

MOUNT RUSHMORE PILGRIMAGE 2015

LINCOLN TRAIL – SHERIDAN LAKE TO MT. RUSHMORE

Welcome to the 77th Annual Mt. Rushmore Pilgrimage and the Lincoln Trail! Troop 88 from Piedmont, SD, will be the lead troop this year for the Lincoln Trail. Todd Mueller will be the Hike Master and pace setter for the trail on hike day. Our Scoutmaster, Pete Jerzak, will be the “caboose” during the hike.

Our routing this year is quite different than in previous years. This is the permitted route provided by the Forest Service, so this is the trail we need to use. This new route will be somewhat shorter and less aggressive than in past years, but is still considered moderate to moderately difficult as there is quite a bit of elevation climb throughout the hike along with some tougher trail conditions on the last 3 miles or so into Mt. Rushmore. Anyone that starts the hike should be able to finish it if they are in good physical condition.

Trail conditions will be quite diverse – gravel road and paved surfaces, to single track trail with loose rock, exposed roots, downed trees, and water crossings. Closed toe, broken-in hiking shoes are recommended. Remember to pack at least two (2) 32oz. Nalgene or similar equivalent of water along with high quality foods for continued energy – nuts, dried fruits, granola bars, etc. Bring at least 1-2 pairs of extra socks – change your socks often – dry feet are happy feet!



Remember to follow all Leave No Trace principals while on the hike from start to finish. Stay on the designated trail. If you pack it in, pack it back out. **There will be no restrooms along the trail, so plan accordingly.** At our lunch stop, a water station will be provided for you to refill your water bottles. Be prepared for all weather and all situations, but keep your pack load and weight to a minimum. Do not bring along unnecessary items – it is dead weight you do not need to haul.

Safety is a main concern on the hike as we will be hiking along roads with traffic. Always walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Walk single file preferably. Adult leaders should be monitoring their Scouts to make sure they comply. We have done our best to make vehicle traffic aware of our presence and to slow traffic down. Your cooperation will be appreciated during the hike to ensure the safety of all Scouts and Scouters.

Our total trail distance will be an estimated 11.1 miles. The hike will start from the Sheridan Lake South Shore Campground at the camp ranger check in booth at the campground (brown building on the road into the campground between the two large speed bumps at the entrance to the campground). There is a grassy area on the north side of the road – gather there. This will be our starting point.

From here, we will hike on Calumet Road to Highway 16, approximately 4.5 miles. Keep in mind this road has moderate traffic, so hike on the left side of the road, and stay on the left side of the road. Single file is preferred. If traffic is approaching from the front, “CAR” will be announced – pass it back through the group. Go to the shoulder of the road, stop hiking, and wait for the car to pass. If a car comes from the rear, use the same process. Keep an eye out for your fellow Scouts!

We will stop at approach to Highway 16 and regroup. This will be one of our major hike breaks. Make sure to stay off the road. At this point, we will need to cross Highway 16. We will have flag men on both directions of traffic, slowing traffic as much as possible. At this point, Highway 16 is split. There are two lanes of traffic west bound, followed by a short connecting road, and then two lanes of east bound traffic. We will cross all lanes, then head west on the far south side of the east bound lane. You will be facing traffic. Cross lanes only when completely safe – unit adult leaders will need to be in charge of their Scouts at this point. Walk single file only – no exceptions. Distance to travel is 1.5 miles to Hardestry Road, where we again will regroup, then head off into the woods.

At Hardestry Road, we have hiked 6 miles. From here, we will head south on another gravel road through a residential area until we come upon a two lane track trail veering off to the right. Follow this for a short distance then turn left. You will come up upon a creek crossing. We have laid a plank across the creek – cross here. Follow the grass covered trail south. You will come up on a deserted house at 6.6 miles. Continue following the road around the south side of this property. At 6.9 miles into the hike, you will come across a dried out creek to cross, and immediately after, a barbed wire fence. Look for a orange piece of snow fence – cross the fence close to here. You are now on Camp Judson property. This fenced area does have cattle in it, so be alert. Continue through the property, walking to the southeast. You will come up upon a house where you will find another gravel road. Follow the gravel road south to a steel gate across the width of the road – it may be closed. If so, walk around the gate on the west side. Once around the gate you will come up on Old Hill City Road, a paved two lane road. Turn left,

walk along the left side of the road single file roughly ¼ mile to the main entrance to Camp Judson Baptist Church Camp. Be alert for traffic as there are blind corners on this road.

