



Membership Handbook

Welcome to Minnesota Rovers Outdoors Club!

Thank you for joining the most active outdoors club in the Upper Midwest. Our members organize trips to more places in Minnesota, across the country and around the world than any other local club. This handbook is your guide to what Rovers has to offer.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to further an appreciation of the outdoors by facilitating the organization of economical, cost-shared trips, arranging informative programs, building and maintaining trails, and providing opportunities for leadership development.

We strive to attain the highest standards, act in an open and responsible manner, and provide a broad variety of activities and equipment to serve our members' needs.

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Club Participation

What's the best way to get involved with Rovers?

Go on a trip! Without doubt, this is the best way to learn about Rovers, connect with other members, and get the most out of the club. Choose a day trip if you're not ready for an overnigher.

Join the e-group. The e-group is a group e-mail address that is used to communicate to all club members who are subscribed. Once you become a member of Rovers, you will receive an e-mail invitation to the e-group. Once subscribed, you can use the e-group to connect with other members.

Come to a Tuesday night program. Tuesday night programs are another way to connect with others in the club. The program includes an introduction, announcements, trips reports, upcoming trip announcements, a presentation and socializing. Reach out to others and ask questions or tell them what your interests are.

Check the website often. It's easy, convenient, and it's updated at least once a week. The Rovers website lists every trip that is planned to date, and includes an archive of past trips. Be aware that part of what sets Rovers apart is the spontaneity of some of our trips. You never know what will be planned or when, so check frequently! Also many trips are announced or organized on the e-group and some last minute trips don't reach the website.

Weekly Program

Our weekly gatherings feature a discussion of upcoming outdoor opportunities as well as highlights of past trips. The program also includes presentations with informative discussions on topics such as past trips, wilderness preservation, equipment demonstrations, tips & techniques, and other topics of general interest to members.

Afterward, Rovers gather at a nearby restaurant to socialize and plan future trips.

The program takes place every Tuesday (check website for current location and time).

Location

The program takes place in St. Paul and is outdoors in the summer, and indoors in the winter months. From September through April, meetings are held at Macalester College and socializing is at Billy's on Grand. From May through August, Rovers get together at Como Park with socializing at Ol' Mexico. Location and time of meetings and socializing occasionally change, so **please check the Weekly Program page of the website for current info.**

Activities & Trips

What kinds of trips are offered?

Going on trips is the backbone of what Rovers is all about. The types of trips you can enjoy are endless and include day hikes, canoeing/kayaking, bike tours (both road and mountain), indoor and outdoor climbing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, car camping, backpacking, and many, many more. Trips are only limited by the imagination of the members. Trips occur just about every week (usually weekends) and are coordinated locally, across the country, and around the globe! Trips include activities that last anywhere from a couple of hours to several weeks.

How do I find out what trips are going on and when?

At each meeting, upcoming trips are announced and briefly described. If the coordinator is present, he/she will go over some of the details and you can ask questions or sign up for a trip at that time. The Rovers website also lists each trip with a detailed description including estimated cost, departure and return times, and the trip coordinator's contact information. Contact the trip coordinator to sign up for their trip or for any questions about the trip. A deposit may be required to save your place and cover up-front costs. Be sure to pay your deposit at the time you sign up. Simply telling the coordinator you are interested or want to sign up may not guarantee your spot until the coordinator receives your deposit.

What if I can't attend meetings?

If you are not able to attend meetings, you can find out what's happening by checking the Rovers website www.mnrovers.org often and by joining the e-group.

Who can coordinate trips?

Any member can coordinate a trip—and this includes you! If you have never coordinated a trip before, you may want to go on a few first to get a feel for it. To get started, all you need is an idea of what to do and where to go. You should then post your trip on the website and, if possible, come to the meetings to promote your trip.

What are the responsibilities of Trip Coordinators?

Typically, trip coordinators decide what the trip will be, how long it will last, and where it will go. Trip coordinators may also arrange for the details of travel, places to stay and buying food ahead of time. They often share these responsibilities with a co-coordinator and/or with the trip members. Depending on the type and length of trip, you may have very little or a lot to coordinate ahead of time.

I'm not sure I can coordinate a trip...what should I do?

If you want some guidance on coordinating trips, there are many experienced Rovers who will gladly help you out. You can start with the Trips Director (a Rovers Board member), who can answer any of your questions or point you to another Rover who can help you figure out what needs to be done. They can offer advice on how to pull the details together, recommend a route if necessary, and even suggest an experienced Rover to co-coordinate the trip with you if you wish.

What are the responsibilities of trip members?

The basis of all trips is shared fun and responsibility. Some trips are designed to help you learn new skills but others assume you already have the experience. Since coordinators are members like you, they also have varying levels of experience. Talk to your coordinator when you sign up to discuss experience and expectations (both yours and theirs) if this is a concern for you.

As a trip member, you're expected to find out how to prepare for the trip, including what you need to bring (eating utensils, clothes, lunches, money, etc.), and help out with chores along the way. It's also important to let the trip coordinator know about special dietary requirements and medical conditions in advance of the trip. You should always notify the trip coordinator if you can't go on a trip that you have signed up for. **Talk to the trip coordinator if you have any questions at all.**

How much do trips generally cost?

