

Wheelchair Hikes

What you need to Know

Choosing Location

Surface type-The harder the surface, the better. Crusher fines, hard packed dirt, and boardwalks work the best. Cement is great, but takes away from the nature experience.

Cross Slope- Cross slope should be less than 5%. Otherwise wheelchair hikers will expend all of their energy trying not to roll off of trail.

Slope- Slope should be less than 8.3%. Exceptions for short distances are acceptable.

Width- Most wheelchairs are less than 3'. Trail should generally be 3' wide and 6' wide at intervals for passing.

Obstacles- Curbs and lips of bridges should be no larger than 2". Roots, branches, and rocks should be no larger than 3" high on flat ground and no larger than 2" on sloped ground.

Be aware of trail conditions before leading hike!!!

For more info on trail accessibility regulations go to:

FSTAG <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/>

Accessboard <http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/>

Equipment-Where to get wheelchairs for experiential wheelchair hikes:

Hospital Therapeutic Rec department

Local City Parks and Rec Department

Local Disability Center

Nursing Home or Retirement Community

Adaptive Sports Program

Donor

Topher Downham – Give me a call or email if you need to borrow wheelchairs:

Ph.303-818-0284, email: downhamt@bouldercolorado.gov

Safety

Wheels- Make sure the wheels are going to stay on.

Tip Bars- If the wheelchair tips backwards, it won't tip over with these bars.

Terrain- Pick trails that won't cause problems.

Practice- Practice wheelies and controlling wheelchair in the grass before hiking.

Communication- Find out each person's needs.

Helmets- Consider using helmets on more difficult terrain. Always use them with off-road handcycles.

Risk and Release Forms- If your agencies policy is to use these forms, use them.

Programs that work well with wheelchairs:

Bird Watching, Wildflowers, Ecology, Geology, History, Fall Colors, Raptors,

Mammals, Insects, Solstice, Sensory, Astronomy, and many, many, more...

Games and Activities:

Who am I? Players group themselves into teams by having a card on their back; use yes/no questions to figure out what you are, then find a team that doesn't have you yet. E.g.: A complete fire

lookout needs a host, visitor, Osborne, binocular and radio. Players figure out which of these their card says, then join a team that doesn't have their kind yet to make a complete fire lookout. Breaks everyone up into learning teams.

Human Sculpture: Participants build a model of something out of their bodies. The model must accurately represent the subject. That is, an insect model must have the correct number of legs, wings, antennae, etc.; a model tree needs roots, branches, bark, a trunk, leaves, etc. Add to it by making the model have to move, or have each part have a special message they must shout out. Leaves say, "Yum yum," bark says, "Tough defense!" roots say, "Slurp slurp."

Secret Stalker: Kid in the middle is blindfolded, the "prey". He can't see the others, who stalk him...but if he hears them, he must point, and the stalkers who are pointed at must freeze. See if anyone can tag the prey. A trustworthy adult must be the referee. Content: Hunting strategies of real animals: packs (one member distracts while others close in), sprinters (sneak up close, then make a sudden dash before prey can react), diversions (throwing a stick or rock to spook the prey), pads on the feet (some may want to go barefoot if appropriate). Kids often hit on these strategies on their own.

Bat and Moth: Cornell describes this activity well. A blindfolded "bat" must tag two or three "moths" inside a circle of "trees." The bat can say, "bat" as often as she likes; and the moths must immediately answer, "Moth." The bat hears and catches prey by echolocation, just like real bats do. (Often the moths cheat and have to be reminded to say moth; often the kid playing the bat doesn't remember to say bat and just flails around silently. They will have to be reminded sometimes until you want to scream at them, making the game drag.) At the end of the game, I tell how I heard bats once on a special bat detector. As they zeroed in on a moth to make the kill, the frequency of their pulses went up greatly: "Bat.....bat.....bat...bat...bat...bat.bat.bat.bat.batbatbat," giving them a very accurate picture. Every once and a while a smarter kid will discover this; usually, I have to model it at the end. The moths have to keep saying moth constantly and are easy to pick off. It's very effective. Incidentally, this game can also be adapted to the marine ecosystem for whales and dolphins that use echolocation to hunt, e.g. "Porpoise!" "Fish!" "Porpoise!" "Fish!"

Adaptive Sports to try on the trail: Off-road handcycling, Off-road downhill mountain biking, Off-road wheelchairs

Adaptive Programs - More Resources

Adaptive Adventures <http://www.adaptiveadventures.org/>, 27888 Meadow Drive, Evergreen, CO 80439. Phone: 303.679.2770

National Sport Center for the Disabled <http://www.nscd.org/>, P.O. Box 1290, Winter Park, Colorado 80482 USA ph: 970.726.1540 or 303.316.1540

Adaptive Sport Center of Crested Butte <http://www.adaptivesports.org>, PO Box 1639, Crested Butte, CO 81224. Program Office: Toll Free 866-349-2296 or (970) 349-2296

Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center <http://www.boec.org/>, PO Box 697 Breckenridge, CO 80424. Phone: 970.453.6422

City of Boulder Parks and Rec EXPAND Program

http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?Itemid=848&id=1472&option=com_content&task=view, For information about EXPAND call Colleen at 303-413-7216.

Wilderness Inquiry <http://www.wildernessinquiry.org/>, 808 14th AVE SE

Minneapolis, MN 55414-1516. Telephone: (612) 676-9400 Toll Free: (800) 728-0719