

2024 Alonzo Stagg 50/20 Hike

Saturday, March 16th, 2024

General Overview and Guide

[The **ULTIMATE** Hiking Challenge for Scouts – Can you hike 50 miles in 20 hours or less?]

Overview: This event offers opportunities for BSA Scouts, Venturers, and Scouters to hike 10, 20, 25, or 50 miles over local trails. The hike is "supported," meaning that there are various Support Stops along the way that provide food, drink, first aid, encouragement, and bail-out options. The event is an ideal opportunity for Scouts to complete a 10- or the "roadblock" 15-mile hike needed for the Hiking Merit Badge – an Eagle Required Merit Badge – a hike that few Units otherwise conduct. It is also an excellent bonding and training event for Philmont, Lenhoksin Trail, or similar activities.

About 75% of the hikers actually sign up for either a 10- or a 20-mile hike – not 50-miles. [Nearly all 10- and 20-Milers complete those distances.] All participants receive a patch. All participating Units receive a flag streamer. If they so request, Scouts that complete 25 miles in 10 hours (or a greater distance in appropriate time) receive a **Certificate of Recognition**. Hikers that complete the entire 50 miles in 20 hours or less (hence the term "50/20") receive the **Alonzo Stagg "Excellence in Physical Fitness" medal, a Certificate of Recognition, and an oval car "Euro-sticker" listing "50/20"** (these match the 26.2 stickers commonly seen for marathon runners). Usually about half of the hikers who attempt 50 miles complete that distance. [Note that a 50/20 hike is a significant physical, emotional, and mental challenge, and should only be attempted by Scouts and adults who have trained for it, to include at least one 25-mile practice hike in the month prior to the 50/20 Hike.]

This hike is put on by the participating Units – not by the District Staff. For this reason, it requires the logistical and staffing support of the participating Units. Support levels are roughly linked to the number of hikers from the respective Unit - Troops with large numbers of hikers are tasked to run full-service Support Stops, while Troops with smaller numbers of hikers are tasked to run smaller Support Stops or other duties as assigned (such as hiking escorts, bicycle escorts, shuttle van drivers, and so on). Units must provide some level of logistical and/or staffing support in order to enroll Scouts in the event. [The minimum Unit sign-up is two hikers and one staffer.] **Participating Units must not enroll Scouts from non-participating Units.**

Much of the information concerning the Hike (including this Guide) is posted on-line at troop111.org (click on Activities, then Annual Events, and then the Alonzo Stagg Hike). Some posts are dated 2014 or 2016, but are still 100% valid. Posts include:

- Training (Hikers)
- Nutrition and Hydration (Hikers)
- Equipment Advice (Hikers)
- Sleep and Mental Attitude (Hikers)
- A copy of this Guide (Everyone)
- Directions for the 10-, 20-, and 25- and 50-mile Hike Routes (Hikers and Staff who are Hiking; Optional for all other Staffers)

- Trail Rules and Emergency Procedures Guide (Hikers)
- Morning of Hike Primer (Hikers)
- Staff and Setup Guides (Unit Leaders, All Staffers, as needed)
- Directions and Maps to Support Stops (Unit leaders, All Staffers, as needed)
- Various Hiker Maps (Hikers)
- Alonzo Stagg Honor Roll (Anyone who is Interested)

Note that this Guide is not comprehensive – in fact, an effort has been made to reduce duplication of material in this Guide that is already posted online or provided in hard copy to each Unit’s Hike Coordinator. **All hikers and staffers (especially hikers going for 25 or more miles) are expected to access and read the pertinent posts on the website.**

Who May Participate? - Only registered BSA Scouts, Venturing Scouts, and associated adults from participating Units may participate in the event. For insurance purposes, participating Units must ensure that any recently “bridged” Webelos Scouts (that is, that are now “New Scouts”) are in fact **registered as BSA Scouts**. For the same reason, *it is also highly recommended that all participating adults also be registered in the BSA*; however, this is not required. **Non-Scout youths, Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts may NOT participate, and similarly, Scouts and adults who are not (or no longer) associated with a participating Unit or with the District Staff, may NOT participate.**

