

Seneca Hills Bible Camp & Retreat Center

Group Leader's Retreat Planning Guide



Phone (814) 432-3026
Fax (814) 437-5442

276 Damascus Rd
Polk, PA 16342

info@senecahills.org
www.senecahills.org

Welcome Retreat Leaders!

The Staff and I are looking forward to working with you in your upcoming retreat. We want to help your event be smooth and successful. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some information to make your job as easy as possible. We have tried to outline areas of general concern and give guidance in areas where people have asked for help in the past. If you have suggestions for additions, deletions, or any type of improvements, we would love to hear from you. We are always striving to improve.

Sincerely,

Sarah

Sarah Palmer
Office Manager

Full-Time Staff

Executive Director	Rev. Lindon Fowler
Program Director	Tim Canning
Adventure Director	Josh Hayes
Facilities Director	Stan Smith
Food Service Director	Dave Pankratz
Office Manager	Sarah Palmer
Financial Assistant	Amy Wentzel
Housekeeper	Katie Coyer

Feel free to use or duplicate any material found within. We are provided an electronic copy so that you will make this information readily available to your staff members.

Seneca Hills Mission & Vision

Our Mission

The mission of Seneca Hills Bible Camp is to transform lives by leading people, especially youth, to a vital personal relationship with, and a life of dedicated service to, Jesus Christ through inspiring year round camps, conferences, retreats and events.

Our Vision

We will fulfill our mission through partnership with the Church in our region and involvement in the local community in order to understand and address current spiritual needs and advance God's Kingdom.

Reservations

Tentative reservations can be made by phoning the office and scheduling your group with our Office Manager. Tentative reservations are valid for a three-week period beginning with the date of inquiry. Reservations are guaranteed only when the signed contract and deposit is received. The paid deposit will be applied to your total bill and is non-refundable. At the end of your three-week period, if we have not received the signed contract and deposit, your reservation cannot be guaranteed.

When returning your contract with deposit, please include a certificate of insurance, obtainable from your insurance carrier at no cost.

Final participant numbers must be received the Monday prior to your retreat date.

The most effective way that groups have found to keep from last minute cancellations among their members is to collect a substantial deposit prior to the conference or retreat.

Standing dates (keeping the same dates and facilities from year to year) are available by putting down the next year's deposit. Standing dates are not automatic and must be arranged annually with the Office Manager.

If a retreat must be cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather, as determined by the Executive Director, deposits will either be refunded or rolled over to a new date.

What To Bring

- Bedding—pillows, extra-long twin/flat sheets, blankets or sleeping bags
- Suitable clothes and shoes
- Personal Toiletries
- Flashlight
- Towels & washcloths

Linens are not available for rental at this time.

What Not To Bring

Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, explosives, and poisonous substances are not permitted in the camp at any time. Smoking is not permitted on campus. Please discourage your participants from bringing radios, iPods, etc. for personal use. Pets are also prohibited on camp property. Special permission from the Seneca Hills office staff must be given prior to arrival to bring hand and/or power tools on site. Firearms and ammunition are not permitted.

Check-In Process

The group leader should arrive before the rest of the group and check-in with the Retreat Host in the office of the Miller Administration Building. The Retreat Host will collect final payment, acquaint you with our facilities, and answer any questions.

Please bring the following items with you to check-in:

- Your contact information for the weekend
- Final attendance count
- Outstanding payment
- Signed Participant Information and Release of Liability form (for each group member who will be participating in adventure activities)

At check-in you will receive the following:

- Copy of the outstanding invoice
- List of check-out procedures
- Evaluation form

Upon arrival, the group leader along with the Retreat Host should inspect the facilities and take note of any prior damage or items that need attention so that your group is not held responsible.

