

# 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut Association

## Backcountry Exploration Program

*"By staying at this hut, many lives were changed and questions were answered about just how much fun a backcountry trip can be..."*  
Outdoor Recreational Program, Gunnison High School

The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut Association manages a system of backcountry huts located in the high mountains of Central Colorado. To encourage use of the system by non-profit educational groups, the Backcountry Exploration Program has recently been developed. The goal of the program is to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the natural mountain environment, while developing individual self-reliance among hut users. To accomplish this, the Backcountry Exploration Program assists non-profits financially, and offers guidance in the planning and facilitation of educational hut trips.

Who can participate? Non-profits such as schools, churches, youth organizations, and senior citizen groups have previously received a 50% discount on 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain hut space. Organizations like these have an educational emphasis, and benefit greatly from the group experience that is provided in the unique hut environment.

We invite your non-profit organization to join the Backcountry Exploration Program. Please read the enclosed information to determine if a hut trip would be a fun, rewarding, and productive experience for your group. Next, complete and return the Discovery Questionnaire. 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain will then contact you to discuss your trip.

This is a fantastic opportunity for all types of non-profit organizations. A hut trip is a great way to get to know each other, to work together, to solve problems, to meet challenges, and also to enjoy and learn about Colorado's backcountry. Please contact us with any questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Ben Dodge  
Executive Director

## Reservation Policies

### **Making Reservations**

After reviewing the enclosed documents and completing the questionnaire, please call (970) 925-5775 to make a reservation. The entire hut must be reserved. No discounts are available for Friday, Saturday, Sunday nights or holidays.

### **Booking Restrictions**

#### **10<sup>TH</sup> Mountain Huts**

Discounts at the Benedict Huts (Fritz and Fabi), Margy's, McNamara, Peter Estin, Harry Gates, Betty Bear, Skinner, Jackal, Fowler-Hilliard and Eiseman are available Monday through Thursday - year-round.

From February 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> groups can only reserve 6 discounted nights at the **10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Hut, Uncle Bud's Hut** or a combination of the 2. During the rest of the year, groups can book an unlimited amount of discounted space at these huts.

#### **Other Huts**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain system includes several privately owned huts, as well as huts owned by other organizations. Please note that different and/or additional restrictions may apply when booking these huts. Call 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain for details.

### **Payment**

10th Mountain will invoice your organization. Payment is due within 30 days from the date of the reservation. We must have your non-profit number on file and payment must come directly from the non-profit organization.

### **Cancellation Policy**

10th Mountain's regular cancellation policy applies to all trips. Changes or cancellations require a 30-day advance notice for an 80% hut credit. Cancellations made less than 30 days prior to your trip start date will result in forfeiture of your payment. No refunds.

### **Waivers**

Each person who stays in a hut must have a completed waiver on file with 10th Mountain before the start of the trip. These forms will be sent to you with your confirmation letter when we have received payment.

### **Membership and Early Bookings**

Non-profit groups can become members of 10th Mountain. Members can participate in our early booking lottery for the following winter season. Please contact 10th Mountain to request a lottery form (lottery deadline is in mid-February). Non-members can begin booking for the following winter on the first business day of June. We begin taking summer reservations on the first business day of October. Membership is not required to book summer trips.

## **Orientations & Work Projects**

The Backcountry Exploration Program is intended to facilitate successful backcountry trips. We think a successful trip is one that is fun, memorable, and helps to promote understanding and appreciation of the backcountry while developing individual self-reliance. To provide your group with some initial guidance, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain offers the following:

### **Pre-Trip Orientation**

**Phone Interview (Required)** Our staff will discuss the Discovery Questionnaire with the trip leader, will review hut and route options, will answer general questions, and will suggest an orientation visit or trip if appropriate for your group.

**Group Visit (Optional)** Our staff or volunteers will visit your organization to present more information about hut trips. The presentation will include packing, getting to the hut, what to expect at the hut, and will also include a brief history of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut Association.

### **Hut Trip Orientation (Optional)**

A Hut Trip Orientation may include a one-day ski, bike, or hike to the hut with a 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain employee. Our staff will not assume a leadership role on an orientation trip; however, the following topics will be reviewed at the trailhead, while on the trail, and at the hut:

- group travel etiquette,
- information about the environment surrounding the hut,
- information about the hut (safety and sanitation, water collection, etc.),
- a review of hut user responsibilities (cleanup, restocking), and
- a history about the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut Association.

