

BRSR RESOURCE GUIDE A-3

ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFING GUIDELINES

The Blue Ridge Scout Reservation (BRSR) Conservation Plan calls for the unit and group leaders to provide an environmental briefing to scouts or other group members whenever visiting or residing on the Reservation. An environmental briefing should be held by an adult or junior leader at the start of each day to identify safety and environmental concerns relative to the day’s activities. Additionally, a briefing should also be held whenever there is an activity or program area shift to reiterate safety and environmental concerns relative to the specific activity and activity program area.

As a minimum, environmental briefings should include a discussion of:

1. General safety hazards of the BRSR
2. Specific Safety Hazards in the program area
3. Any environmental concerns relative to special species or habitats
4. Actions to be taken should one encounter safety hazards or environmental concerns

When giving the environmental briefing, leaders should make sure the entire group is present and attentive.

General Hazards on the BRSR	Where to learn more
General Safety Information —Make sure someone is trained in first aid and that you know how to get help in an emergency.	BRSR Emergency Procedures, BSA Fieldbook, Boy Scout Handbook, Nature Fieldguides, etc
Wildlife —The Reservation has a whole host of animals ranging from bears to ticks—Be prepared!	Wildlife Safety Plan for Campers and Leaders and various Bear information are located on the Reservation Website
Wildfire —Be careful with fire!	Fire restrictions are often in effect based on state restrictions or council restrictions. Please consult your tour permit, Ranger, or Campmaster before building a fire. Fire Danger signs are located in both camps at the entrance and near the dining hall.
Poisonous Plants — Please do not ingest any plant without confirming its identification. Make sure you can recognize and treat for Poison Ivy	Reservation Web Site
Physical Hazards —Steep slopes, loose rock, tripping hazards, etc	Rangers or Campmasters
Weather Hazards —Lightening, High Winds, High/Low Temperatures	Always check the weather before visiting the property, but still plan on all types of unpredictable mountain weather.

Example of an Environmental Briefing

Today, we will be hiking from Puncheon Junction to Huff farm. We will follow the Big Macks trail. As usual, we must be safety minded as we hike along the trail.

Several groups using this trail have encountered black bear during the past couple of weeks so we need to be alert for bears. There have also been several sightings of timber rattlesnakes on the trail. Keep in mind, all wildlife can cause an injury, so respect them as wild creatures and don't harass or attempt to catch them. Rain over the past couple of days has made the trail quite slippery in several areas. There are also several areas with loose or slippery rock on the trail. Also, be careful of poison ivy that grows in numerous locations along the trail.

If a bear is observed, yell "bear" to alert the group and then follow Mr. Smith's instructions. Yell "rattlesnake" if one is encountered, move out of harms way, and allow the snake to move away from the trail. Be very careful when hiking through areas where the trail is slippery or where loose rocks could cause you to slip or stumble.

If you notice anything else as you are hiking along or during rest stops that may present a hazard to the group, notify Mr. Smith immediately and take appropriate steps to avoid it.

Hike safely and enjoy the trek.