Payment of Your Bill

Your bill will be ready for you based on the numbers you provided the week of your retreat. Full payment is required upon arrival of your retreat group to the camp. **We request that your group pay with one check made payable to Seneca Hills.** Please be advised that there will be a service charge of \$25.00 on all checks returned for "insufficient funds." We also take Visa, and Master Card for payment or purchase. If your group size drops below the required reservation minimum, you will be charged for the minimum.

Vehicles & Parking

Please designate one vehicle for medical emergencies. It should be parked in an accessible place, and someone in your group should be assigned the driving responsibility. An alternative driver should also be designated. **Drivers should be at least 21 years of age.**

All other vehicles should be parked either in the lot behind Woodland Heights, along the old railroad right-of-way adjacent to the Maintenance buildings or in the parking lots near the Miller Retreat Center. Please do not park in front of the Dining Hall.

While You Are Here

While at Seneca Hills, guests are expected to demonstrate respect for the

- **Human environment**, by being considerate of the needs, feelings and rights of other persons on the grounds. We encourage and request a reasonable curfew for all groups. 11:30 pm is our suggested time.
- **Natural environment**, by protecting the plant and animal life in the area, and by keeping the grounds free of litter.
- **Constructed environment**, by refraining from any behavior which might damage or deface the buildings, facilities or equipment at Seneca Hills. In order to conserve energy, we desire and request each of the group leaders help to keep all windows and doors closed during the heating season. Please turn off lights when leaving a room, especially in meetings rooms at the end of the day.

Supervisory Issues

You are responsible for the actions of your group. Please be sure that there are no unsupervised guests in buildings, and that you are aware of where each guest is at all times. Should problems arise, the Retreat Host will contact you.

Room Assignments/Floor Plans

For youth retreats, an adult over the age of 18, is to be assigned to each cabin and must sleep in that cabin during your event. Please refer to the following.

ACA Camper Supervision Ratios

Ages 4—5	1 adult per 5 overnight campers
Ages 6—8	1 adult per 6 overnight campers
Ages 9—14	1 adult per 8 overnight campers
Ages 15—18	1 adult per 10 overnight campers

Floor plan/room assignment sheets are available upon request from the Seneca Hills office. Please note the minimum and maximum capacity of your reserved facilities as you make room and cabin assignment. In general, the Miller Administration Building can sleep 37, and each cabin holds 12. Seneca Hills promotes maximum usage of our facilities and good stewardship of the resources with which we have been blessed. Better facility usage will also help us to keep our rates as reasonable as possible.

Food Service

The majority of our guests use the Dining Hall for their meals. A limited number of

groups with special needs make other arrangements and do some or all of their own cooking. If your group has these needs, please contact the Seneca Hills office for available facilities and current applicable fees. Please follow the posted procedures for food storage, food service and sanitation.

Family style meals are served in the Dining Hall. Groups will be charged for all meal reservations according to the final count as of the Monday prior to the retreat arrival. Please discourage your group members from taking food to their rooms as it may attract mice, ants and other pests.

Because multiple groups may be served together in the Dining Hall, the meal schedule is listed below. If it is critical to your program to have meals at other times, please contact the office. Please encourage your group to be on time to meals so as to be courteous to other groups and the kitchen staff.

Dining Hall Meal Times

Breakfast	8:15 am
Brunch	10:30 am
Lunch	12:00 pm
Dinner	5:30 pm

Dining Room Procedures

Rules of the Dining Hall and clean-up procedures are displayed at each table. Your Retreat Host should explain these policies at your first meal. Please encourage your group to follow these procedures as a courtesy to other groups and the food service staff.

- Return all serving dishes and pitchers to the kitchen window. Take only what you can carry, and do not stack them.
- Return all condiments, except the jelly container and salt and pepper shakers, to the kitchen window.
- Collect silverware and serving spoons and place them in the provided containers.
- Scrape and stack all plates and bowls.
- Take all plates, bowls, and cups to the kitchen window, including any unused dishes.
- Please do not wipe crumbs on the floor.
- Food fights, eating contests or any wasteful or childish behavior with food will not be tolerated.