This type of one-day orientation requires that your group get an early start, so that our staff can return to the trailhead at a reasonable hour. Our staff will not stay at the hut with your group.

It is important to have a sufficient participant to staff ratio on your trip. If your group is **mentally or physically challenged**, your staff must be able to accommodate their special needs in adverse outdoor conditions. 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain staff will not provide assistance with things like dispensing medications, monitoring dietary needs, or personal care.

**Pre-Trip and Hut Trip Orientations are optional, must be arranged in advance, and are not guaranteed.**

### **Work Projects**

10<sup>th</sup> Mountain maintenance is largely supported by thousands of volunteer hours. We offer free or discounted hut use in exchange for volunteer project(s). This is a great opportunity to reduce the cost of hut fees for your group. This hut space can be used for the current trip or in exchange for a trip at a later date. Work projects may include hut cleaning, painting, firewood stacking, landscaping, and snow shoveling. Work projects usually take 6+ hours. 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain provides all tools, equipment and supervision. **Work projects may not always be available, so groups with financial needs are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible.**

## Leadership Guidelines

Please review the enclosed brochure(s), the Hut Use Information sheets, and the Group Organizer/General Hut Information sheet to help you determine if your group is suited for a hut trip. These documents are given to all of our hut users and are very helpful. In addition, the following information on leadership has been designed specifically for organized groups and should be strongly considered when you are choosing your group leader(s) and planning your trip. **It is imperative for the group to have a designated, qualified and accountable leader who has control and is responsible for making effective decisions in the field.**

If your group does not have someone with sufficient leadership skills, there are several reasonable options:

1. Backcountry and leadership skills can be learned prior to the trip through participation in **10<sup>th</sup> Mountain workshops**. These are offered at the beginning of each season, and similar workshops may be available at outdoor shops or schools in your area. Please refer to [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org) for additional workshop information.
2. There are several **guide services** listed in our brochures that may be of assistance to your group.

### **Suggested Outdoor Skills**

- **Current first aid and CPR** (wilderness first responder is highly recommended). Knowledge of your group's medical conditions and requirements, prior to the trip is strongly suggested.
- **Winter Skills** should include but are not limited to: Backcountry skiing/snowshoeing experience including knowledge of ski/snowshoe equipment, use of skins, waxing, and repair. Also, experience using map, compass and altimeter, and navigating in white-out conditions. Avalanche awareness including stability evaluation, route selection, and rescue is advised. Knowledge of winter survival techniques and winter driving skills on snow-packed winter roads is highly recommended.
- **Summer Skills** should include but are not limited to: Hiking/backpacking experience (including navigation, familiarity with terrain, and knowledge of alpine weather patterns), mountain-biking experience including riding skills, bike repair, and 4 wheel driving skills.

### **Suggested Group Equipment**

- **First Aid Kit:** appropriate size for the group and leaders' level of training.
- **Survival Kit:** at least one of each of the following items per group: shelter, emergency stove, small cooking pot, fire-starter and fuel, extra ground pad, extra sleeping bag, water purification method(s), and a snow shovel (in case of an emergency winter bivouac). If your group plans to travel in avalanche prone terrain, it is strongly recommended that each person have an avalanche shovel, beacon and probe poles.
- **Extra Group Clothing:** including hat, gloves, and an insulating layer. This may be useful for a participant who has forgotten their gear, or for replacing gear that has become wet while in use. See enclosed information sheet for clothing and equipment lists.
- **Repair Kit:** appropriate for winter ski/snowshoe equipment or summer mountain biking/hiking.
- **Navigation:** 7½ minute USGS map(s), 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain map(s), compass, altimeter and GPS.
- **Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue Card:** 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain suggests that your group purchase a CORSAR Card for each hut trip participant. Money generated from the sale of these cards goes to a state fund that provides reimbursement for expenses incurred during search and rescue missions. Cards are \$3.00 per person, per year. Cards can be purchased through 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain, at many outdoor retailers, and where hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

### **Other Leadership Considerations**

10<sup>th</sup> Mountain suggests that the leader(s) consider the following points in planning your trip. Note: even experienced group leaders will benefit from reviewing these points.

