

Mountain Skills and Trip Coordinator Course

Trip Report

Tuesday Evening

14 participants met at Sandy and Steve's house. The evening began with introductions and a brief explanation of why each of us wanted to take the course – the reasons were multiple and ranged from wanting to learn how to read a map and not get lost to improving and confirming skills.

Steve began our education with map reading skills. Some of the things we learned are as follows:

- Use the *Legend* to interpret the symbols on the map and AVOID depressions with marshes!
- The contour lines actually do provide extremely useful information such as
 - Tight spacing = steep slopes
 - Wide spacing = gentle slopes
 - 'V' shaped pointing away from the summit = ridge
 - 'V' shaped pointing towards the summit = gully
- UTM Coordinates
 - Easting and Northing and a handy little rule of "in the house and up the stairs"

Sandy then took over and reviewed the responsibilities of a coordinator – they are many but manageable. A few that stood out for us are:

- When contacting participants prior to the trip confirm the elevation gain, distance and requirements (i.e., rain gear, water, food). Discuss the participants abilities/experience and enquire if there are any medical conditions you need to be aware of
- At the meeting place:
 - Yes you can ask to look in a beginner hiker's pack to ensure the contents are appropriate
 - Check that everyone has water and food
- During the trip keep everyone safe and have fun!

We then planned a spectacular pot luck meal for Saturday night and organized car pooling to Steve and Sandy's place in Harvey Heights.

Since hikers are an enquiring bunch, frequently asked questions were put in a jar and each participant drew their homework assignment for the weekend – a brief presentation and one page handout.

Friday Evening

We met at Steve and Sandy's place in Harvey Heights and began the evening with Steve's rendition of assessing hikers' abilities:

- Unconscious incompetence – unaware of what they don't know
- Conscious incompetence – aware they know little and ask lots of questions
- Conscious competence – know lots but think they know it all (these are the most dangerous)
- Unconscious competence – very skilled and knowledgeable

Next, 9 terrific presentations were given answering some of the frequently asked questions. Topics were:

- Hydration
- Food

- Footwear
- Clothing
- How to pick a pack
- What to carry in a day pack
- What to carry in a back pack
- How to pack a pack
- First Aid and Pack Repair Kits

We closed the evening with some map work to prepare us for the next day. Using our new found knowledge and the UTM coordinates 347 491 and 404 481, we identified the hiking trail *Porcupine Creek Trail (north fork)*. We also calculated the distance to be hiked (~ 6.8 km) and the elevation gain (~675 m).