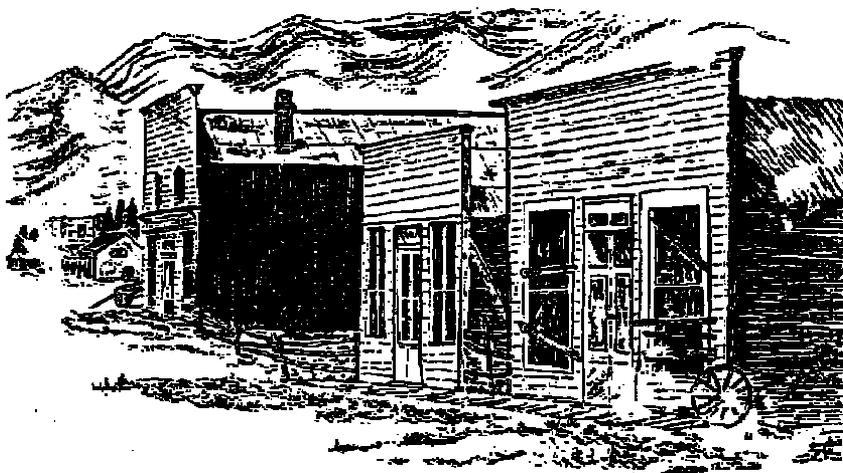


# GHOST TOWN CLUB

OF COLORADO

How to Plan and Lead a Field Trip



2022

## **INTRODUCTION**

This book was written for the first-time trip leader, as a refresher course for those who have not led a trip for a while, and as a checklist to ensure that something has not been overlooked when planning a trip.

A broad range of trip types have been described, and as such, some information contained herein may not apply to the trip being planned. If a trip is being planned that does not relate to a particular section of this book, skip it, and go to the next section.

Hopefully, this book will serve you well in all your trip planning needs.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE GHOST TOWN CLUB OF COLORADO SHALL BE TO STUDY, VISIT, PERPETUATE AND OTHERWISE CONCERN OURSELVES WITH GHOST TOWNS, MINING CAMPS AND THEIR ALLIED SUBJECTS AND HISTORY**

**May your travels be filled with many adventures,  
and end with many happy memories**

**GHOST TOWN CLUB OF COLORADO**  
How to Plan and Lead a Field Trip

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# GHOST TOWN CLUB OF COLORADO

## How to Plan and Lead a Field Trip

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- I. **Researching and Planning a Trip**
  - A. Schedule the trip with the Vice President(s) to make sure your dates are available and do not interfere with other trips and meetings.
  - B. Before the research and planning begins, get a show of hands at a meeting to see if there are enough people interested in going.
  - C. Research, read and learn as much as you can about the area to be visited, such as any historical sites, museums, etc.
  - D. Drive the trip route and scout out the area(s) to be visited. Take others with you on these scouting trips, particularly someone who is knowledgeable about the area and its local conditions.
  - E. Talk to the local people in the area and find out as much as you can from them. Ask if there are any local experts willing to assist you. The people and places referred to you can be “gems” of the trip.
  - F. Find out about any guided or self-guided tours that can be taken and the cost. If there is no cost for the tour, consider a donation to the site being toured.
  - G. If what you want to see is private property (look for “NO TRESPASSING” signs,) get permission from the owner or caretaker to see that it is okay to enter the property.
  - H. Do not plan any more than you can reasonably do in one day but have in mind some extra things to do or places to see in the area or along the route, in case there is extra time. Allow time for photo opportunities.
  - I. Plan your return trip home so that everyone does not get home too late in the day.

