



## 40km Carpe Adventure Trek (CAT-40)

**Saturday, 14 March 2020**

(Snow Date: Saturday, 21 March 2020)

### Leader Guide

#### I. Overview

This hike provides Scouts the opportunity to participate in a high adventure activity on the Potomac River's scenic Mount Vernon Trail. The 40km hike is equivalent to walking a marathon; successful completion will require adult leaders to ensure that Scouts are prepared for this distance through shakedown hikes. The 20km hike (HALF-CAT) provides an opportunity for younger Scouts to develop and test their endurance in a safe-to-fail environment. **NEW THIS YEAR: The 15km CATNIP hike from Fort Hunt Park to National Harbor gets Webelos hooked on the joys of hiking!** The hike is "supported", meaning there are Support Stops along the way that provide food, drink, first aid, encouragement, and bail-out options. The hike can also be used as a team-building and training event for Lenhoksin, Philmont, or other backpacking adventures.

#### II. Participation

Only registered Scouts (Troops, Venturing Crews, Sea Scout Ships, Explorer Posts and Webelos), and associated adults from participating Units may participate in the event. For insurance purposes, participating Units must ensure that any recently "bridged" Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts (that is, who are now "Scouts BSA" Scouts) are in fact registered as Scouts. For the same reason, it is highly recommended that all participating adults be registered as BSA volunteers, but this is not required. **Non-Scout youth, Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts (except Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts) may NOT participate; similarly, Scouts and adults who are not (or no longer) associated with a participating Unit or with the District Staff, may NOT participate.**

The Colonial District sponsors the CAT-40, but participating Units from across the Council contribute the support staff who make the event successful. Sometimes referred to as "pay to play", participating Units provide the adult volunteer support required to plan and execute the hike. Support levels are linked to the number of hikers from the respective Unit; Units with large numbers of hikers are tasked to run full service Support Stops, while Units with smaller numbers of hikers are tasked to run smaller Support Stops or other duties as assigned (such as morning check-in, bicycle escorts, shuttle drivers, etc.).

Units must provide adult volunteer support in order to register for the hike. The ratio for hikers to volunteers is 5 to 1--one volunteer for every increment of 5 hikers. For example, 7 hikers would require 2 volunteers, and 12 hikers would require 3. The minimum Unit signup is two hikers and one adult volunteer. Two-deep leadership is required for adults hiking with Scouts, plus the adult volunteer support. Participating Units may not register Scouts from other (i.e., non-volunteering) Units.

#### III. Registration

The event is limited to 175 hikers. All registration is online via the NCAC website; registration closes a week before the hike (8 March 2019) or when the 175 hiker limit is reached. The fee for the 40km hike distance

(CAT-40) is \$20; the 20km distance (HALF-CAT) is \$15; and the 15km distance (CATNIP – Webelos only) is \$12. 20km registrants will not be permitted to hike the longer distance on hike day.

Snow date is Saturday, 21 March 2020. The event will not be postponed or cancelled due to rain unless storms threaten hiker safety; there are no refunds unless the event is cancelled altogether. Units may substitute other Unit members for drop-outs until check-in on the day of the hike (with a perm. slip and health form for the sub).

## IV. Planning and Logistics

*Hiker Safety and Preparation* A leader’s “duty of care” to Scouts includes eliminating unnecessary risks, and mitigating known and foreseeable risks. The hike’s organizers have incorporated safety considerations into the hike design, route and operation (modeled after Chain Bridge District’s 20+ year Alonzo Stagg Hike), and have created a Safety Patrol Coordinator position to promote hiker safety before and during the hike. The Safety Patrol Coordinator will work with participating Units to ensure this “duty of care” standard is maintained throughout the hike for the safety of all participants; hikers who violate the safety rules (and thereby jeopardize their own or others’ safety) will be terminated from the hike.

The Unit hike leader’s responsibilities for hiker safety and preparation include: 1) Setting realistic expectations for hike distance: 40km is a very challenging hike for Scouts and should be preceded by shakedown hikes to prepare for that distance; 20km is more appropriate for younger Scouts; and 15km is a challenging hike for Webelos and should be preceded by shakedown hikes to prepare for that distance;. 2) Collecting permission slips and health forms (Parts A & B only) for all hikers, and providing a copy of these forms at check-in on hike day. 3) Ensuring all hikers are familiar with and abide by the safety rules during the hike (See Section V.). 4) Ensuring all hikers are properly attired (non-cotton layers appropriate for the weather); BSA uniforms are discouraged for the hike (except for adult volunteers). 5) Ensuring all hikers check-in and check-out at Support Stops and at the end of the hike (this is mandatory for safety and accountability of all participants).

