

New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club

Hut Trip Policy And Protocol

Adopted April 28, 2007

Those interested in signing up for hut trips should be aware of some of the unique elements of Club hut trips.

Hut reservations are made several months to a year in advance, and the entire hut is booked for the Club group, unless otherwise specified. The Club advances money to the hut trip leader to secure the hut, and this money is repaid as spots on the trip are sold. A nominal surcharge, payable to the Club, may be added to the cost of the trip for the purpose of generating and maintaining funds to be used for booking huts.

Unlike the bus trips and some of the day trips, those skiers wishing to go on a hut trip must be pre-screened by the trip leader, who will determine if the skiers' ability level qualifies them to participate. These outings are in remote wilderness locations where weather conditions can change without warning, and where there are no facilities for rescue, medical attention, or equipment repair. All participants must sign a Club-approved hut trip waiver of liability.

One need not be an expert skier with an impressive resume to be a hut skier, but participants must have the ability to function effectively in backcountry winter conditions. Skiers must be reasonably fit, and possessed of sufficient stamina to operate at a fairly high level of exertion for prolonged periods at elevations above 10,000 feet. All skiers must be properly equipped for backcountry skiing. As a rule of thumb, a moderately proficient skier who can do hiking backpack trips, most probably has the level of ability needed to do a hut trip.

The general rule is that the hut trip leader must be acquainted with, and must have skied with, the participant. A solid reference from another skier can also suffice. Failing this, an aspiring hut skier is offered the opportunity to otherwise convince the hut leader that he or she is capable. Hut trip leader has complete discretion in selecting participants, as well as refusing participation.

Although skiers purchase a spot on the trip, they do not own that spot; it belongs to the group. If a skier who has signed on for a trip subsequently must cancel, there is no guarantee of a refund. Reasonable efforts will be made to find a replacement, but if a suitable replacement is not found, the cost of the trip is forfeited. It is conceivable that a hut trip might need to be aborted or otherwise altered due to road conditions, insurmountable mechanical problems, unusually severe weather conditions, unacceptably high avalanche conditions, or other unforeseeable or unavoidable situations that would make proceeding with the trip inadvisable. Trip leader, who may accept input from participants, is responsible for making this type of decision. In the event a hut trip is aborted, refunds likely will not be possible.

Club hut trips are **group** experiences, with the group functioning as a team. Skiers need to be aware of the responsibility they have toward other members of the group in terms of mutual assistance as well as in terms of their own conduct during the outing. Hut trip leader may outline hut chores which need to be completed (ie: cleaning, cutting wood, melting snow), and all chores are shared.

The group process pertains both to the hut trip itself, as well as to the trip to the trailhead, and the trip back home. All participants must agree that, in the event of damage to any group vehicle

due to other than gross negligence on the part of the owner, they will share in the insurance deductible up to \$500 per vehicle. Hut trip leader is the final arbiter of what might constitute gross negligence on a case-by-case basis. It should be noted that, as of the 2007 season, this policy has never had to be invoked. Mileage reimbursement for those who travel as passengers to and from the trailhead will be determined prior to the start of each trip, and may be linked to increases in fuel prices, other Club mileage compensation policies notwithstanding.

While the hut trip leader will make reasonable efforts to organize and coordinate transportation, skiers must be aware that neither the trip leader, its other organizers, nor the Club are responsible for providing transportation for individual skiers.

For further information about Club-sponsored hut trips, contact the hut trips chairperson.