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- J. Scout Out Parking Places
  - 1. Multi-Vehicle Parking
    - a. Make sure that the parking is easy to find. Estimate how many vehicles can park and get turned around easily. Make sure that there is sufficient space for a large number of vehicles without blocking roads, driveways, trails, etc.
    - b. Keep in mind that a couple people may be needed to act as a parking crew to direct the parking.
    - c. Find more than one parking place in an area in case the group is too large for one and they must split up.
  - 2. Motor Coach Parking
    - a. Make sure that overnight or long-term parking is allowed for the appropriate number of vehicles at the pickup point(s) at the beginning of the trip.
    - b. Make sure that the parking is easy to find and that there is plenty of space to park without blocking roads, driveways, trails, etc., and that there is plenty of room to turn around.
  - 3. Carpooling
    - a. Encourage carpooling whenever possible. This is encouraged for any trip, especially if parking is at a premium. Plus, it also allows those who cannot drive to go on the trip.
- K. Emergency Medical
  - 1. Know where the medical facilities (hospitals, clinics, etc.) are located along the route.
- L. Overnight Accommodations/Reservations
  - 1. Include in your research a list of hotels, motels, campgrounds, etc. in the area being visited. Include the prices whenever possible.
  - 2. When camping, encourage all campers stay at the same campground and their campsites are close together.

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3. The trip leader(s) may or may not want to make the reservations for overnight accommodations. In some cases, it may be best to coordinate the overnight accommodations to ensure that everyone stays at the same place to keep the costs down by getting group rates and keeping the trip on schedule. This can be left up to the trip leader(s) and/or the type of trip being planned. Keep in mind that if the trip leader(s) make reservations for a large group, a contract may need to be signed with the establishment to accommodate a large group. The contract should be in the trip leader(s) name(s), NOT in the Ghost Town Club's name, and signed by the trip leader(s).
4. If the trip leader(s) decides to make the reservations, it is suggested that the cost of the accommodations be collected before the trip. Set a deadline for when the money is to be collected, and mention that there can (possibly) be no refunds after a certain date.

#### M. Dining

1. On any type of trip, the day can be planned with a picnic. Find out where there are any parks or roadside picnic areas along the route. Depending on the trip (i.e., a multi-day trip), trip participants can bring their meal(s), or schedule a stop to a grocery store for folks to buy their picnic supplies.
2. Include a list of the local dining establishments and the costs (if possible). And do not forget those ice cream stops!
3. The trip leader(s) may or may not want to make the arrangements for dining, but sometimes it may be best to coordinate dining based on the size of the group and the type of trip, even if this is a one-day trip. This will ensure that everyone dines together and to keep the costs down by getting a group rate and keep the trip on schedule. This can be left up to the trip leader(s). The type of dining establishment may determine what needs to be done.

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Keep in mind that if the trip leader(s) make reservations for a large group, a contract may need to be signed with the establishment to accommodate a large group. The contract should be in the trip leader(s) name(s), NOT in the Ghost Town Club's name, and signed by the trip leader(s).

4. If the trip leader(s) decides to make the reservations, it is suggested that the cost of the meal(s) be collected before the trip. Set a deadline for when the money is to be collected and mention that there can (possibly) be no refund after a certain date.
  5. Make sure that there is sufficient parking in the area.
- N. Rest Areas / Rest Rooms
1. Find as many rest areas along the route that you can. Make sure there is sufficient parking space for multiple vehicles or a motor coach. (See 'Scout Out Parking' in Section I above.)
  2. Plan to have sufficient time for rest stops for the size of group you are going to have. The larger the group there is, the longer the stop will take.
  3. In isolated areas rest stops may have to be "in the woods." Plan for stops where there are sufficient trees or big rocks for privacy. Men to the left, women to the right.

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### II. Trip Information and Announcements

#### A. Club Meeting Announcements

1. Make announcements about the trip at each meeting prior to the trip, even if you do not have all of the information. You can make future announcements as additional information becomes available.

#### B. Gazette Announcements and Trip Handouts

1. It is never too soon to make an announcement about a trip. As soon as the trip leader(s) has trip information available, publish them in the Gazette and have handouts at the meetings. As more information becomes available, it can be included in future Gazette and meeting announcements, and handouts. It is important to have the full date(s) and names of place(s) to be visited in every announcement.
2. Have a sign-up sheet for those who want to go on the trip. Have them include their phone number(s) and emails when possible.
3. The Vice President(s) should have all the information needed for a trip and in turn given to the Web Master, Gazette Editors, and the Historian / Archivist. As updates become available for the trips, they should be given to the Vice President(s) so they can be passed on to the others.

