather changes the hike can be cancelled/cut short at any time.

## WHAT TO BRING:

**WEAR:** proper footwear (sneakers or hiking boots), long track pants, cap (optional) and carry a spare change of clothing. Raingear is optional.

Please do not wear shorts on hikes as snakes, insects and other forest creatures may be encountered along the way and exposed legs and ankles present an unnecessary risk.

## **EACH HIKER SHOULD WALK WITH THE FOLLOWING IN A PROPERLY FITTED BACKPACK:**

**FOOD:** Lunch, Drinking water and emergency snacks.

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES:** Relevant items should be secured in plastic/waterproof bags.

- Personal items such as insect repellent, sunscreen, toilet paper, handwipes, etc.
- Lighter, flashlight, length of rope (10 feet), whistle, life jacket.
- Personal first aid items, including medications, an antihistamine for insect stings, painkiller, something for diarrhoea, bandage/plaster, etc.
- A cellular phone, if you have one.
- Extra money for travelling in case of any eventualities
- Hiking sticks are recommended, and are especially important for inexperienced hikers.

## CONDUCT DURING HIKE:

- **HIKERS MUST PLEASE ENSURE THEY MAINTAIN A CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. DO NOT LITTER.**
- In the event of a large number of hikers, or to accommodate the differences in hiking skills, smaller groups may be formed. The Hike Master will designate a Hike Leader for each group and a Sweeper (tail-end-Charlie) who will hike at the rear of the entire group. Each group should have its own co-leader, who will advise the Hike Leader of any alternate plans.
- All hikers must follow all instructions given.
- Hikers must walk with just what is necessary or as indicated by the hike master.
- Hikers must remember that their own safety responsibility firstly lies with themselves.

- Please do not be a hero. Please do not encourage other hikers to disobey the leaders' judgment.
- All hikers must stay within eyesight of their leader or hikers in front of them. If by some chance they become separated they should stay at that location for the next group.
- If unsure at any time, remain in place for the advice of the hike master or another leader/ experienced hiker.
- If you begin the hike with one group and decide to switch to another one, you should make your change known to both leaders. Do NOT hike alone between groups.
- When it is necessary for you to leave the trail, let another hiker know you are doing so.
- If you decide to leave the hike altogether, be sure the leader is aware of it.
- If a hiker is uncomfortable with the safety device or a particular event he or she should make the leaders aware.
- If you are in doubt about your ability to complete the hike without problems, heed the advice of the Leader. It is better to miss the hike than to encounter problems, which may result in an unpleasant experience for you or your fellow hikers. THE LEADER MAY EXCLUDE ANY PERSON FROM A HIKE AT HIS OR HER DISCRETION.
- Pets are not to be brought on any hike.
- You are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the hike you are taking, as you may be asked to lead a similar one in the future.

All information is available on the website at <http://www.hikeseekers.com>