Cross onto the gravel road that leads into Camp Judson and follow it up the hill. At the top of the hill follow the road to the left. Walk to the east where you will come to the main lodge building (very large log building) where you will turn right, go down a hill to a stream crossing, then continue across. On your left will be a playground, then a picnic shelter. This will be our lunch and water stop. At this point, we have hiked around 7.8 miles. Based on our progress, our lunch stop will be around one hour, plenty of time to eat lunch, fill water bottles, and check feet.

From Camp Judson, we will head south from the lake by the picnic shelter onto the Old Baldy trail. We will cross a running creek on a log crossing – please take your time and do not rush. Please be sure that there is only one person at a time on the crossing. Shortly after this we will come across two additional creek crossings. The rocks in place will provide an adequate way across the creek. Please be very careful and go slowly. Rocks may become wet and may become slippery, so use caution and take your time. After the final creek crossing, we start climbing in elevation. The trail becomes steep and washed out in spots, with exposed roots and loose rock. Watch your foot plants and again, take your time.



At 8.7 miles into the hike, you will come to a rusty bucket atop a wooden pole – stay on the trail on the right heading directly south. Veering to the left will take you to the summit of Old Baldy. At 9.2 miles we will take a rest stop at a vertical rock outcropping. Less than 2 miles to go.



Continue heading south on the trail. After another tenth of a mile, you'll walk up on a brown sign stating we are entering Mt. Rushmore National Park property. Stay to left. The trail will turn and head east. At times the trail may not be so visible as this area has been recently logged. Look for the brown trail markers to stay on the trail. At 10.1 miles into the hike, we'll be at some large down trees marked with a "Bearing Tree" yellow sign. This will be another break and gathering point.



From here, there is roughly about one mile to go. Head to the south over the hill and down through a saddle (draw) and you will come up on the Mt. Rushmore maintenance area. Take the rocky ledge around the left side. You will come upon a down tree in the way. Do not cross over the tree here, but go to the root base of the tree and go around it. Follow the trail around the ledge to the gravel road until you come upon an intersection. Turn right here, taking the road less traveled heading uphill. The road continues, then turns left, up a steep hill. The path is clear and wide. Climb to the top of this ridge, where you will see several sheds and shops. Follow the graveled path down to the intersection, taking a right turn here leading to the water treatment plant. Look up – you can see Mt. Rushmore. Walk along the fence passing the water treatment plant. There is no visible trail here, so fan out. Ahead, you will see a road at the top of the ridge ahead of you. You will need to walk towards the left when climbing up this ridge line . . . you are parallel to the highway leading into Mt. Rushmore. This will be a tough climb to the top. Once you reach the road, walk towards the steel barricade across the road. We will gather there and catch our breath. Walk around the barricade on the south side and just passed this you will find a path with lights leading up to Mt. Rushmore. Follow the path up the hill which will take you to the main entrance.

Congratulations – you have finished hiking the Lincoln Trail!

If you have any questions or comments before or after the event, please feel free to contact me at (605) 430-7345 or by email at scoutertodd54@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Lincoln Trail – Friday, September 12

- 9:00 PM – Crackerbarrel – Troop 88 campsite for adult leaders and Senior Patrol Leaders

Lincoln Trail – Hike Day Schedule – Saturday, September 12

- 6:30 AM – leave your campsite for the gather point at campground ranger booth at the entrance to Sheridan Lake South Shore Campground
- 7:00 AM – Departure time – Lincoln Trail
- 11:00 AM – ETA to Camp Judson
- 12:30 PM – Latest departure time from Camp Judson
- 2:30 PM – ETA to Mt. Rushmore
- 3:15 PM – All hikers gather at Southeast Lower Level Parking Lot
- 3:30 PM – Parade of Flags Begins
- 3:45 PM – Ceremony starts in the amphitheater

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL UNITS WILL NEED TO BRING THEIR UNIT FLAG TO MT. RUSHMORE FOR THE PARADE OF FLAGS. ALL SCOUTS AND SCOUTERS SHOULD BE IN FULL UNIFORM FOR THE CEREMONY.

