

## **How To Run AAAS Pacific Division Field Trips**

Keep the Executive Director and the local meeting chairperson informed of your work. For certain operations, such as arranging transportation and meals, they must be involved.

Announce the trip on the Division website as soon as the concept has been formed, with such information as the rough route and the approximate length of time involved. Normally these things are set about a year ahead, during the annual meeting prior to the one in which the trip will run. You can say plans are tentative if they are not firm.

By November preceding the meeting you will need to submit a paragraph length description of the trip for the January newsletter. The Executive Director needs to know enough details to make a plausible estimate as to the cost, because that figure is on the registration form. The description also needs to note min/max limits on number of people. Be sure to mention any unusual features of the trip such as high altitude, rough terrain or muddy hiking that registrants must know before deciding to sign up. Other special requirements such as specific types of clothing, specialized equipment (e.g. binoculars or a rock hammer), etc. should also be noted at this time. Please indicate the activity level for any out-of-vehicle activities (e.g. an easy hike, a 3 mile hike over difficult terrain, etc.).

In forecasting cost, the following must be estimated:

- How many drivers and leaders are being included in the trip. Leaders and drivers do not usually pay field trip fees. For drivers, count the number of vans to be used. Leaders may also be drivers.
- If guidebooks or road logs will be used, how many pages will be in each (to help us to estimate the cost of printing, etc.). If a book is being purchased for distribution to the participants (e.g., from Mountain Press books), include the current price.
- How many days of lunches are needed. Stopping for lunch at a Subway or similar place is an option but participants need to be warned to bring money to pay for their lunch. Restaurants are slower than box lunches but give more choice. Another option for longer trips is to bring fixings and prepare sandwiches out of ice chests on the road. Do you want water and/or sodas for afternoon breaks?
- What type of transport is planned to be used. Check state regulations, as sometimes a special driver's license is needed for larger vans and for buses, in which case you may need a commercial driver or smaller vans. If procuring vehicles through the meeting host institution, what are the requirements of that institution for drivers?
- Are there entrance and/or parking fees at any destinations. If so, what are they?
- If planning a trip that lasts overnight, how many nights of lodging will be needed? Suggestions for reasonably priced places (but not dumps) are helpful. If two motels are equivalent and one has a free breakfast, take it.

A dry run a few weeks or months before the trip is highly desirable. Pay special attention to potential bathroom stops and also places where you can stop for lunch. Be alert for parking problems. If you are going to a museum or national or state park, write ahead to see if the fees can be waived or discounted. Build in extra time for the real trip to allow for stops to buy souvenirs, people slow at getting in and out

of vans, picture-taking, chatty leaders, traffic, flat tires, and so on. Allow for one to two hours of lost time per day. You can write the road log after the dry run (a sample is available). The Division can help with reasonable costs of dry runs; check with the Executive Office in advance.

Vans must be equipped with:

- Maps
- Cell phones and walkie-talkies
- Ice chests
- Guidebooks
- Stepstool (many participants are older folks or of short stature)
- First aid kit
- Water
- Window cleaning fluid and paper towels
- Lunches for each day

Remind participants to bring water, sunblock, hats, jackets, sunglasses, umbrella, etc.

Consider having a briefing about a multi-day trip the night before you leave. You can orient the audience to the sites, the science, and the logistics. At this time, double check with the Executive Office to confirm that lunch has been ordered!

The Executive Office will provide you with a list of participants. Make sure you have everyone in the van before you leave a stop. When the trip begins, do not wait for laggards too long; they may be no-shows.

Ask your drivers to check on any insurance complications on their personal policy. The division pays daily collision liability on the vehicles. You may need to fax copies of drivers' licenses to a rental company if going that route.

If you are going to a national park and have not had the fees waived, ask participants how many have Golden Age/Eagle/Senior passes. Entrance ranger may shave a few dollars off.

Leaders and drivers should know the phone numbers of leaders or drivers in the other van(s) for leaving messages in case of emergency or becoming separated and not being able to be in touch by cell phone.

Keep receipts for entrance fees, gas, tolls, ice, etc. for reimbursement.

In ordering lunches, allow for a few vegetarian or even vegan boxes. Ask that mayonnaise be offered in packets, not spread on sandwiches. In buying drinks, include diet sodas, juices, and water as well as caffeine and non-caffeinated sodas.

Please fill out the two-page Field Trip Application Form and return it to the Executive Director as soon as possible. Addresses are included on the form.