*Food Allergies and Special Requests* If Scouts or adults in your Unit have food allergies or special requests, please contact the Hike Coordinator ASAP. Nuts are not served at the Support Stops in the interest of safety, but be aware that hikers may eat nuts (from their own snack supply) on the trail or at the Support Stops.

*Planning Meeting* **There is one mandatory meeting for all participating Units and volunteers on Sunday, 1 March at 7PM (two weeks prior to the hike) at Good Shepherd Parish.** Each participating Unit **must** send at least one adult who is deeply involved in that Unit’s hike planning, as well as their adult volunteer(s). In addition, participating Units that are running a Support Stop **must** send at least one adult to an equipment pick-up meeting the night before the hike (or another night if arranged in advance). These representatives will pick-up food, drink, and cooking and serving equipment for the Support Stops. Other volunteers are welcome to come to this latter meeting (aka “Costco Pizza Friday”) too. Details regarding both meetings will be sent to the Unit hike leader and adult volunteers (whose contact details are submitted during the registration process).

*Hike Routes* The 40km and 20km hike routes begin at Good Shepherd Parish and proceed along Old Mount Vernon Highway to Mount Vernon Mansion, pick up the Mount Vernon Trail, and proceed to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The routes follow the pedestrian walkway across the bridge, ascend the pedestrian ramps at the other end, cross over 495/Beltway, descend the pedestrian ramps, and follow an asphalt trail along the river to The Awakening statue at National Harbor. The 20km hike ends at National Harbor. Units are responsible for arranging their return transportation (e.g., parking one car at National Harbor, and then driving another car to Good Shepherd). The 40km hike route turns around at The Awakening statue and retraces the route back to Good Shepherd. This “doubling back” ensures familiarity with the route and increases Scouts’ confidence in their ability to complete the 40km distance. Detailed directions for the hike route will be sent to the Unit hike leader.

The 15km hike route (Webelos only) begins at Fort Hunt Park, Pavilion A. Hikers depart Fort Hunt Park and proceed north on the Mount Vernon Trail (a Waypoint Guide will direct hikers to the trail). Hikers proceed to the Support Stop at Belle Haven Park, continue to The Awakening statue at National Harbor, and enjoy lunch at the National Harbor Support Stop. The 15km hike ends at National Harbor. Units are responsible for arranging their return transportation (e.g., parking one car at National Harbor, and then driving another car to Fort Hunt Park). Detailed directions for the hike route will be sent to the Unit hike leader.

## V. Hike Day: 14 March 2020

*Arrival Times and Check-in* 40km and 20km hikers are required to arrive at Good Shepherd Parish for check-in at the following times based upon distance: **40km at 6:00 am; 20km at 7:00 am. 15km hikers are required to arrive at Fort Hunt Park, Pavilion A, for check-in at 8:30 am. The Unit hike leader must provide a copy of all hikers' permission slips and health forms (including any substitute hikers) at check-in.** (The Unit hike leader is expected to retain a copy of all hikers' forms with him throughout the hike.) **Hikers will be given a numbered bib, to be worn throughout the hike, to enable easy identification at Support Stops and by Hike Safety personnel.** If a Unit has hikers registered for both the 40km and 20km distances, the 20km hikers may start at 6:00am with the 40km hikers.

Morning announcements will begin fifteen minutes after check-in, and hikers will begin to be launched a half-hour after check-in. 40km hikers who fail to arrive on time may not participate in the 40km hike, but may elect to hike the 20km distance at that hike's start time. 20km and 15km hikers who fail to arrive on time may start their hike late, but they will be subject to the cut-off times listed below. Late arrivals (regardless of cause) will not be given a refund.

*Buddy System* All Hikers must hike as buddy pairs or a group of three ("triplets"). Groups of four or more must split into buddy pairs or triplets for hiking. Buddy pairs and triplets must stay together at all times, even for bathroom stops. "Together" means side-by-side, not "in sight".

*Hiker Safety and Etiquette* The Mount Vernon Trail is particularly busy on Saturday with both pedestrian and bike traffic. **Buddy pairs and triplets must stay on the right side of the trail except when passing another group; triplets should have one hiker walk ahead or behind the other two (not three abreast).** To ensure a group knows you are approaching to pass, say "On your left" in a raised voice prior to passing. Before beginning to pass, check for bicycles approaching from the front and rear, and return to the right side of the trail quickly.

