Trailhead Checklist

Use this guide alongside the Trailhead Talking Points document

☐ Form a circle when all hikers have their gear. Drivers, display permits!

☐ Intro Leader and Shepherd (see script in Trailhead Talking Points doc)

☐ Have participants go around the circle and say their name, and maybe a fun fact.

☐ Ask: Has anyone hiked this trail before? Is this your first Friends' hike? Are you a member of Friends? (Helps you to assess the group)

☐ Announce the plan for today's hike and what the trail will feature: waterfalls, flowers, mountain views, animals, geology, etc. “We will talk about Friends and some current issues in the Gorge at lunch.” “Today's hike will be: ( ) miles with ( ) feet elevation gain.”

☐ Announce trail conditions: steep, slippery, muddy, stream crossings, steep drop-offs, etc. Weather - esp. if expecting changes or high heat, cold, wind, rain, snow, etc. Safety/hazards: ticks, poison oak, rattlesnakes, etc.

☐ “Do you have? ( ) liters of water? Lunch, snacks?”

☐ Visual check of hikers: footwear, rain gear. (Cotton and jean material are VERY HIGHLY discouraged)

☐ Speak to poorly equipped hikers privately after the briefing, just before the hike. Don’t hesitate about telling them they can’t go on the hike, if necessary. Your goal is a safe hike for everyone in your group.

☐ We expect to return to the trailhead/off-trail by about ( ) pm. (but no guarantees!)

☐ Is there anyone who does not plan to do the whole hike? If you leave early, you must officially sign out with the Leader or Shepherd.

☐ Medical: Who has first aid kits and training?

☐ Special Medical Situations: You cannot ask for specific medical conditions but ask “if you have a specific medical condition, have you come prepared with remedy/treatment? (ex: asthma inhaler, allergy medicine or Epi Pen, medication, etc)

☐ Order of March: This is a group activity and participants will stay behind the Leader & in front of the Shepherd.

☐ Introduce any botanists, birders, geologists, etc.

☐ Silence your cell phones. If you must use it, do so at a break.

☐ Be safe! Be considerate of others!

☐ Count off! Know how many people total are in your group.
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Trailhead Talking Points & Suggested Script

*Take the time to set the tone and intention for the day*

Introduction
Hello! Thank you so much for coming on a hike with Friends of the Columbia Gorge today. My name is [name] and I’ll be your [leader/shepherd] today. This is [name] who will be acting as [leader/shepherd]. Our jobs are to make sure that no one gets lost and we all return here safely. The shepherd will stay at the back of the group and is available to assist anyone who may need some support during the hike.

*This is the time to let everyone know what to expect for your day together. Spend the extra time to set tone and intention, so the group will be set up for a successful outing*

1. **Reiterate the trail/route information** (length, elevation gain, any points of interest, tricky trail junctions, hazards to expect, etc).
2. **Communicate your plans for the outing experience**, for examples, if you plan to hike at a fast pace; if you are going to stop frequently to identify plants; if you plan on having some silent hiking time to appreciate the sounds of nature.
3. **Add a personal anecdote here** - what is your connection to Friends?

About Friends of the Columbia Gorge
We’re on this outing today because we enjoy the Gorge. In fact, the Gorge is loved worldwide, and Friends of the Columbia Gorge exists to make sure that this national treasure is safeguarded for generations to come. That means first of all, we’re **protectors**. We’re the only conservation advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting the Gorge. Second, we, like many of you, are **landowners**. Our land trust owns over 1,200 acres here in the Gorge, providing hiking and recreation opportunities and managing our land for long-term protection. Third, we’re **educators**. We lead over 100 outings a year to educate people on how to appreciate the Gorge and be responsible stewards for its future. Fourth, we’re **stewards**, offering many opportunities throughout the year to give back to these treasured Gorge landscapes and trails at various work parties in our Land Trust & Public Lands Stewardship Programs. Finally, we’re **connectors**, helping connect the landscapes of the Gorge to its communities and through efforts such as our **Gorge Towns to Trails** initiative.

Closing
The success of Friends’ Hike Program would not be possible without the skills, commitment, and spirit of our members and supporters. Thanks to those of you who are already members of Friends. If you’re not already a member, please consider joining. Thanks for being here, and I look forward to chatting with you on the trail.