Who Must Register? – **Everyone must Register, whether hiking, staffing, or both.** However, only hikers are charged a registration fee. Registration must be done through the CheddarUp link distributed to troops by the Hike Administrator. **All registrants shall be associated with a participating Unit.** District Staff members who ARE associated with a participating Unit should register with that Unit; those who are NOT may instead register with the Provo Unit that has been set up for this event (with an “Acting Provisional Scoutmaster”). All adults, whether BSA-registered or not, must ensure that their Unit has their medical form on file. District Staff who register through the Provo Unit (only) must email a copy of their medical form to Hike Administrator. **Individuals registering without a participating Unit will NOT be accepted by the Hike Administrator – everyone MUST register as a member of a participating Unit or (for District Staff only) with the Provo Unit.**

Registration Fees - The fee varies by intended distance, as follows: 10 Milers are charged \$10, 20 Milers \$20, 25 Milers \$25, and 50 Milers \$35. There is a registration cutoff one week in advance (i.e., midnight on the Sunday prior). **There is a No Refund policy in effect following the registration cutoff, but Units may freely substitute other Unit members for dropouts right up to the morning of the Hike.** Note, however, that substitutes must be properly registered and have a medical form on file with their Unit, or they may not participate. As noted above, there is no charge for Staffers (defined as anyone who is not hiking; however, except for Tail-End Charlies and Bluemont Loop Escorts, staffers who hike but also staff before or after their hike must register and pay for their respective hikes). **[Tail-End Charlies, Gravelly Point to Bluemont Escorts, and Bluemont Loop Escorts are considered to be Staff, and are not charged.]**

Routes – There are three different routes, specific for the 10-, 20-, and 25-50 Milers (see the Directions for details). All three use a combination of local roads, the C&O Canal Towpath, and various bike trails. All Hikes begin from the St. Agnes Gym (1914 N. Randolph St., Arlington, 22207). The routes may be

marked at certain points with signs, but more likely there will be adult staffers directing the hikers at a few critical junctions. **All hikers must download a copy of the Directions for their hike** (based on past years, Units should print off forms for their hikers, since many of their hikers will not do so). The 10- and 20-Mile routes start and end at the gym. The 25 Mile route ends at Fletchers Boat House. And the (39.5 to 50) Milers end at the Bluemont Pavilion. Hikers ending at Fletchers will be shuttled back to St. Agnes, and should sign out there, while hikers making it to Bluemont will be returned to St. Agnes if needed (most hikers finishing at Bluemont are picked up there by their families).

Assembly Times - Are as follows: **25 to 50 milers at 5:00 am; 20 milers at 6:30 am; and 10 milers at 8:00 am.** Showing up early will not change your starting time, so no one should show up early (or complain about being held til the scheduled starting time). **Hikers that fail to make their assembly time may not participate in their scheduled hike**, but (except for 10 milers) can hike a lower distance hike assembling at a later time, if they wish. Note that missing your assembly time, **regardless of cause**, is NOT grounds for either a partial or full refund.

Support Stops – Minor refreshments will be available at St. Agnes at the beginning of all hikes, and possibly at the conclusion of the 10- and 20-mile routes (which both also end St. Agnes), if anything is left. Full Support Stops will be located at Lock 10/C&O Canal, Great Falls Tavern/C&O Canal, Fletchers Boathouse/C&O Canal, Gravelly Point/National Airport, and Bluemont Park. A minor “Waypoint Support Stop” will be located in Shirlington, roughly halfway between Gravelly Point and Bluemont.

Support Stop Setup and Operations – IMPORTANT! – All Support Stops are standalone operations run entirely by their assigned Units. See the Support Stop handout for extensive information on this critical issue.

Arrival Hold Times at Support Stops - **No one is allowed to run the course** – this is a **HIKING** event, **NOT** a running event! Runners reach the various Support Stops well before they are open for business, sometimes before any staffers have even arrived. **Any “hiker” who reaches the Support Stops faster than a 4 mph pace will be assumed to have been running, and will be held in place (i.e., not allowed to sign in) until his pace has been reduced to 4 mph.**

Cut-Off Times at Support Stops - There will be cut-off times at each Support Stop, past which any remaining hikers will not be allowed to continue. The cut-off times are based on LEAVING the Support Stop before the 2.5 mph deadline. **No exceptions, period, including for adults.** There will also be a SUGGESTED cutoff time for leaving Gravelly Point based on a 3 mph deadline - Past events have repeatedly shown that hikers who have not maintained a 3 mph pace up to this point have virtually no chance of completing 50 miles within 20 hours, and also greatly extend the operational hours for the Shirlington Waypoint and Bluemont Park Staffs.