Sharing costs helps make most Rover trips inexpensive. Depending on type and length of the trip, it may cost anywhere from a few dollars to several hundred dollars. Some trips cost absolutely nothing. Keep in mind, trip coordinators do not make any profit on the trip. The trip coordinator adds up all group costs and charges each trip member (including themselves) an equal share. Drivers should be reimbursed for mileage and gas. The suggested Rovers mileage rate is 10 cents per mile after the cost of gas has been shared. If you want to use a different formula for calculating trip costs, that's fine too, as long as all trip members agree beforehand. Be sure to discuss these details with the trip coordinator well in advance.

Equipment

What if I don't have the gear or equipment necessary to go on a trip?

You're in luck! Rovers maintain a large collection of equipment for the use of members while on Rovers trips. We call this collection the "Cage." The Cage includes items such as tents, canoes, stoves, cook kits, backpacks, helmets, bike panniers, sleeping bags, and more. Cage equipment is available for members to use for free—as long as it's for a Rovers trip that has been announced and posted on the website. Generally, the trip coordinator obtains "group gear" (e.g., tents, cook kits) and you arrange for your personal gear (e.g., sleeping bag, backpack). The equipment should be reserved well in advance and must be returned clean, dry, and in good condition the first Tuesday after the trip. See the "**Cage Equipment Checkout Policy**" on the website for additional information. Be sure to discuss equipment and gear with your trip coordinator well in advance.

How do I get to the "Cage?"

Ask the Equipment Director where to meet if you need to borrow something. If you're not sure what equipment to take on a trip ask your trip coordinator or the Equipment Director. They'll be happy to help.

Website/Contact Information

Website: www.mnrovers.org

E-mail: info@mnrovers.org

E-group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mnrovers/>

Who should I contact if I have questions or comments?

Send an e-mail to info@mnrovers.org with any questions or comments about the club or the website. If the web administrator cannot answer your question, it will be directed to someone else that can. You will find a list of the current Board of Directors, their positions, and contact information on the website under "ABOUT US" > "Board of Directors". You are encouraged to contact any of them with whatever questions or concerns you might have.

Rovers Board of Directors

Who runs the club?

The members really run the club but there is a board of directors that manage the club. Each February, members elect the officers who will manage the club for the next year. Any member may run for office. Current officers, their responsibilities, and e-mail addresses are listed on the Rovers website. Board meetings are held once a month. Club members are welcome to attend Board meetings. You may even wish to be on the Board of Directors one day!

Check the website for current Board members.

http://mnrovers.org/html/clubInfo_contact.htm

Additional Club Information

Trails and Conservation

The Border Route Trail (BRT). Begun in 1972, the BRT was built by Minnesota Rovers with help from the Minnesota DNR and the US Forest Service. The BRT is the longest and most scenic wilderness backpacking trail in the upper Midwest, stretching 65 miles along the Minnesota/Canada Border from the Kekekabic Trail near Gunflint Lake eastward to the Superior Hiking Trail near Lake Superior. Rovers continues to be actively involved in maintaining the trail. Both mechanized and non-mechanized trail clearing trips go out frequently during the Spring and Fall. No experience is necessary and the club provides instruction, tools, and equipment. For more information contact info@borderoutetrail.org.

Conservation and Volunteer Opportunities. Many conservation and volunteer opportunities are posted throughout the year on the Trips & Activities page of the Rovers website, communicated at meetings and via the e-group.

Intro Shows

Twice a year, Rovers collect the best digital photos of past trips and set them to music. This is a great time to relive past trips, see the variety of outdoor activities that Rovers has to offer, and meet and recruit new people and introduce your friends, family and coworkers to the club. As you take pictures on Rovers trips, consider sending them to the Intro Show coordinator for use in the show.

Extravaganzas

Twice a year, Rovers has a kick-off camping trip designed to welcome and recruit new members. It takes place in the Fall and Spring, shortly after the Intro Show. At this event, many activities are planned (e.g., biking, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing) to introduce new and potential members to Rovers activities. Anywhere from 40-60 people attend. You do not need to be a member to attend, so bring your friends to introduce them to the club!

Club Days and Vendor Discounts

Some local outdoor stores offer discount prices to Rovers members. Check the "Discounts" page under "membership" on the Rovers website for current vendors offering discounts to club members and details on how to obtain the discount.

Rovers "Culture"

This is a bit more difficult to describe as everyone's experience will be different—but what seems to set Rovers apart are the following:

- **Trips are continually being planned and announced.** You never know what new and interesting adventures will come your way. That means that you do not have to commit to a trip months in advance when you don't know your schedule yet. A trip may be planned a couple of months or only a couple of days out. For Rovers, spontaneity is part of the fun.
- **Individual Rovers members plan the trips**—there is no central trip coordinating committee. That means we may have several trips going out on a weekend or none at all. If you want to go on a trip and you can't find it, plan it yourself!
- **We like to go low cost.** Rovers often coordinate trips that some people call "roughing it." That means we camp a lot or stay in large group accommodations (i.e., cabins, hostels). That doesn't mean that trips with more "cushy" surroundings are not planned, but we are more likely to sacrifice beds and central heat/air conditioning for lower prices.
- **There are trips for all experience and interest levels.** You don't have to be an expert or fanatic. Some Rovers join with absolutely no experience and sample several activities after they join. Some Rovers are or become quite skilled in activities and like to travel with other experienced folks. And, there are Rovers everywhere in between.
- **Minnesota Rovers is about having fun.** That speaks for itself. New members find us every day and some members have been around for many years. We hope to see you on a trip soon!

Rovers Policies

Over the years, the Minnesota Rovers Board has developed a number of policies to help the club run smoothly. These can be viewed on the website here: <http://mnrovers.org/about-us/policies/> Please check them out.