#### C. Trip Handouts

1. Any handouts (itinerary, brochures, etc.) you can get together about the trip will be good. The sooner people have information in their hands, the better they can plan. Keep the handouts functional and simple. Give the names of the place(s) to be visited, beginning, and ending times of the trip, costs, etc., making sure everyone knows the arrival and departure time. The arrival time should be before the departure time.
2. Include in the handouts a registration form for trip participants to fill out. Include on this form a place for name(s), address(es), phone number(s), email address(es), and anything else that is pertinent to the trip. If applicable, include the trip participant's vehicle make/model and license plate number.

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3. This form should include all costs of the trip (if applicable) and when the down payment and final payment are due. Any money collected in advance for any significant expenses may not be refunded by a certain amount of time before the trip begins. The trip leader(s) does not want to be responsible for insufficient funds for any costs incurred along the trip.
  4. Include a description of the Hiking Trail Ratings (page 13) and/or 4WD Trail Ratings (page 19), where appropriate. Explain what the ratings mean (i.e., exertion levels or physical requirements). Do not give just the trail rating number, but a full description of the trail rating.
- D. Trip Synopsis and Photos to the Gazette Editor and the Historical Files
1. The trip leader(s) (or designated party) should write a synopsis of the trip as soon as the trip is over so that it gets to the Gazette editors in time for the next publication. Include the full date(s) (mm/dd/yyyy) in the synopsis. It is not the responsibility of the Gazette editor to write the trip synopsis, but that of the trip leader(s) or person(s) assigned the responsibility.
  2. A copy of the synopsis and copies of photos taken on a trip are recommended to go to the Historian/Archivist for the historical files. Make sure the synopsis has the full date(s) (mm/dd/yyyy), and the photos have the full date(s) (mm/dd/yyyy), names of people, places, and things, etc. on the back of each photo.

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### III. **The Day of the Trip**

#### A. Arrival Time

1. Have everyone arrive about fifteen or more minutes early. This will allow the trip leader(s) to take head count, get the appropriate forms signed, give out any last-minute instructions, answer any questions, and depart on time.

#### B. Release of Claims Form

1. The trip leader(s) should make sure that everyone has signed a Release of Claims form. This is important to maintain the Club's insurance.

#### C. Trip Registration Book

1. The trip leader(s) should also make sure that everyone signs the Trip Registration book. Have everyone include their cell phone number(s) (if possible) and include emergency contact information whenever possible and the vehicle make/model and license plate number.

#### D. Stops and Breaks

##### 1. Length of Stop

- a) The length of time at a stop depends on the size of the group and the type of stop. The trip leader(s) will develop a "feel" for the proper length of time.
- b) A rest stop or photo opportunity may take about fifteen or more minutes, but a dining stop could take up to an hour. If people are not taking photos or looking at structures and are just milling around, announce that it is time to go.

##### 2. Caravan Stops

- a) Encourage everyone to fill up their gas tank the night before or in the morning prior to departing. If anyone needs to make a fuel stop during a caravan trip, encourage them to go to the closest filling station to fill up. The closest filling station will save time for everyone so that the trip can continue in a timely manner.

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3. Exploring
  - a) Allow plenty of time to explore places. Little things, like that special photo, are often missed by rushing. It might be that a site will be gone before we get back to it at another time.
4. Return Time
  - a) Before any stops or breaks are taken, a return time to the departure spot should be announced before everyone disemburs. Encourage everyone to return to the departure spot a few minutes early to get reorganized so that the group can leave on time.
  - b) If everyone has not returned to their vehicles at the designated time, the trip leader will give a signal of three auto honks to signal that it is time to return to your vehicles for departure.