There should be at least one counselor or adult sitting at each table during every meal. This will help greatly with any potential discipline problems. If you anticipate mealtime guests, please contact the office to alert us prior to your arrival.

Snacks

Your group is welcome to bring your own snacks. A refrigerator is available depending on your reserved facility. A pop and candy machine is available in the dining hall.

Snacks can be purchased through our food service department for a small per person fee. Please be sure to add this to your contract. Available snack options include popcorn, cookies, chips and cheese sauce, crackers, and fresh fruit. Evening snacks should be picked up at the kitchen after the dinner meal. Please return all snack utensils to the Dining Hall the following morning.

Special Diet Needs

Please notify the office of any dietary needs at least two weeks in advance so that the food service staff can take them into consideration in meal planning. If anything else arises, please notify the Retreat Host upon your arrival. Special requests not made until meal time are difficult to fulfill on the spot.

Recreation Center

The Recreation Center is open for year-round use by all our overnight Retreat and Conference guests free of charge. A per hour fee applies for day use. Use of the Recreation Center for multiple groups must be arranged by each individual retreat group. Otherwise, the facility cannot be claimed for solo use at any one time. Please note food and drinks are not permitted in the Recreation Center. Please see Appendix 1 for additional indoor and outdoor recreation options.

Sports Equipment

Sports equipment is available for use in the Recreation Center at no additional charge. The typical inventory consists of basketballs, footballs, soccer balls, volleyballs, softballs and bats. If you are counting on specific equipment, please check in advance. Use and storage of your own equipment is the responsibility of the guest group.

Climbing Room

Our indoor climbing facility, including top rope and bouldering walls, can be booked by all retreat groups for a per hour fee. Please schedule your group for climbing at least two weeks prior to your scheduled retreat so that we can provide adequate program staff. Only Seneca Hills trained and certified staff may facilitate climbing groups. If you have any further questions regarding our Climbing facilities, please contact our Program Director. The maximum group size is 20 per hour.

Challenge/Ropes Course

Our Ropes Course is available to retreat groups for half or full-day facilitated adventure experiences. The Ropes Course is a team building/character building event in experiential learning, and not an obstacle course or competitive activity. The course consists of initiatives, low elements, and high elements. Low elements are geared toward group dynamics, while our high elements are more suited for individuals and pairs. More information may be obtained on our website about specific activities. Each group utilizing the Ropes Course should fill out a Goal Assessment Sheet prior to arrival at so we may tailor your experience to your specified goals and needs. Indoor portable initiatives can be scheduled to serve as an outdoor experience. Mini-

mum group size is 10 participants. Groups larger than 20 participants will be broken down into groups of 10-16. The Ropes Course may not be used without Seneca Hills trained and certified facilitators.

Swimming Pool

The camp pool is open between Memorial Day and Labor Day. If your retreat falls between these dates, contact the Seneca Hills office to schedule use of the pool. A separate pool fee applies to cover lifeguard and operational costs. Only Seneca Hills hired lifeguards are permitted.

Special Events

Please let the Seneca Hills office staff know your schedule in advance (especially if you are planning campfires, concerts, speakers, or chapel services) so that conflicts with other groups can be avoided. Also, if you would like to use Calvary Chapel, or the Amphitheater, please make arrangements in advance. Separate fees may apply. Again, your Retreat Host is available to you to assist with specific needs.

Campfires

We have multiple campfire locations. However, to avoid confusion when multiple groups are present, please notify the office in advance of your intentions for a campfire and your requested location. Your Retreat Host can supply you with wood, kindling, paper and matches. Please do not attempt to try and light any campfire with gasoline and other flammable liquids. Please monitor campfires at all times while lit, and remember food is not allowed in the Recreation Center.

