

# Volunteer Led Group: Backpacking



Designed with outdoor skill progression in mind, GSHPA's backpacking program is an outdoor experience she won't want to miss! Each level of the program offers new challenges, and new opportunities to grow her outdoor skills and knowledge. GSHPA volunteers run programs throughout the year, which you can find on our [Event Calendar](#).

See [level descriptions and prerequisites](#) and explore backpacking resources helpful to any backpacker below!

## Introductory Course

This is the first step in the GSHPA backpacking progression. This course is intended for both adults and girls (Juniors-Ambassadors) who wish to learn the skills necessary to go on an overnight backpacking trip. Topics covered include: Leave No Trace principles, how to use typical backpacking gear, and basic outdoor safety. Day hikes prior to this course are encouraged. The morning will be classroom based and a group hike will take place after lunch.

**Prerequisites:** No experience necessary

**Levels:** Adults & Juniors-Ambassadors Girl Scouts

**Distance:** 1-2 miles

**Duration:** Single day (Typically - 9:30am-4pm)

**Location:** Typically held at GSHPA properties

**Cost:** \$7, fees include hot chocolate & granola bar, backpacking/Leave No Trace handouts

## Level 1 Course

This is the second step in the GSHPA backpacking progression. This course is intended for girls who have taken the Introduction course and are ready for two nights outdoors. The course will begin on Friday evening with car camping at a PA State Park or similar location. Friday evening and Saturday morning girls will review basic backpacking principles, pack their backpacks, and prepare to head out on Saturday afternoon to their camping spot. Girls will hike back to the car on Sunday morning and debrief their weekend.

In addition to the two trip leaders, there will be one adult spot available for an adult who is interested in gaining the skills necessary to lead GSHPA backpacking events. Sleeping pads & backpacks are available to borrow on a first come, first served basis. Girls will be expected to share the responsibility of carrying group gear.

**Prerequisites:** Introduction Course

**Levels:** Juniors - Ambassadors

**Distance:** 3-4 miles/day

**Duration:** 2 nights

**Location:** Pennsylvania State Park or similar location

**Cost:** \$40, Fees include food and group gear (Group Gear listed on [Equipment List](#))

## Level 2 Course

This is the third step in the GSHPA backpacking progression. This course is for girls who have completed two Level 1 courses and are ready to test their skills during a 2-3 night backpacking trip. Girls must be comfortable hiking 6-10 miles per day with a loaded backpack. In addition to the two trip leaders, there will be one adult spot available for an adult who is interested in gaining the skills necessary to lead GSHPA backpacking events. Sleeping pads & backpacks are available to borrow on a first come, first served basis. Girls will be expected to share the responsibility of carrying group gear.

**Prerequisites:** Two Level 1 courses

**Levels:** Cadettes - Ambassadors

**Distance:** 6-10 miles/day

**Duration:** 2-3 nights

**Location:** Usually within GSHPA footprint

**Cost:** \$50, Fees include food and group gear (Group Gear listed on [Equipment List](#))

## Level 3 Course

Level 3 is the fourth and final step in the GSHPA backpacking progression. This course is for girls who are comfortable backpacking for 4-6 nights with a loaded backpack. This course will take place somewhere in the Mid-Atlantic or New England region and girls will hike 6-10 miles per day. In addition to the two trip leaders, there will be one adult spot available for an adult who is interested in gaining the skills necessary to lead GSHPA backpacking events. Sleeping pads & backpacks are available to borrow on a first come, first served basis. Girls will be expected to share the responsibility of carrying group gear.

**Prerequisites:** Combination of three Level 1 and Level 2's; with at least one Level 1 and one Level 2

**Levels:** Cadettes - Ambassadors

**Distance:** 6-10 miles/day

**Duration:** 4-6 nights

**Location:** Mid-Atlantic or New England region

**Cost:** \$150, Fees include food and group gear (Group Gear listed on [Equipment List](#))



INTRODUCTION

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

Participants in the backpacking program will receive a patch and rocker for their initial program, and then a rocker for each unique level of programming they attend after.

## Backpacking Resources

\*Click the name of the resource, highlighted in green, to learn more about each resource

### Equipment List

### Safety Activity Checkpoints - Backpacking

**How to Videos** – Learn basic skills before your program

[How to Set up a Tent](#)

[What To Pack](#)

[Campsite Selection](#)

[What Clothes to Wear](#)

[Dispose of Waste Properly](#)

[Camp Stoves](#)

### Leave Not Trace Resources

- [Leave No Trace Principles](#)
- [Leave No Trace Online Awareness Course](#) - This is an introductory Leave No Trace workshop recommended for ages 12 and older. It is approximately 45 minutes in length.
- [Leave No Trace PEAK Online](#) - This course includes videos and activities to help kids (ages 7-12) understand the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace. A digital certificate is available upon completion.
- Activity Resources
  1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare: Are You Ready?](#)
  2. [Travel & Camp On Durable Surfaces: Surface Hopscotch](#)
  3. [Leave What You Find: Before and After](#)
  4. [Minimize Campfire Impact: Moundfire Mania](#)
  5. [Respect Wildlife: Role Reversal](#)
  6. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors: Close Encounters of the Unkind](#)
  7. [No Campfire, No Problem](#)
  8. [Would You Drink It?](#)
  9. [Okay vs. No Way](#)

## Meet the Backpacking Volunteers



**Connie** has been a Girl Scout volunteer for 13 years. She has degrees in Physical Therapy and Industrial Hygiene/Safety and is currently employed by Geisinger Health System. Find her trail hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, skiing, gardening, and even indoors quilting. She is certified in Wilderness First Aid, CPR, and is a Level 1 NICA coach.



**Addie** has been a Girl Scout since first grade and an adult volunteer since 2014. She has worked as a camp counselor at many camps. When Addie isn't teaching ESL to middle and high school students, she can be found trail running, hiking, camping, or backpacking. She has completed a 50k trail run and hopes to do a 50-mile race in 2020! She is certified in Wilderness First Aid and First Aid/CPR/AED.

**Have questions about the Backpacking program?** Reach out to our Member Services team at [MemberServices@gshpa.org](mailto:MemberServices@gshpa.org) or 800-692-7816.