- Even the simplest act of transportation – on skis, snowshoes, bicycles or foot – can become very complex in the backcountry because of route conditions, weather, route finding, avalanche, injuries or ill-prepared group members.
- Group members should take responsibility for their own health and comfort as well as for the comfort of others.
- It is helpful to discuss cold injury awareness before the trip.
- It is also beneficial to discuss and demonstrate clothing and layering before the trip.
- Group leaders should pre-travel a hut route to check for unique aspects as well as possible alternatives.

- Be realistic about travel plans. A foot of fresh snow is beautiful, but can slow down even strong groups.
- Try to tour with the group at least one week before the actual hut trip. This will allow you, the leader, to pre-check equipment, clothing and the general overall ability of the group.
- For winter trips, the more avalanche awareness and training a group has the better. Leaders should also have experience in choosing appropriate alternate ski routes when skiing off 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain's suggested routes. Practice with beacons, probe poles, shovels, etc. can only benefit all members of the group.
- We encourage use of the hut logbooks. Please provide younger hut users with reasonable guidelines.
- Share with your group members your backcountry knowledge and survival skills. Knowledge about bivouac techniques, snow shelter construction, and emergency fire techniques are always helpful.
- A brief session on waxing and skin use (winter trips) or bicycle maintenance (summer trips) will save priceless minutes and hours on the trail.
- Group leaders should be aware of any medical limitations of the participants. It's good to know about asthma, allergies, etc. before the trip. Also bring a list of participants' names and phone numbers.
- It can be helpful to provide participants with a list of what is available at the huts. Participants can save a lot of pack weight by not duplicating items already at the hut.
- Educate participants about the value of staying hydrated & fed during the journey to and while at the hut.
- Make sure that the last person to arrive is not the only one to have the confirmation letter and hut combination.
- Upon arriving at the huts, review fire escape routes and evacuation procedures; locate fire extinguishers and escape ladders, and educate your group about use of the gas and wood-burning stoves. No smoking is allowed in the hut or outbuildings.
- Relax. Enjoy the backcountry. Have fun.

## **Ideas for Education**

Educational opportunities are endless while visiting a hut. Your group will be working together and will be in a new environment. This type of outdoor, group experience places participants in a unique atmosphere that is conducive to learning. We suggest that you determine some educational goals and do some research before your trip. To complement your research, an interpretive library is provided at each hut (book titles and authors are listed below). Also visit our website's education section for more information at [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org).

Some interesting and appropriate **topics** to explore while at the hut include:

- Environment: Land Use, Conservation, Low Impact Recreation, & Leave No Trace Principles (see LNT section)
- Ecology: Alpine Flora and Fauna, Snow and Watershed Systems
- Group Living: Leadership, Group Dynamics, Conflict Resolution
- Creative Learning: Painting, Journal Writing, Skits, Photography
- Other: 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain History, Map/Compass, Winter Survival/Avalanche Awareness, Astronomy, Geology

Several **books** containing outdoor activities appropriate for the hut environment, suggested by educators, are listed below. While these books are designed for children, their activities can be fun and educational for groups of all ages. These books are not currently available at the huts.

- Hands-On Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring the Environment With Children (Jenepher Lingelbach (Editor), Lisa Purcell (Editor), Susan Sawyer (Illustrator))
- Sharing Nature With Children (Joseph Cornell)
- The Keepers Series (Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac):

**Keepers of Life: Discovering Plants Through Native American Stories and Earth Activities for Children**  
**Keepers of the Night : Native American Stories and Nocturnal Activities for Children**  
**Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children**  
**Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children**

- Ranger Rick's NatureScope Series (National Wildlife Federation)

Visit the following **websites**, also suggested by educators, for ideas and resources: Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education [www.caee.org](http://www.caee.org), Center for Environmental Education [www.cee-ane.org](http://www.cee-ane.org), and Environmental Education on the Internet [www.eelink.net](http://www.eelink.net).

