

What to Expect on the Snow Travel Hike

We will meet in the parking lot at the assigned time.

Everyone must sign in.

One **ski pole or trekking pole** is a must for this hike. Most leaders use two adjustable trekking poles with snow baskets. Trekking poles typically come with small hiking baskets, you may need to change or even buy the larger snow baskets. This makes a big difference in soft snow.

We will set out as a group from the parking lot with one leader in the front and one leader “sweeping” at the end. The “sweep” is responsible for keeping everyone together, so **if you need to go to the bathroom, please leave your pack on the trail**, so the “sweep” knows someone has stopped.

We will hike up the Ice House Canyon trail until we hit snow. We will then have a short snow travel instruction session and then head out cross-country over the snow.

After 10 – 20 minutes of hiking we will stop for a “**clothing break**”. Take this opportunity to adjust your clothing layers, bootlaces, and pack.

We call **bathroom stops “split breaks”** because we send the guys one way and the girls another. “Split breaks” should be taken 200’ from water sources and cat-holes should be dug no more than 6” deep. In snow conditions bare ground can often be found in the moats around tree trunks. If there’s substantial snow where it’s unlikely you can reach bare ground to dig a cat-hole, or the ground is too hard and frozen, a wag-bag should be carried and used. In all cases, carry out your TP (in a zip-loc bag). Watch out for poison oak off trail.

Periodically along the trail we will stop for a navigation exercise. **Please have your map and compass handy.**

Every time we stop, please take the opportunity to **drink some water and snack on something**. Have water and snacks easily accessible (not at the bottom of your pack).

Lunch will be on the summit, no matter how long it takes us to get there.

A **sit pad** made of some type of insulating material would be useful to sit on the snow at lunch.

Before we leave the summit, you might want to re-lace your boots tighter for the downhill to help keep your toes from hitting the front of your boots.

We will move off trail when being overtaken and when meeting with an uphill party (people coming down while we are hiking up).

When not on snow, don’t cut switchbacks. Stay on established trails and walk single file to avoid creating a wider path or new trails.

Pack out all your trash including organic material like rinds and nutshells. A good rule to remember is that if there isn’t an apple tree, don’t leave an apple core.

It will be a long day. Wear whatever **knee braces, orthotics**, or any other support you might wear for sport activities.

Most leaders and hopefully most students will stop after the hike for pizza and beer.