#### **E. Photography**

1. If someone wants to take pictures, they should notify the trip leader(s). The trip leader(s) should make an announcement when there is a photo stop. In high photo potential areas, it is wise to have an initial photo line before people start to explore and take individual photos. Limit the photo line to five minutes. The trip leader(s) should try to include photo stops along the trip wherever and whenever the opportunity arises.

#### **F. Returning Home**

1. Allow a reasonable length of time to return home so that people are not getting home too late in the day.

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### IV. Safety

Always keep in mind the physical limitations and health issues that anyone in the group may have.

#### A. Private Properties

1. Stay off private property unless the trip leader(s) has received permission to enter.

#### B. Hazardous Grounds

1. Always remind people of the dangers of open mine shafts, unstable ground, rattlesnakes, boards with nails upturned, stay away from shaft mounds and head frames unless the leader gives the okay, and the possibility of old buildings or stairs collapsing.
2. Always mention if there are a significant amount stairs, steep grades, or rough terrain to climb. This can be an issue with people with any physical limitations and/or health issues that prevents them from climbing stairs. If anyone cannot do the hike, set up a meeting time and place to rejoin the group.

#### C. Respect the Property

1. No littering and pack out all trash.
2. Do not remove or destroy property or plant life.
3. **Leave only footprints and take only photos and memories with you.**

#### D. Pets

1. Before bringing pets, check with the trip leader to find out if pets are allowed on a trip or activity.
2. All pets out of vehicles must be kept on a leash for safety and control. Please pick up after your pet as well.

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### V. Types of Trips

#### A. Hiking / Walking Tours

1. Leaders for Hiking / Walking
  - a) Make sure the group knows who the leader is on any hike or walk so that no one gets separated from the group.
2. "Tail-End-Charlie" for Hiking / Walking
  - a) Always have someone assigned to the back of the group to make sure that everyone makes it through or if someone gets injured. If someone is injured, the "Tail-End-Charlie" should notify the trip leader(s) and stay with the injured person until help arrives. The rest of the group can continue with the hike/walk after deciding with the person assisting the injured person as to where and when they will meet to continue with the trip.
  - b) If possible, have an FRS radio for the Leader and "Tail-End-Charlie" for easy contact with one another.
3. Stay With the Group
  - a) Do not leave the group and go your own direction. Stay with the group and the scheduled program. If you must leave, let the trip leader(s) know and a couple other people. Do not rely on others to tell the trip leader(s), that should be up to the person leaving the group. If you are going to continue with the rest of the trip, set up a meeting time and place to rejoin the group.
4. Skill Levels for Walking and Hiking
  - a) Keep in mind that not everyone can do all levels of hikes or walks. What may be easy for one person may be difficult for another. If someone cannot make a particular hike or walk, set up a meeting time and place to rejoin the group.
  - b) Explain the trail rating before the hike begins. Do not just give the number of the rating, but a detailed explanation (see Hiking Trail Ratings on page 13 of this booklet).

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### HIKING TRAIL RATINGS

These ratings provided by the American Volkspport Association, Inc. If a hike falls between two ratings, a “+” can be added to the lower number.

1	<b>Easy walk</b> on pavement or on a well-maintained trail. No significant hills. Probably suitable for strollers and wheelchairs.
2	<b>Moderately easy walk</b> on some pavement or some woodland or open field trails, or entirely on woodland and field trails that may not be well maintained. Not significantly difficult with hills, possibly not suitable for strollers or wheelchairs.
3	<b>Moderate walk</b> in any setting with some difficult terrain with one or two substantial hills and/or steps. Strollers and wheelchairs are questionable.
4	<b>Difficult walk</b> , most likely in natural settings with poorly maintained paths and steep or hilly inclines. Not suitable for strollers, wheelchairs, or persons with severe health problems.
5	<b>Very difficult walk</b> . All on rough fields, trails, or roads. Many steep hills, high altitude trails, very rough and uneven terrain, and steep and unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good physical health.