Some titles and authors from the **interpretive libraries** found at the huts include:

365 Starry Nights (Raymo, Chet)  
Another Wilderness (Rogers, Susan)  
Audubon Field Guide to Wildflowers: Western Region (Knopf, A.)  
Audubon Field Guide to Mushrooms (Knopf, Alfred)  
Avalanche Book, The (Armstrong, Armstrong, and Knox)  
Basic Essentials of Map and Compass (Jacobson, Cliff)  
Climber's Guide to Mountain Sickness (Hackett, Peter)  
Colorado 10th Mountain Trails (Dawson, Lou)  
Colorado Hut to Hut (Litz, Brian)  
Crinkleroot's Book of Animal Tracking (Amosky, Jim)  
Earth Speaks (Van Matre, Steve)  
Exploring around the Hut (Aspen Ctr for Environmental Studies)  
Falling Season (Clifford, Hal)  
Field Guide to Mammal Tracking in N. America (Halfpenny, J.)  
From Grassland to Glacier (Mutel, Cornelia Fleischer)  
Gentle Expeditions (McConnel, Bob)  
Geologic Story of the Aspen Region (U.S. Geological Survey)  
Golden: A Guide to Field ID of Birds in N. America (Robbins, C.)  
Good Times and Bad Times (Imbrie and Evans)  
Hut Handbook (Girvin, Leigh)  
Hypothermia, Frostbite, and other Cold Injuries (Wilkerson, J.)  
Invisible Men on Skis (Coqouze, Rene)  
John Fremont - Soldier and Pathfinder (Sanford and Green)  
Land Above the Trees: Alpine Tundra Guide (Zwinger & Willard)  
Land Navigation Handbook (Kals, W.S.)  
Leave No Trace (NOLS)  
Lorax (Seuss, Dr.)  
MAC's Flower Chart  
Medicine for Mountaineering (Wilkerson, James)  
Memoirs of a Ski Trooper (Fitzgerald, John E.)  
Mountain State Mammals (Russo, Ron)  
Outward Bound Wilderness First Aid Handbook (Isaac, Jeff)  
PDQ Telemark Technique (Ryerson, "Tele" Ned)  
People & Nature in the Hut Region (Aspen Ctr for Env Studies)  
Peterson Field Guide: Rocky Mountain Wildflowers  
Rocky Mountain Flower Finder (Wingate, Janet)  
Rocky Mountain Tree Finder (Watts, Tom)  
Snow Sense (Fredstone and Fesler)  
Solo: On Her Own Adventures (Rogers, Susan)  
Star and Planet Guide (Knight Vision)  
Staying Found (Flening, June)  
Undaunted Courage (Ambrose, Stephen)  
Uphill with the Ski Troops (Kohlman, Oley)  
Weather Wizards Cloud Book (Rubin and Duncan)  
Wilderness as Idea and Adventure (Obermeyer)  
Wilderness Ways (Litz and Anderson)

## **Leave No Trace Principles**

More individuals and groups are seeking out the beauty of backcountry environments. This may be through a simple day trip, hut trip, or multi-day expedition. Whatever the purpose, the environment requires special minimum impact considerations. With a little care, the solitude and beauty - granted only by the backcountry - can be enjoyed by more backcountry travelers.

An abiding respect for wild places and their inhabitants can only come from responsibility and education. A list of rules and regulations cannot bring about this respect; rather, one must adopt an overall attitude of care and appreciation. Aldo Leopold might have stated it best in A Sand County Almanac: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Please adhere to the following Leave No Trace principles. As we examine each of these areas in a little more detail, remember Leave No Trace practices are continually evolving and improving. Each trip and environment requires judgment and should add positively to your experience. You will enjoy each trip more knowing that you are minimizing your impact upon the land, its wildlife, and other visitors.

