

Part of the fun of vacations, we keep hearing, is the planning that goes into them. Still, after an all-too-brief survey of people at play in different holiday areas not far from our town, we've noticed that vacation "planning" in many instances doesn't seem to include learning much about the recreational activities to be undertaken. At the beach, for example, there's the overzealous Sun Worshipper fried to a crisp on the first day, the Would-be Channel Swimmer constantly striking out too far from shore, or the Compleat Angler strafing relatives and passers-by with miscast fish hooks.

Along the highway the amateur boater may be the epitome of care and caution with his trailer in tow; but once he drops that motor boat into the water and installs the family, it's full speed across the bows of sailboats and canoes and through any swimmers. Some of the most dangerous amateur vacationing, however, takes place in the mountains, where unskilled hikers and campers set off on ambitious trips without proper preparations.

Even the most experienced hikers can encounter difficulties along their way, and relatively few people know much about search and rescue techniques. This year, however, an Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference is being organized to help meet this need. The group is trying to recruit local rescue squad members, cavers, rock climbers or outdoor survival school graduates to participate in an extensive training program. Among the techniques to be studied are basic ropework, litter handling, technical rigging and first aid principles for wilderness travel. Anyone with experience useful to this volunteer effort, which should provide a valuable service for the surrounding area, may write to the ASRC, c/o Potomac Appalachian Trail Club at 1718 N St. NW, 20036.