Other Support Personnel – Additional support will be provided by “Waypoint” staffers, Tail End Charlie (TEC) Hikers, Cyclists, Gravelly Point to Bluemont Hiker Escorts, and Bluemont Loop Hiker Escorts. These positions need to be filled by Units who are not assigned to run a Support Stop, or by excess staff from Units that are already handling a Support Stop. See the Waypoint handout for brief sketches of all staff positions. Note that parents and/or spouses of “50 Milers” are invited to come to Bluemont Park late to encourage and, if necessary, escort hikers around the Bluemont Loops.

Hiker Distances - All Hikers should have realistic expectations - 20 miles is a very challenging hike for anyone who hasn't been training. All Hikers are expected to hike their intended distance, or at least to

the next Support Stop on their route. There will be no "pickup" support between Support Stops, except in emergency situations. Any hikers who stop between Support locations and either cannot or refuses to continue will need to be picked up by their parents or by their Unit, and are responsible for FIRST notifying the Hike Administrator and their Unit Leaders that they are going to Quit the Hike. Under no circumstances should a hiker walk home or get picked up by a parent before the Hike Administrator and Unit Leader have been notified and approve. For obvious reasons, this is especially critical for young Scouts.

Buddy System in Effect Throughout the Hike - All Hikers must hike as buddy pairs or triplets. "Buddy groups" of 4 or more are not allowed (that is, 4 Scouts hiking together is actually 2 buddy pairs co-hiking; this is because "buddy groups" of 4 or more tend to lose solo hikers, which is unacceptable). Buddy pairs and triplets MUST stay together at all times, even for bathroom stops. "Together" means side-by-side, not "in sight." All hikers must wear a loop of colored surveyor tape (provided at Registration, different colors for different hikes) around their neck and shoulder to enable easy identification at Support Stops and by Hike Safety personnel (Tail End Charlies, Cyclists, Waypoint Guides, etc.)

Support Bags – 20 and greater milers may have a support daypack or small duffle bag forwarded to Support Stops so that they'll be there when the hiker arrives. This relieves the hiker from the burden of carrying a pack. See the "Equipment" post on the website for additional information concerning this option. Note that **10 Milers should not need to carry any gear, but can pack and carry a light daypack if they so wish.** Most 20 Milers also just carry a light daypack. Heavy daypacks and backpacks full of "stuff" are completely unnecessary and are potentially harmful.

Finishing Times – The **10 Milers** should finish between 11:30 am and 1:00 pm at St. Agnes. The **20 Milers** should finish between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm at St. Agnes. **25 Milers** will arrive at Fletchers between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm, and will be shuttled to St. Agnes when a shuttle vehicle is available. **50 Milers** will arrive at Fletchers between noon and 2:00, at Gravelly Point (32 miles) between 1:30 and 4:00, at Shirlington between 2:30 and 5:30, and at Bluemont (1st time, 39.4 miles) between 3:30 and 7:00. 50 Milers typically finish between 8:00 pm and 12:00 am. The cutoff to earn an Alonzo Stagg medal is 20 hours after starting, which almost always corresponds to 1:30 am. In bad weather conditions, the first 50-Miler finish times will be 30 to 60 minutes later, and the last finish times 60 to 90 minutes later.

Hiker Tracking – Units will check in their own hikers the morning of the Hike, are responsible for picking up any of their hikers that quit between Support Stops, and for verifying that all their hikers are accounted for when the last one(s) have either quit or completed their hikes. **It is the Unit Leader's or Unit Registrar's responsibility to contact the Acting Hike Administrator or his designee to confirm that all of their Unit's Hikers have finished and are accounted for; this is especially critical for Scouts, especially young Scouts.**

Cell Phones and Cell Phone Lists – All hikers and support personnel are strongly encouraged to carry a charged cell phone, but hikers are specifically warned to avoid "distracted hiking" on trails that are busy and hazardous with runners and fast-moving cyclists – this is a particular problem when the weather is pleasant on Hike Saturday, because there will be hundreds of other people on the trails. **Staring down at a phone and/or listening to loud music while hiking on the towpath or any local bike trail is a good way to be seriously injured or killed.** Although cell phone numbers will be inputted into the electronic database, and will be written on the permission slips, **Units are still responsible for maintaining a Unit**

cell phone list, and for immediate access to same, for all their hikers and staffers. Hikers reaching Gravelly Point and Shirlington will be counseled on the upcoming route if they have not walked it on a previous Alonzo Stagg Hike or on a Unit practice hike (**buddy groups of younger Scouts who don't know the route will be escorted to Bluemont**).