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#### **B. Multiple-Day Trips**

1. At the end of each day, establish the time and place for meeting the next day.
2. Depending on the length of the trip, a half-day or even a full day off is helpful for laundry, shopping, making repairs, or just checking out the sites.
3. Suggest available activities in the area for free time.

#### **C. Motor Coach Trips**

1. Make sure that the parking is easy to find and that there is plenty of space for one-day or multi-day parking without blocking roads, driveways, trails, etc., and that there is plenty of room to accommodate the motor coach. It may be necessary to get permission from the property owners for long-term parking.
2. Make sure that overnight or long-term parking is allowed for the appropriate number of vehicles at the pickup point(s) at the beginning of the trip.
3. Multiple pickup point(s) at the beginning of the trip can be important, especially if people are coming in from a long distance to catch the motor coach. Scheduling the pickup(s) should be based on the direction the trip is headed, and the drop off(s) based on the direction of the return trip route.
4. Carpooling to the pickup point is important, especially if overnight or long-term parking is at a premium. It is also encouraged to allow those who cannot drive to go on the trip.

#### **D. Caravan Trips**

1. For large numbers of cars, it is useful to be able to identify which cars are part of the group (e.g., an orange sticker in the rear window or a yellow ribbon tied to the antenna). This may keep someone from following the wrong car. Get a count of the number of cars in the caravan. This will allow you to quickly check if everyone is there.

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2. Parking
  - a) Assign a parking crew to ensure that everyone gets parked efficiently.
  - b) Make sure that the parking is easy to find. Estimate how many vehicles can park and get turned around. Make sure that there is sufficient space for a large number of vehicles without blocking roads, driveways, trails, etc.
  - c) Find more than one parking place in an area in case the group is too large for one and they must split up.
  
3. CB Radios
  - a) CB radios are recommended during any caravan trip to stay connected with all vehicles in the group. It is important that everyone be given the CB channel at the beginning of the trip. (Channel 14 is the usual Ghost Town Club Channel.)
  - b) For multi-day trips, the CB channel should be announced at the beginning of each day to make sure that everyone has it, or if it needs to be changed for any reason.
  - c) Have a "Tail-End-Charlie" as well as a mid-column relay if needed. In the mountains, front and tail-end people may not hear each other because of hills, so the mid-column relay is critical.
  
4. Lead Vehicle for Caravan Trips
  - a) Make sure the group knows who the lead vehicle is so that they follow the correct vehicle, and no one gets separated from the group. It is a good idea to have everyone's vehicle make and model, and their license plate number. Everyone should know the vehicle's make and model, and license plate number in front of them. This will help them know that they are following the correct vehicle in the caravan and have not been separated from the group.

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5. "Tail-End-Charlie" Vehicle for Caravan Trips
  - a) Always have a "Tail-End-Charlie" to make sure that everyone makes it through. The "Tail-End-Charlie" should stop and help those that break down along the route. (See 'Breakdowns in '11' below.)
6. Keys
  - a) Always carry an extra set of car keys with you apart from your other keys (in case the others get lost.) If there is a passenger with you, have them carry the extra keys.
7. Keeping the Gas Tanks Filled Up
  - a) Gas tanks should be filled up the night before, or in the morning BEFORE departure time. Everyone should be ready to go by departure time to keep the trip on schedule.
  - b) If anyone needs to make a fuel stop during a caravan trip, encourage them to go to the closest filling station to fill up. The closest filling station will save time for everyone so that the trip can continue in a timely manner.
8. Stay With the Group
  - a) Do not leave the group and go your own direction. Stay with the group and the scheduled program. If you must leave, let the trip leader(s) know and a couple other people. Do not rely on others to tell the trip leader(s); that should be up to the person leaving the group. If you are going to continue with the rest of the trip, set up a meeting time and place.
9. Keeping Vehicles in Your Sights
  - a) When in a caravan, always keep the vehicle behind you in your review mirror. If you lose sight of them, slow down until they catch up. Let the others know what you are doing; but if you cannot, and if everyone keeps the vehicle behind them in sight, the caravan should keep together without any problems.
  - b) Do not tailgate. Leave sufficient space between vehicles for safety, especially on steep grades.