Audio Visual Equipment

We usually have on site TV's, VHS tape players, DVD players, white boards, flip charts, podiums, screens, etc. However, please make all requests in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts. You will need to provide your own sound system and microphones unless your group is renting Calvary Chapel. A Seneca Hills sound technician must be present to use the Calvary Chapel sound system. Please call the office for further details.

Travel

Groups that leave the campus during their scheduled retreat are requested to leave an itinerary and phone number with the Retreat Host. Likewise, please contact the office should your itinerary change, especially if you will miss a scheduled meal. The Seneca Hills office number is (814) 432-3026. Please use extra caution when transporting the group participants.

Phones

Cell phone coverage, depending on your carrier, is not always a reliable source of communication while at Seneca Hills. The main camp phone number is (814) 432-3026. Incoming calls may be taken at this number in the camp office, or a phone message will be passed on to you at the next meal unless it is an emergency. Make sure

your caller knows the name of your event or your group. Our phone system allows local calls to be made from the black phone just inside the main office door in the Miller Administration Building. Operating procedures are posted by the office phone. You will need a calling card to make long distance calls from any phone.

Medical Treatment & Insurance

Each group should designate a First Aid person who is certified in First Aid and CPR to accompany your group. Retreat groups are responsible for their own first aid supplies. Minimal first aid supplies are kept in the Nurses Station in the Miller Administration Building and are available for emergency use.

In the event a retreat guest needs medical attention, please contact the Retreat Host. **In the event of an emergency, please call 911.** Retreat groups may also call the Community Ambulance Service number listed by each telephone or provide their own emergency transportation. Continuous ringing of the bell at the Dining Hall is the signal for a fire or other emergency. Any violations of this rule will call for serious disciplinary action. **Please inform your participants and staff of this rule.**

All groups must provide a Certificate of Insurance from their church or organization before coming to Seneca Hills. Seneca Hills does not provide camper insurance, therefore guests are covered under their own policies in the event of an accident or illness.

All guests participating in any of the adventure activities (climbing, ropes course, etc.) must complete a **Participant Information and Release of Liability** form. See Appendix 2 and 3 for copies of this form.

In the event of an injury or illness sustained at camp but requiring the person to receive treatment beyond the retreat First Aid person, Seneca Hills requires that an Accident/Incident Report be submitted to the camp office containing:

- The type of incident (illness or injury)
- The location of the incident
- The treatment administered
- Where the treatment was given
- The health care provider

Security

Please review the following security guidelines to ensure a safe camp environment.

- When you arrive, you must come to the Miller Administration Building to gain access to your facilities.
- Only registered campers are permitted on the Seneca Hills property.
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illegal substances and unauthorized firearms are not permitted on the Seneca Hills grounds at any time.
- Unauthorized vehicles, such as: motorcycles, snowmobiles, and ATV's, etc. are not permitted on the Seneca Hills property.
- Please check all cabins to ensure adequate curtains or blinds are in place.
- Emergency procedures are posted in each cabin. Please review these rules upon arrival.

In the evenings our Retreat Host patrols the grounds. If you do confront a problem, please contact the Retreat Host for assistance.

Damages & Repairs

Each retreat leader is responsible to inform their own participants of their responsibilities for the care of all facilities and equipment and to immediately report any broken or damaged equipment or facilities to the Retreat Host. This includes both accidental and intentional (vandalism) damages.

When damage occurs, the following policy will be followed:

If damage is repairable, repair costs will be charged to the responsible parties. If damage cannot be repaired, reimbursement shall be determined by depreciation value as established by the Seneca Hills staff.

If the damage is the result of individual carelessness and/or horse play, the retreat leader and the Facilities Director shall investigate and evaluate all of the aspects and nuances of the action to determine the responsibility and ability of the individual or group to handle the repairs and/or replacement. The decision of the retreat leader and the Facilities Director shall be final.

If the damage is caused by malicious or willful intent, full responsibility for replacement is expected from the individual or group involved, and if reimbursement is not received the matter shall be reported to the Seneca Hills Board Finance Committee for evaluation and further attempts to obtain reimbursement to the camp.