Hikers should not carry a backpack or heavy daypack on the hike (a light daypack is OK). Hikers should carry only enough water and snacks to reach the next Support Stop. The first Support Stop at Fort Hunt Park is ~6km (3.5 miles); subsequent Support Stops will be a similar distance apart. Hikers do not need to carry 4 liters (8+ lbs.) of water between Support Stops. Be smart and minimize the weight you carry; there will be plenty of liquids and food at the Support Stops.

*Hiker Tracking* All hikers are expected to hike their intended distance, or at least to the next Support Stop on their route. Hikers who cannot, or decide not to, hike their intended distance should check-out by saying "Quit" at their last Support Stop. Units are responsible for arranging transportation for hikers who do not hike their intended distance; there is no "pick-up" support, except in emergency situations. **Under no circumstances should a hiker leave the hike or be picked up by a parent before checking-out at a Support Stop, or notifying their Unit hike leader and the Safety Patrol Coordinator in case of an emergency. It is the Unit hike leader's responsibility to contact the Safety Patrol Coordinator at the end of the hike to confirm that all of the Unit's hikers have finished/are accounted for; this is especially critical for Scouts.**

*Support Stops* Light refreshments will be available at Good Shepherd Parish and Fort Hunt Park at the beginning of each hike. Support Stops, with food, drink and first aid supplies, will be located at Fort Hunt Park, Belle Haven Park, and National Harbor. Hikers must check-in and check-out at each Support Stop; 40km hikers must check-in and check-out at Belle Haven Park, Fort Hunt Park and Good Shepherd Parish on their return route as well. 20km and 15km hikers must check-in at National Harbor at the completion of their hike. Support Stop set-up and operation procedures for adult volunteers will be covered at the 1 March planning meeting (See Section IV.).

*Hold Times at Support Stops* **No one will be allowed to run the course**; this is a hiking event, not a running event. **A “hiker” who reaches a Support Stop faster than a 6.5km per hour (~4 mph) pace will be assumed to have been running, and will be held in place (i.e., not allowed to check-in) until his pace has been reduced to 6.5km per hour.**

*Cut-Off Times at Support Stops* There will be cut-off times at each Support Stop, after which hikers will not be allowed to continue the hike. Cut-off times are based upon a 4km per hour pace (5 hours for the 20km HALF-CAT; 10 hours for the 40km distance). Hikers must check-out from the Support Stop before the cut-off time. **There will be no exceptions to the cut-off times, including for adults.** There are no refunds for hikers whose hike is terminated due to cut-off times.

*Hike Safety Personnel* “Waypoint” staff will guide Scouts at key street crossings (e.g., Mount Vernon Mansion) and other points along the hike route. Cyclists will traverse the route to assist hikers between Support Stops, and “Tail End Charlie” hikers will follow the last hikers from Fort Hunt Park to Good Shepherd Parish for the conclusion of the hike. Shuttle drivers will be available in case of emergency. These positions will need to be filled by adult volunteers from participating Units, so please note during the registration process if your volunteers have a preference for a position (e.g., cook at Support Stop, avid cyclist).

*Cell Phones and Cell Phone Lists* All Unit hike leaders and adult volunteers are strongly encouraged to carry a fully charged cell phone on hike day. All key volunteers (e.g., Support Stop Captain) will receive a list of names and cell phone numbers of adult volunteers and Unit hike leaders for communication on hike day. All Unit hike leaders will receive the names and cell phone numbers of the Hike Coordinator and Safety Patrol Coordinator.

Unit hike leaders are strongly encouraged to create a Unit cell phone list (for their adult and Scout hikers with cell phones, as well as parents/guardians of Scouts in case of emergency). Scouts with cell phones should be warned before the hike to avoid “distracted hiking” on trails that are busy and potentially hazardous with runners and fast-moving cyclists. (Support Stops are OK.) **Staring at a phone and/or listening to loud music while hiking can result in serious injury; your “duty of care” includes policing this known hazard.**

*Estimated Finishing Times* The 20km hikers should finish between 11:00am and 1:00pm at National Harbor. The 15km hikers should finish between 12:00 and 1:30pm at National Harbor. (Units are responsible for arranging their return transportation from National Harbor.) The 40km hikers should return to Good Shepherd Parish between 3:00 and 5:00pm.

*Hiker Recognition* Participating Units receive a CAT-40 flag streamer, and all hikers receive a patch and Euro sticker. All hikers who complete the 40km distance receive the coveted Cat Claw challenge coin. All hikers may purchase a wicked cool CAT-40 t-shirt on hike day (cash and check accepted).

**This is the third 40km Carpe Adventure Trek; help make this a successful, legacy event for our Scouts by following the rules for your own and others’ safety.**

**Be safe. Have fun. Good luck. Hike on!**