Medical Records - Units are responsible for designating a Medical Liaison who is responsible for maintaining their medical records. **The Medical Liaison must have physical possession of the records for all their Unit's hikers and support personnel, and must be immediately available by phone for as long as any of them are still on the trail or staffing.** This person obviously cannot be a hiker or hiking staffer, and may be required to remain on duty as early as 5 am and as late as 2 am for Units with 50 Milers.

Organizational Meetings – There may be several check-in meetings leading up to the hike. We will attempt to use an online meeting program (MS Teams or similar) to host the meetings. All participating units **must** have in attendance at least one adult who is deeply involved in that Unit's hike planning (two people are requested) to the meetings. In addition, all participating Units who are running a Support Stop or a Waypoint **must** send at least one adult to an equipment pickup the night before the Hike (or another night if so designated). These representatives will be picking up signs and other equipment, and possibly helping to set up the Hall. Other Staffers may come to the latter meeting if they wish. Reminder emails will be sent for these meetings.

Trail Signage – Some pre-hike signage “may” be done the day before the Hike. [The need for such signage has been greatly reduced over the past 4 years by the use of “Waypoints Guides” at critical junctions.] If employed, the signage will include small surveyor flags with a "50/20" marked on them, plus chalk-marks (arrows and 50/20's) marked on sidewalks, and possibly some larger directional signs. **The 50 Miler Tail-End Charlies and Cyclists are responsible for collecting these surveyor flags after all hikers have passed (flags should be delivered to the next Support Stop for eventual return to the Hike Administrator, or returned directly to the Hike Administrator's residence).** Other signs will be installed on site or near site at the various Support Stops on Saturday. These signs will be collected by the Support Stop staff after the last pair of Tail-End Charlies has passed their Stop (and later returned to the Overall Hike Coordinator).

Hike Saturday - The gym usually opens at 4:30 am on Hike Saturday. The hikers will be checked in and given bib numbers once ALL hikers in their unit are accounted for (that means ON SITE or confirmed NO SHOW). Once a unit leader has confirmed which scouts in that group are present, and which will not be posting, the check in team will hand the unit leader all of that unit's bib numbers for distribution to the unit.

Each hiker is to attach a colored streamer (color dependent upon distance) and a bib number to themselves during check-in. The bibs are handed out during the check-in process described above. The streamers will be available on a table in the gym. The streamer and bib number should be visible at all times during the hike. The streamer helps volunteers and bike support staff to easily identify hikers. The bib numbers are critical to the tracking of the hikers at each support station.

The gym will close when the Tail-End Charlies for the 10 and 20 Milers have returned and departed for home; at that point, the Morning/Afternoon Hike Administrator will hand off the Hike to the Evening/Nighttime Hike Administrator (at the Bluemont Pavilion); this usually occurs between 3:30 and 4:30 pm.

Support Stop and Waypoint Shutdowns - It is the Station Chief's or Waypoint Chief's Responsibility to contact the Hike Administrator to confirm that their Station has closed. Between 3:00 and 5:00 it would be prudent to call both the morning and the evening Hike Administrators to ensure that their closure notice has been recorded.

More on Awards – We have a stock of Alonzo Stagg medals for the 50 Milers, and they can be picked up at each Unit's convenience the week after the Hike. Certificates (for 25 or higher mile hikers) will be prepared within a week of the Hike's conclusion, for Scouts only (if an adult wants one, please so request). Successful 50 Mile Hikers will have their names posted on the Alonzo Stagg Hike Honor Roll, on Troop 111's website (each adult's position (ASM, MC, etc.) and each Scout's rank, are needed for the postings). A writeup will be published in a future issue of Chainemail.

Hike On!

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