Any equipment not functioning properly should also be reported so the maintenance staff can be notified.

Evaluation Forms

At the conclusion of your stay, you will be emailed an evaluation form which will help us to improve our services for guests. The results of these evaluations are very important to our staff. This is the best way we have to upgrade our service and better perform our "Ministry of Hospitality." Please feel free to share suggestions for improvements. It is only through your feedback and input that we are aware of what is most and least helpful. Your extra effort to keep us informed of these areas will be a great help. Also, please do not wait until the end of your stay to tell us about a problem that you have had during your visit. We can only help if we are aware of the situation.

Lost & Found

Review all lost and found items on the last day of your retreat. The retreat leader and our Retreat Host should check all rooms before the last meal if possible. Lost and found items will be kept at camp for a minimum of 1 month before giving to the Salvation Army or Goodwill. Loss or damage to personal property is NOT covered by our insurance. Valuables and money should not be brought to camp.

Furniture

Please do not move any furniture. This includes beds, couches, ping pong tables, etc. Mattresses are not to be removed from beds and placed on the floor. Please return all chairs to their original place before you leave. Please leave the area in the same or better condition than when you found it.

Check-Out Process

Check-out time is stated on your Retreat Contract and should be adhered to closely so as to not inconvenience other registered groups. The rooms should be kept in a clean and presentable manner throughout your visit. Our housekeeping staff will clean your rooms after you leave, however your cooperation is greatly appreciated in a few areas. Please make sure trash is placed in proper receptacles, that chairs are returned to where you found them and that all sports equipment is returned to the Recreation Building storage room.

It is possible that the Retreat Host may request that your group clear your rooms of all personal belongings before breakfast on your last day to allow the housekeeping staff adequate time to prepare for the next group's arrival. Luggage can be placed in the Recreation Building if necessary.

To complete check-out, the Retreat Host will do the following:

- Conduct a walk-through of used facilities with the group leader
- Report any damaged or broken items

APPENDIX 1

Optional Activities

Sports equipment is provided at no charge unless noted. A list of available balls, etc. is listed in the Recreation Center section. Please make sure our staff are aware of your recreation needs so that we may accommodate you.

Activity	Notes
Volleyball (Upon request)	Indoor Court
Soccer	Soccer Field with Regulation-size goals
Walleyball	Court, ball, and net available
Softball/Baseball	Bats and balls available; bring your own gloves
Football	Flags available
Tubing/Sled Riding	\$20 per group per day for rental; Free with own equipment
Hiking	7 trails, Maps available
Mountain/Trail Biking	Bring your own bikes and helmets
Basketball	Indoor half and full court
Swimming	Available Memorial Day to Labor Day Fee for lifeguard & usage
Indoor Campfire	Recreation Center, MRC, Pine Lodge
Outdoor Campfire	Outside Recreation Center, Harmony Pavilion, or Amphitheater

APPENDIX 2

Budget Worksheet

To assist you as you plan your retreat:

COSTS:

Program:

Speaker.....\$ _____

Musician.....\$ _____

Other.....\$ _____

Travel:

Speaker.....\$ _____

Musician.....\$ _____

Other.....\$ _____

Promotion:

Brochure.....\$ _____

Other.....\$ _____

Miscellaneous:

