



## **Gear Girls FAQs**

### **Winter 2022**

#### **What is the schedule for Gear Girls?**

Gear Girls runs for three 10-week sessions in spring, fall, & winter, and in the summer, we host multi-day backcountry trips. You do not need to commit to all seasons, as we hold registration for each session separately.

This winter session, we'll meet once a week on Fridays for 10 consecutive weeks, starting January 7 and ending March 11. Participants are highly encouraged to attend all 10 outings, but we understand that everyone's lives are very full; please keep us informed if your Gear Girl can't make it to an outing, so we know not to wait up at the parking lot.

The typical drop off and pick up location will be the Thorpe Park baseball fields; we will provide transportation from there via our 15 passenger van. The typical outing time will be Fridays 1 pm - 5 pm. Since it's hard to predict what kind of conditions we'll have this winter, it's likely that outing locations and activities will change in response to the weather and snowfall. Your flexibility is appreciated!

[Check out the calendar with meeting times and locations.](#)

We are very excited to host a [campout](#) near Pine, AZ, which will take place on March 11th at 1:30 pm to March 13th at 1:30 pm!

#### **Is there a fee?**

Nope! Our program is funded by grants and private donations. We hope to remove the barriers to entry as much as possible and don't want cost to be an issue. We do

however accept donations from anyone who wants to support Gear Girls; you are welcome to donate here: <http://www.aztrail.org/donate.html>

### **But my daughter doesn't have cross country skis or snowshoes?**

We will provide cross country skis and snowshoes for any girls who don't have the necessary equipment. We will need advance notice of this request, and please let us know if your Gear Girl will be missing any outings so that we can skip the rental for those days.

### **What else will she need to participate?**

We have a hearty supply of loaner winter clothing –gloves, hats, snow pants, jackets, boots, etc! Please don't let the clothing list prevent participation. We will make sure everyone has what they need!

Participants should come prepared with...

- A mask. Masks are not required while we're social distancing outside. Masks are required in the van.
- A comfortable backpack with space for extra clothing layers.
- Minimum 2 liters of water. Warm water is nice for colder weather.
- Snacks are provided: Bars, chips/pretzels, seeds/nuts, fruit. We will accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Comfy weather-appropriate clothing (layers) meant for moving.

\*Winter adventuring requires the right clothing for sure! See below for our suggested approach to layering:

- 1) Base layer - specially for colder weather and snow, participants should be wearing a base layer of long johns. Polar fleece pajamas work great as long johns! So does a combo of non-cotton yoga pants and a long sleeve polyester athletic shirt.
- 2) Mid layer - a fleece jacket or light to mid weight puffy.
- 3) Outer layer - a waterproof shell or snow jacket, snow pants or a combo of warm fleece pants with waterproof pants and gaiters.

\*\*No clothing for winter adventuring should be cotton. Cotton, when wet, retains no insulative value and will transfer heat away from the body rather than keeping it in!

- Insulated waterproof gloves
- Wool or fleece socks
- Insulated waterproof boots
- Sunglasses - Very important for sunny days with snow.
- Sunscreen
- Reusable insulated mug

- Any participants who require an epi pen, inhaler, or other life saving medications must have those medications available for every outing.

### **What if there is inclement weather?**

Please ensure the participant is always prepared with weather-appropriate layers and, if forecasted, a rain jacket; be sure to check the weather the day of or before and then pack accordingly. Given our variable mountain town weather, it's hard to predict what kind of conditions we might be working with. Nevertheless, with the proper clothing and attitudes, rain, snow, and cold are awesome opportunities to experience the trail in new ways, awaken the senses, and embark on memorable adventures. That being said, our instructors know when to call it off; when inclement weather is forecasted, we'll be in touch to give you a heads up to pack extra items or that we'll be adjusting/cancelling that week's outing. We'll cancel outings if driving conditions are unsafe.

### **What will participants do and learn?**

Outings will typically consist of hiking, snowshoeing, or cross country skiing; a fun educational activity; a snack break; games/initiatives/mindful moments; and nature-learning opportunities along the trail!

Girls will gain outdoor skills and knowledge essential for a lifetime of trail adventures, including Leave No Trace practices, trip preparation, local ecology, and survival techniques. We will use the process of learning winter technical skills to illustrate concepts like planning ahead, self care, self confidence, and being part of a thoughtful community.

The program's capstone experience will be a 2-night campout. Throughout our outings, girls will be set up for success with campcraft lessons and will collaborate to plan meals and individuals' camp tasks. The campout experience will give participants the opportunity to showcase their knowledge, self-lead a hike, and demonstrate their abilities to cooperate and guide others with compassion. Plus, it's simply going to be a ton of fun.

### **Where will the campout be, and what will she need?**

Check out the [Campout Details & Packing List](#) doc for more information!

### **Is there a goal they are working towards?**

Gear Girls is a non-competitive and pressure free environment. Girls are free to set their own goals as they wish. We host a yearly multi-day ride from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon, and we hope that participants will have the skills and confidence to complete this ride by the end of 8th grade.

## What measures are being taken in response to the coronavirus?

The Arizona Trail Association's Gear Girls program is committed to reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission. Information about our safety strategies can be found in our [Revised COVID Epidemic Protocols](#).

Participants will be required to:

- Follow any federal, state, and local mask ordinances.
- Wear a mask during group transportation and when we're unable to maintain physical distancing. We will not check participants' vaccination status, and we ask that participants respect one another's requests to wear masks and/or requests for physical distancing.
- Carry and use disinfectants (provided by ATA).
- Not share beverages.

We ask that girls kindly refrain from participation if they have COVID-19 symptoms, believe they may have COVID-19, or have had any exposure to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

## What if our family prefers to provide our own transportation?

We understand if you're more comfortable providing your own transportation to and from the trailheads in light of COVID-19. Please indicate this preference on your registration form. Because we will reserve 13 spots in the van for the same participants, if you choose to provide your own transportation, you'll be responsible for transportation for the entire duration of the winter session; we can, however, still accommodate group transportation for the campout, since it's a further drive, and we'll have an additional SUV. Providing your own rides will require some extra coordination and will alter your daughter's drop off and pick up times.

## Learn more about Gear Girls online!

Check out our [website](#).

Follow us on [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#)!

## More questions?

Please reach out to Julie at [julie@aztrail.org](mailto:julie@aztrail.org).

