

## #80 CREEK HIKING SAFETY



Hiking within and adjacent to creeks provides an opportunity to observe and learn about plants and animals that inhabit riparian habitats and creek waters. In addition, creek beds and banks are ideal places to observe natural processes of erosion and sedimentation. The impacts of flooding usually can be observed on creek floodplains. Fresh rock outcrops or exposures are also common and readily available for inspection in creek beds and along creek banks and channels. This Clover Safe note provides information about safe creek hiking.

### Safe Creek Hiking Precautions

- Wear personal protective equipment appropriate to the creek hiking weather conditions: jackets or sweatshirts during cool weather, and light clothing, insect repellent, sunscreen, sun glasses, and hat during warm weather. Wear slip resistant shoes or rubber boots. Always carry sufficient water (at least one quart or more).
- Always listen to and follow the volunteer leader's instructions about creek walking and creek plant and animals. Do not touch plants and animals unless the volunteer leader has given permission.
- After examining a creek inhabitant, return it to the place where it was found. Collecting live specimens from creeks is generally prohibited. If you turn over a rock, carefully replace it.
- Stay with your creek hiking group and volunteer leader. Do not wander off on your own.
- Creek hikers that are young, non-swimmers, and poor swimmers should always wear a personal flotation device or life preserver.
- Closely look for snakes or insects before picking up objects from the ground (i.e. rocks, plants, leaves, etc.) and thoroughly inspect areas where you intend to sit.
- Wet rocks and banks can be slippery so be cautious and step carefully to prevent falls.
- Be alert and take precautions when standing on steep or slippery banks adjacent to creeks.
- Do not wade into swift water or water above your knees.
- Avoid rockfalls and slope failures by staying away from steep bluffs or cut banks.
- Stop creek hiking if a thunder or lightning storm approaches. Seek shelter outside the creek bed on dry land.
- If you notice that a member of your creek hiking group is missing, immediately notify your volunteer leader, parent, or guardian.
- If you are injured while creek hiking, notify your volunteer leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.