.....\$ _____

.....\$ _____

TOTAL\$ _____

Divide by Min. # of People expected\$ _____

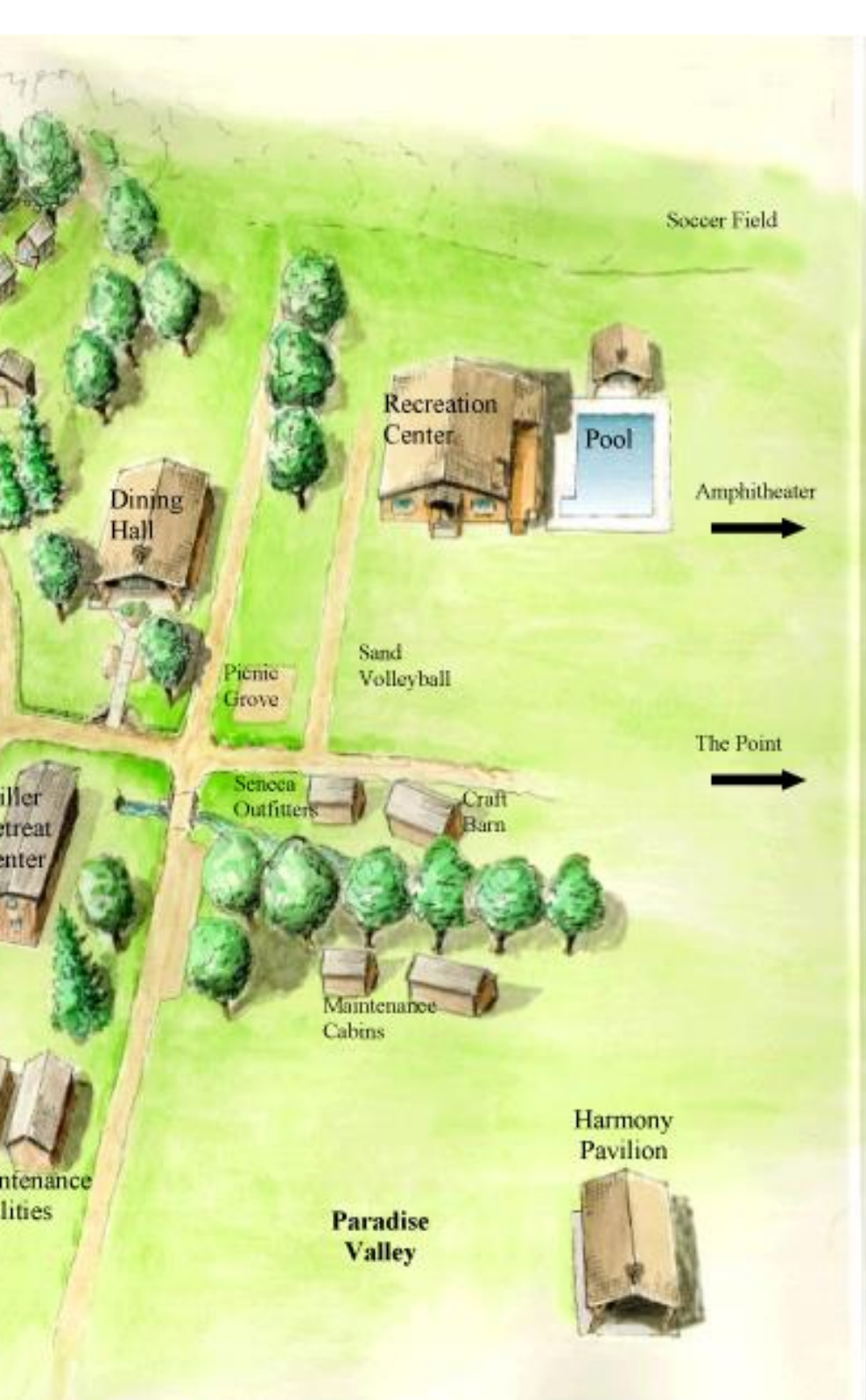
Add per person charge of Conference Center\$ _____

Your total Charge per Person\$ _____

Find out from the retreat facility what is or is not covered in their per person charge. If you have to pay extra for any equipment or services you will want to figure this into your program charge.

If you are concerned about keeping the cost so low so that everyone in your group can afford to attend, you might want to consider adding a couple of dollars to the total price for everyone who can afford it. Then use the extra money as a sponsorship fund to help those who really do need some financial assistance.





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