

Appalachian Mountain Club Carpooling Tips

Carpooling takes more time to organize than taking your own car, but it sure does reduce how much carbon and other pollutants are left behind. Here are a few tips for smoothing out the organization of a carpool. The most important thing for you is to ensure that you know what will make it comfortable for you.

Choose a rendezvous point

Park and Rides and other commuter parking areas are great places to meet up. These convenient locations are online, easily mapped and have plenty of parking spaces. Some even have security. If everyone lives close together it might work to meet at one house or just collect everyone.

Organize the Driver(s)

It usually works to have one driver/owner with passengers chipping in for gas. For long trips, you may need to share that task which opens up the possibility of choosing cars based on fuel efficiency, comfort, etc. If you are heading out for several days, take a moment to make sure the carpooling car has enough room for gear!

Timing is everything

Choose a departure time and make it very clear. Outdoor trips often rely on good timing to make the goal or to beat the sunset. Your travel time should build in time for bathroom and meal breaks. If you have a drop dead I-must-leave-by-this-moment departure time, make it clear that if you don't hear from your passengers, they will have to find their own way.

Chipping in is not awkward

Easiest thing to do is to work out the expected cost of gas, tolls, parking, etc. for the trip and give people a flat rate. \$5 or \$10 is a lot easier for people to manage than \$7.81. Make it clear if you accept cash only, if you expect payment at pick up, or anything else that will help you not get anxious.

Take a Know-Before-You-Go Moment

Before you get started, make sure everyone knows about your plans and expectations. They can relax when they know about things like scheduled bathroom breaks, that there is no smoking in your car, and that you know where to go, have the directions, or will need some help with navigation.

Transportation Alternatives

The White Mountain National Forest is one of the most popular National Forests in the country: the region attracts nearly 7 million visitors annually and is within a day's drive for 70 million people. Growth in visitation has led to increased automobile traffic within the region that has impacted the visitor experience, available parking, the Forest's natural resources, and air quality.



When planning a visit to the WMNF, you can lighten the impact of your trip and create a more pleasurable experience for yourself and others by leaving your car at home and taking advantage of public transportation, local services or ride sharing opportunities.

How can I plan a car-free trip to the White Mountains?

- **Public Transportation** by Concord Coach Lines is available from Boston via Concord, NH.
- **AMC Hiker Shuttle** provides seasonal shuttle service between facilities and popular trail heads. See: <http://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping/lodging-shuttle.cfm>
- **Carpooling tips** from AMC trip planning experts. See above!
- **Bicycling** is an alternative for nearby recreation opportunities.

Photo: Jerry Monkman