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#### **10. Turns**

- a) Make the instructions for turns specific by giving the street name, highway numbers/markers, fixed landmarks, etc. Do not say 'turn at the next street or the next light.' If the vehicles are strung out far enough apart, they may not realize where the next street or light is and turn incorrectly and get separated from the group, along with everyone behind them.
- b) When turning, make certain that the vehicle behind you sees you turn. If possible, wait until you are sure they have made the turn before you continue.

#### **11. Breakdowns**

- a) Breakdowns occur. It is the job of the "Tail-End-Charlie" to stay with the disabled vehicle until help arrives. No one is to leave a stranded vehicle by themselves. A new "Tail-End-Charlie" may have to be appointed to continue with the trip. If repairs are minimal, such as a flat tire, it is wise to stop and give the group a rest while repairs are made. Make sure everyone has a safe place to pull off.

#### **12. Continuing With the Trip**

- a) After any stop and it is time to leave again, honk the horn three times to let people know that it is time for everyone to get back to their vehicles and continue with the trip.

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#### E. 4WD Trips

##### 1. Skills

- a) Not everyone may have recent experience in four-wheeling. Do not hesitate to announce when to put the hubs in, or when to go into low range. It is always good to announce this, especially if the trail is not familiar to everyone.
- b) When locking and unlocking hubs, you may need to find a large enough area to pull over safely as some people may need to get out and lock and unlock their hubs.
- c) Keep in mind that any 4WD trail can be easier or more difficult for some drivers than it is for others based on the skill level of the driver and the ability of the vehicle (i.e., stock or modified.)
- d) Conditions of trails can change depending on the time of year and the weather. An easy trail can become difficult when washed out by rain or blocked by fallen rock. If any part of a trail is difficult, the entire trail is rated difficult, even if the first part of the trail is easy until you get to the difficult part.
- e) Explain the trail rating before the drive begins. Do not just give the number of the rating, but a detailed explanation (see 4WD Trail Ratings on page 19 of this booklet).

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### 4WD TRAIL RATINGS

**EASY:** Four-wheel drive is recommended, but some roads are suitable for two-wheel drive under dry conditions. Road can be mildly rocky, gravel, dirt, sand, or clay. Clay surface roads can become difficult when wet. It can have gentle grades, water levels low except during periods of heavy runoff. The width of the road can be single lane or wider with adequate room to pass most of the time. Where shelf conditions exist, road is wide and well-maintained with minor sideways tilt.

**MODERATE:** Vehicles with four-wheel drive, low range and high ground clearance are required, and standard factory skid plates and tow hooks are recommended on many trails. Road can be rutted, dirt, have soft sand, or rocky and is suitable for most sport utility vehicles. Careful tire placement is often necessary. The undercarriage may scrape occasionally. Some grades can be steep, but manageable when dry. Sideways tilt will require caution with narrow shelf roads possible. Backing up may be necessary to pass. Water depths are passable for stock high-clearance vehicles except during periods of heavy runoff. Mud holes may be present, especially in the spring. Rock-stacking to clear obstacles may be necessary and brush may touch the vehicle.

**DIFFICULT:** Vehicles with lifts, differential lockers, aggressive articulation, and/or winches are recommended. Skid plates and tow hooks are required. Body damage can be possible as brush may scratch sides of vehicle or vehicle can scrape against rocks. Some trails are suitable for more aggressive stock vehicles, but most trails require vehicles with modifications. Grades can cause vehicle to rock back and forth quite a bit with extreme sideways tilting. Sand hills with very steep soft down slopes. Deep water crossings are possible, and shelf roads can be extremely narrow. Passing may be difficult with backing up required for long distances.

