

## Lowland Leader Award Training

### Overview

During the review of the Adventure Skills Programme the Hillwalking Team took a comprehensive look at the hillwalking skills award and the training needs of both the Scouters and the Youth members. Continuing this as part of the Adventure Skills Award Facilitator review with the training team we extended this review to external accredited awards and felt the Mountain Skills Scheme (MS) best dovetailed into the scout hillwalking award scheme.

We also consulted as widely as we could and one of the messages that we received was that scouters, especially in the beaver and cub wanted training that allowed them to benchmark their skills level and to enhance it., but not to the level of Mountain Leader (ML) as both the need for that higher skill level and time commitment were a constraint.

What we felt was an option that offered this training to Scouters was one of the newer awards from Mountain Training called the Low Land Leader Award, which is an ideal outdoor leadership qualification for beaver, cub, scout & venture leaders who are not leading on steeper mountain terrain.

### Course Overview

The Lowland Leader Award is an Internationally recognised and accredited formal qualification, which has been designed for people who wish to lead groups on day walks in lowland countryside and woodland in summer conditions. The majority of the UK & Ireland is made up of this type of terrain, so you'll never be short of places to go walking.

The leadership opportunities for Lowland Leaders are varied and far reaching, from the Wicklow Way to the Kerry/Dingle/Beara ways and more tracks and trails on the island of Ireland; walking in lowland areas can be no less spectacular than walking high up in the mountains. With campaigns and initiatives such as Get Ireland Walking proving really popular, there's no better time to be a walking leader. The Lowland Leader Award is for leading groups on lowland tracks that are clearly marked on both the land and the map.

The award can also be enhanced by an expedition module that covers overnight camping and expedition.

### Syllabus

Lowland Leaders should be competent in the following key areas, all of which will be covered during your two-day training course.

- Leadership Skills and Group Management
- Walking Skills
- Planning a Walk



- Basic Mapwork and Route-Finding Skills
- Equipment
- Hazards and Emergency Procedures
- Environmental Awareness, Conservation, Access and Land Ownership

Detailed information on each of the above topics can be found in the Lowland Leader Handbook and the onus is on you to be competent in all of them by the time you come to assessment.

## What's Involved

If we break the scheme into a number of stages

**The Prerequisites for entry to the scheme;** Before attending training you must have completed and logged at least 10 varied walks in Lowland terrain where the use of a map is required (ideally these will be recorded in your digital logbook) which can have taken place at any point (pre- or post-registration)

**OR** have attended a navigational skills training course recognised by Mountaineering Ireland such as Mountain Skills.

**The training weekend;** This is the element that we are pushing regardless of whether or not you go in to complete the assessment

**Post Training Consolidation;** The period between training and assessment varies in length for each person and is an opportunity to develop your skills, paying particular attention to any weaknesses identified during the training course. We recommend at least three months between training and assessment and if it takes you a few years to feel ready, that's fine too. You can use the excuse 'I'm preparing for assessment' to have as many walking adventures as you like, so get out there and explore this beautiful country of ours!

**Assessment;** Before you book onto a Lowland Leader assessment, make sure you have done the following:

- You must have attended a Lowland Leader training course (or have been granted exemption)
- You must be familiar with the syllabus
- You must have logged a minimum of 20 walks in lowland countryside in different types of terrain (woodland, coastal, farmland etc)
- You must hold a current outdoor first aid certificate, minimum 16 hours (REC2)
- The Lowland Leader assessment is 2 days long (minimum 16 hours contact time)

**Optional Expedition Module;** Post Assessment you may also complete an additional model on overnight expeditions and camping in the terrain that you are leading in



This is a link to Mountaineering Ireland's page on the award, which includes the official handbook and registration details:

<http://www.mountaineering.ie/TrainingAndSafety/LeadershipTrainingAndAssessmentSchemes/TrailWalkLeaderAward/default.aspx>

### **The Hillwalking Teams Plan**

We have organised and secured trainers for 4 dates in the Autumn. Each course can have a maximum of 8 participants. You only need to attend one of the training weekends

- September 28<sup>th</sup> / 29<sup>th</sup> Lough Dan Co. Wicklow
- October 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> Donegal
- November 16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> TBC Possible Commeragh from Melleary
- November 30<sup>th</sup> / 1<sup>st</sup> Dec Lough Dan Co. Wicklow

### **Costs**

As an international recognised and moderated award delivered by professional instructors, there are costs associated. However, the Hillwalking team has secured funding to subsidise 50% plus of the total cost

Currently the registration fee for the Lowland Leader Award, with Mountaineering Ireland, is: €52.00 along with a reduced membership rate of €30 (some scouters are already members), this is separate from the fees that will be paid to the instructors.

In order to reduce the administration effort and to ensure GDPR compliance the plan is that the scouters will register and pay the fee to Mountaineering Ireland along with camp fees, and the Hillwalking team will pay the fees to the instructors.

### **Next Steps**

A number of scouters have already contacted us in relation to booking spots on weekends, we have pencilled them into these spots, as soon as the registration with Mountaineering Ireland is confirmed we will firm up that spot

In order to ensure smooth management of this initiative, Dave Batt who is both a member of the Hillwalking Skills team and a member of the Mountain Training Board (Ireland) will co-ordinate this programme, you can reach Dave by email at [info@osierhill.ie](mailto:info@osierhill.ie)

As always, any other question on the hillwalking award to [hillwalking@scouts.ie](mailto:hillwalking@scouts.ie)

