

Planning a “Pop-Up” Event – Anyone Can Do It!!

BCOS schedules many “formal” events throughout the year (those that are on the official calendar and typically planned and led by a BCOS officer or long-time member). **BUT** what we hope **ALSO** to enjoy regularly are more spontaneous “Pop-Up” events, which **ANY** member can put together and invite BCOS friends to participate in!! Planning a Pop Up is **EASY** ... it’s basically a matter of saying to the group “Hey I think I’ll hike/paddle at this place on this day who wants to join me??”. While there are no real “rules” for a Pop-Up, here are some suggestions to help you feel more comfortable with the idea of being a Pop Up planner/leader:

- **Decide on an activity, location, and day/time.** It can be a place that is familiar to you... “let’s go hike my favorite trail!!” or it can be a new adventure you’ve been wanting to try out... “let’s explore this new paddling area together!!”. Pick a day/time that works for **YOU**.. this is **YOUR** event!! We’re not limited to weekend activities, many members would be available on weekdays as well!!
- **If possible, scope out the area/activity ahead of time.** This isn’t always possible and it’s not required but it can help you feel more confident in making suggestions about what participants should expect... “wear appropriate shoes there are still muddy spots on this trail” “there are a couple of trees down on the trail, be prepared to climb over those” “download the trail map on your phone ahead of time the cell signal is bad here” “the salvinia is pretty thick, be prepared to paddle hard through some spots ” “I spied a gator here yesterday so be sure to bring your camera!!” ... Etc...
- **Get word out to your BCOS friends.** The easiest way to announce your pop-up is through the group email. Send an email out to bcos@googlegroups.com with some of the following basic info:
 - **Day/time for the event and anticipated duration.** “Hiking at Bodcau next Wednesday 9/15/21 at 9am. This hike should take us about 2 hours”
 - **Location for the event.** Be pretty detailed with this (location/driving directions), especially if it’s a less familiar location for new members. A link to a **google map** of the location is a **very good idea**. Also include any special instructions on where to park, how to find the boat launch, “tricky” instructions, etc... “if you get to the Shell gas station you went to far”..... “look for the gravel road just past the ranger station” “follow the signs for the campground and park there”
 - **Any cost for the event.** If you’re planning an event in a park that charges an entrance fee or a boat launch fee be sure to let the members know to bring \$\$ for that.
 - **Suggestions on what to bring.** Some of these should be “standard”. For example in planning a **hike** you should always recommend that members bring things like bug spray/sunscreen, water, hat/sunglasses, and wear good hiking shoes. In planning a **paddle** you should always recommend that members remember to bring/wear their PFD, water, hat/sunglasses, sunscreen/bug spray. And then depending on the specifics of the event the member might need to bring/plan for “**extras**”. These things might include a snack or packed lunch (if the event is long or you want to add in a picnic lunch), special shoes or hiking stick/trekking poles (for particularly muddy/wet/rocky areas), a map of the area/trail (paper copy or downloaded version to phone... helpful if there’s a chance someone would get a little lost from the group).

- **A “heads up” on the level of difficulty and pace of the event.** Are you planning a “leisurely paced” hike on “easy” trail? Or are you planning more of a “let’s get a workout” event over more challenging terrain at a quicker pace? Both are **FINE** and can be **FUN** but members should know what you have in mind so they can decide if this event is really for them. For example “this paddle will be long and will take us through some pretty “dead” water areas so you’ll need to be prepared to paddle hard” ... “I would say this hike is moderate in difficulty...mostly flat but with a few pretty killer hills to climb” ... “this paddle will take us through some white water/rapids so if you’re not comfortable with that it may not be for you” Etc...
It’s possible (if 2 members are willing to be leaders on an event) that you can plan for 2 different kinds of experiences.... “Kim is going to take the shorter route with fewer hills and take a slower (let’s look at the flora and fauna) pace if you want to follow her! Jill is going to take the longer route that has those big hills and she tends to walk faster so if that sounds like your thing (you want to get your heartrate up and get those steps in) plan to follow her!”
- **Other specifics.** May want to mention if the location/event is **dog-friendly** (if so, remind members about keeping pets leashed and bringing poop bags) or if they should leave little Fido at home for this one. May want to mention if there is a good map available of the area/trail accessible on apps like **All Trails, Trailforks**, etc
- **Leave no Trace** and consider making the event a **clean-up** opportunity! Members can be reminded to bring a small bag with them and maybe a pair of gloves (just toss those in your backpack or kayak) so we not only carry out our own trash but we can leave each place we visit a little more pristine than how we found it!!
- **Consider socializing after the hike/paddle.** Definitely not required but planning to eat/drink together afterwards (picnic lunch? Meet at a restaurant?) can be a lot of **FUN!!**
- **Include your contact information.** Very important! If a member wants to ask questions about the event or gets lost trying to find you on the way there what’s the best way for them to reach you?

Some other **FAQ’s and information** you might want to consider/know:

- You can often **enlist a more experienced BCOS member to help you**... want to organize a paddle but afraid you’ll get the group lost?? It’s likely that one (or several) of your BCOS friends have been there before or are super comfortable being the “lead kayak/hiker” as you explore! Just because you organize the Pop-Up doesn’t mean you have to necessarily be the one out front during the event!
- For safety reasons on the day of your event it’s a good idea to not only have a leader (lead hiker/lead kayak) but also a **“sweeper”** who can stay at the back of the group to make sure no one gets lost/left behind. Just ask any BCOS member at the event to volunteer to be the sweep and someone will gladly take that role.
- If you want a **larger audience** for your invite (the more the merrier!!) then BCOS can add the Pop-Up as an Event on their **Facebook** page. Just include that in your email to the group (“Feel free to post this event on Facebook”)

- Send some pics from the event (and a brief write-up about it) to the BCOS **Newsletter** chair (Marian Howard at marianehoward@comcast.net) afterward so she can share your fun experiences with the whole group!

Hopefully this information has helped you feel more comfortable and prepared to plan a Pop-Up event!! ALL members are strongly encouraged participate in this way and we hope to see a LOT of pop-ups throughout the year!! Let's get out and enjoy nature together as much as possible!!