**Please note that the following principles are selected and adapted specifically for hut users from current Leave No Trace principles.**

- 1. Plan ahead and prepare.** Unnecessary impact in backcountry areas can be avoided with proper preparation. Inappropriate fires can be avoided if you know the route, have adequate time/travel plans, and are properly equipped. Teach the Leave No Trace principles before you go on the trip. You can avoid traffic, crowding, delays, and conflicts with other groups by scheduling your trip to the more remote huts during times of little use.
- 2. Travel lightly across the land.** Skis, snowshoes, hiking boots and bicycles do a good job of traveling lightly. Stay on existing routes to and from the huts. In summer, travel single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Do not "lose" trash. Wax tube remnants, pieces of duct tape, Kleenex and energy bar wrappers seem to be especially troublesome.
- 3. Pack it in, pack it out.** Prepackage meals so you eliminate excessive trash. Do not burn trash in the hut stoves. Carry out all excess food. Use the trash bags at the huts to bag and carry out all garbage.
- 4. Practice good sanitation.** Each hut is provided with a toilet to concentrate and control human waste. Do not make yellow snow surprises around the hut. Hut users' health is at risk, because snow is often gathered around the hut to melt for drinking water. Enroute to the hut, please cover yellow snow and do the business away from the main trail. If you must use toilet paper, be sure to carry it out.
- 5. Leave what you find.** Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them. Do not build structures.
- 6. Respect wildlife.** The disturbance of wildlife is a major concern. Wildlife can often be approached in the winter because of their attempts to conserve energy. Avoid the urge to approach or feed them. These animals often have enough trouble with loss of habitat and loss of genuine wilderness. They do not need increased pressures during the winter season when they normally escape human encroachment. Please remember that feeding wildlife compromises their ability to carry out their normal behaviors. If they are eating cheesy puffs, they are not eating pine nuts.
- 7. Reduce your impact on other visitors.** Be courteous. Share the trail with other users. Portable radios, tape players, cell phones and lap tops bring immediate contact from the outside world to the remoteness of the huts. Many visitors are disturbed by these "intrusions." If you choose to use such items, do so unobtrusively.

For more information visit [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org) and [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us) (search for LNT Principles), or contact the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) LNT Program at 1-800-332-4100 for related books and materials.

### **Discovery Questionnaire for Trip Leaders**

After 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain receives this completed Questionnaire, one of our staff will contact the Trip Leader to discuss hut locations and availability. A discount may be approved for non-profit groups booking full huts during mid-week (Monday – Thursday). Fax form to 970-925-5317 or mail to 1280 Ute Ave., Ste. 21, Aspen CO 81611.

**Name of Organization:**

**NFP#:**

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Mailing Address:

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City, State, Zip:

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Phone:

Fax:

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**Name of Trip Leader:**

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Mailing Address:

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City, State, Zip:

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Phone:

Fax:

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Please answer the following questions carefully.

**About The Trip**

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1. What are the primary goals of your trip?

2. What will be your itinerary and what topics/subjects will you be emphasizing? (See enclosed Ideas for Education).

3. Given the demands of backcountry travel and lack of creature comforts (electricity, running water, food service, etc.), are the huts the appropriate location for your group?

4. What is the primary mode of transportation for your trip?

\_\_\_\_\_ Skis

\_\_\_\_\_ Snowshoes

\_\_\_\_\_ Hiking

\_\_\_\_\_ Mountain Biking

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe)

5. What specific huts are you interested in booking?

**About The Leader(s)**

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1. Using the provided grid, please rate each leader's backcountry skills: inexperienced, moderately experienced, experienced, or expert.

Name of Leader	Map, Compass & Altimeter	Avalanche Awareness	Survival & Rescue

2. For each leader, please list: formal backcountry training (College Courses, AMGA Certification, American Avalanche Institute, NOLS, Outward Bound) including course title and year completed; medical training; leadership experience; and applicable personal experience.

**1. Name of Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

Formal Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name of Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

Formal Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Name of Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

Formal Training:

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Medical Training:

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Leadership Experience:

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Personal Experience:

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### About The Participants

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1. How many participants will there be on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ # of Male \_\_\_\_\_ # of Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the age range of your participants? Youngest \_\_\_\_\_ Oldest \_\_\_\_\_ Average \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please rate the group's overall fitness level: \_\_\_\_\_ Below average \_\_\_\_\_ Average \_\_\_\_\_ Highly energetic  
Comments:
  
4. Please rate the group's overall skiing ability: \_\_\_\_\_ Beginner \_\_\_\_\_ Intermediate \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced  
Comments:
  
5. Do members of your group have special needs or ADA requirements? If yes, please describe.
  
6. List any additional needs:

### About 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain

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- Will your group request a Pre-Trip Orientation with 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain staff? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
- Will your group request a Hut Trip Orientation with 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain staff? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No