Trailhead Talking Points

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 the [leader/shepherd] for today. Our jobs are to make sure that no one gets lost, we all return here safely, and that we have an enjoyable time learning more about the Gorge. 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. **Communicate COVID-19 Expectations**, if group will be gathering close to hear or learn from leader or shepherd, please remind participants to physically distance. If participants want to put on masks, let them know they are free to do so.
4. **Add a personal anecdote here** - When did you begin volunteering for Friends and why?

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 ensure the Gorge remains a vibrant, living place—wondrous, wild, and open for all.

Friends is the only conservation organization entirely dedicated to protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Gorge. For over four decades, we have successfully advocated to protect the Gorge from irresponsible development, purchased scenic and sensitive lands, and connected thousands of students and volunteers to the Gorge’s wonders.

Closing
A large, diverse base of supporters is critical if we are to preserve the Columbia Gorge for future generations.

The success of the outdoor programs 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.
Trailhead Checklist

☐ Form a circle when all participants are signed in and have their gear.

☐ Go through Trailhead Talking Points script.

☐ Announce the plan for today’s outing and what the trail or day-use area will feature: waterfalls, flowers, mountain views, animals, geology, etc.

☐ Have participants quickly go around the circle for a quick introduction; everyone says their name, and why they wanted to attend this outing.

☐ Visual preparedness check of participants: footwear, layers, rain gear, daypack and 10+ Essentials. Ask participants if they have plenty of water, food, layers. If a participant is unprepared, chat with them privately after the briefing, just before the hike. If unprepared, let participant know they can’t participate due to safety concern for them and the group. Your goal is a safe hike for everyone in your group.

☐ Reiterate route mileage and elevation gain.

☐ State any hazards, trail or weather conditions participants should be aware of.

☐ Estimated return to the trailhead by what time.

☐ If anyone leaves early, they must sign out with the Leader or Shepherd.

☐ Ask if there any first responders, medical professionals, or Wilderness First Aid trained people in attendance.

☐ Special Medical Situations: Ask if anyone has a medical condition that leader/shepherd should be aware of, if so, tell them to pull you aside to speak privately. Do they have the medication or remedy in their pack, if so, where is it located? (ex: asthma inhaler, allergy medicine, Epi Pen, Rx medication, food, etc).

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

☐ Order of Group: The leader is always at front leading the group, the shepherd is in the back.

☐ Have all participants count off so you know how many people total are in your group.