

MSR Appendix 2 – Tips and Tricks

This appendix contains helpful hints and important information to help your Unit get ready for a week-long merit badge or high adventure trek summer camp experience.

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Tips on Personal Gear

It is usually unnecessary for someone new to backpacking or canoeing to invest a great deal of money in new equipment. We suggest borrowing the required gear from an older Scout or friends with more experience. The Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan High Adventure Base has a small selection of backpacks and other available items for no extra charge (please contact us for more information). Those who are new to High Adventure and backcountry camping would do best to try out borrowed gear to better understand the available features before purchasing their own.

As Scouts, we should remember that being thrifty implies reusing old equipment whenever possible and acting as responsible consumers. If you have decided to purchase new gear, make sure that you do your homework and consult multiple sources for reviews, advice, etc. Do NOT merely follow the word of a salesperson. Remember, their job is to sell you the most expensive thing they can, not necessarily the item that best suits your needs.

For further assistance, consult *The Complete Walker IV* by Fletcher and Rawlins (perhaps the most comprehensive resource for camping equipment available) or contact the High Adventure Staff.

Buying the Right Boots

- Hiking boots should be sturdy and protect from natural elements.
- The fewer the number of seams, the harder it will be for water to penetrate the boot.
- Full-grain leather and Gore-Tex help the boots breathe, keeping your feet dryer while preventing sweat build-up.
- For hiking, the boots should cover the ankle to provide better stabilization and support.
- Size your hiking boots correctly. Go to a reputable dealer with experience in fitting boots.
- Friction is a contributing factor to blisters. A properly sized boot will keep the foot from moving around in the boot. Also, the use of sock liners will reduce friction.
- Wear the socks you plan to hike in when purchasing boots.

Breaking in Boots

It is a good idea to break in your boots before the trip.

- Wear the boots often to allow them to mold to your feet and work the stiffness out.
- Check the literature before applying any dressings or waterproofing; some boots will work better without these.
- One method to break in boots is to wear them on a series of hikes or walks, gradually increasing distance and the weight you carry.
- You can also soak the boots in water, then walk in them until they are dry.

Extra Footwear

- On canoeing and kayaking trips, you may want to bring a pair of shoes or sandals that can get wet for loading and unloading and getting into your boat. Make sure the second pair is equally appropriate for the environment.
- Some backpackers like to have a second pair of shoes or sandals for the campsite to let their feet and boots dry out. A pair of lightweight shoes will also help reduce the impact at your campsite.
- Socks should be wool or a synthetic blend appropriate for hiking. Cotton will not wick moisture away from the foot and will leave the wearer more susceptible to blisters.
- Be sure to bring extra socks to allow one pair to dry out when in camp.

Proper foot care is essential. It only takes a few minutes to remove your boots and check your feet. Do it often.

Sleeping Gear

Sleeping bags for High Adventure trips should be of good quality and rated for summer temperatures in the Northern Wisconsin area.

Types of Sleeping Bags

- Goose Down – Lasts for years. Ounce for ounce, it is lighter and less bulky than any other material. It will not, however, keep you warm if wet. More expensive.
- Synthetic Material – Warmer when wet; heavier and bulkier; less expensive.

We highly recommend ground pads for High Adventure treks. Not only do they make sleeping more comfortable, but they help insulate you from the colder ground.

Types of Sleeping Pads

- Foam Pads: Bulkier, nearly indestructible, can be less comfortable, less expensive.
- Self-inflating: Smaller, more damage-prone (will be useless if there is a hole of any size), can be more comfortable, more expensive.

LEAVE YOUR PILLOW AT HOME!

Extra clothes packed in your sleeping bag's stuff sack can serve as a pillow.

SECURITY OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

The security of personal possessions at camp is the responsibility of the individual. Personal possessions such as stereos, iPods, etc., have no place in camp. It is virtually impossible to securely store valuables in your campsite (watches, jewelry, or money). Please keep these items out of sight or on your person. Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan Scout Reservation cannot be responsible for the loss of personal possessions. If an item has significant monetary or sentimental value, the trek is probably not the place for it.

Leave No Trace

Why can't man travel through wild country in such a manner that he leaves behind him the least possible traces of his passing? The ethic is simple...man is measured by what does not remain.

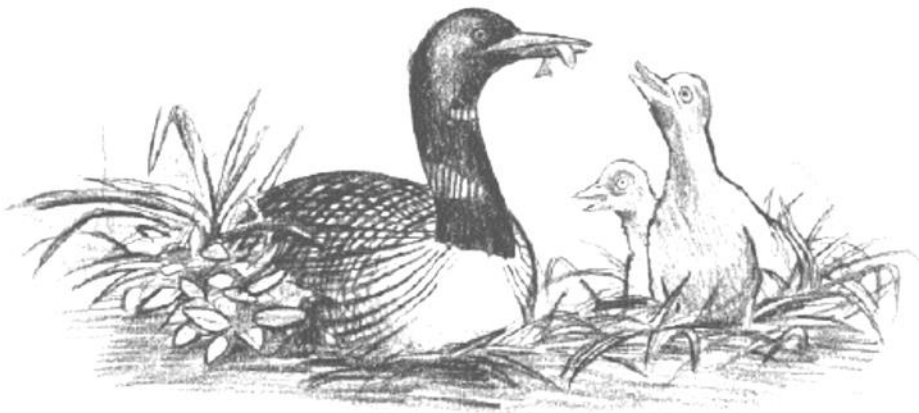
– John Milton

Tread lightly! America's woodlands are diverse and beautiful; they are also fragile. Outdoor recreation is often a catalyst for conservation, but there is a flip side. Polluted water, displaced wildlife, eroded soils, and trampled vegetation are just some of the impacts linked directly to recreational activities. Many of us have taken a pine cone or rock, veered off the trail to dodge mud puddles, gotten too close to wildlife, or tossed an apple core into the woods. While these actions may seem harmless at the time, until we learn to reduce our impact, the quality of our outdoor experiences and the recreational resources we enjoy are at critical risk.

If recreationists were better informed on low-impact techniques, much of the destruction would be prevented. We are drawn to the Northwoods for its beauty, purity, remoteness, ruggedness, and the unique challenges it presents, but it can sometimes be challenging to practice Leave No Trace principles. The Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan High Adventure Base takes the "Leave No Trace" ethic and approach seriously. We are unwilling to sacrifice the preservation of the natural setting for personal objectives.

We believe that most people will do all they can to help protect and maintain the environment, given the proper information. As guides, we spend time teaching the environmentally appropriate Leave No Trace principles and practices. There is nothing more beautiful than working hard to get far into the wilderness, come upon a pristine campsite, witness incredible views, and have the feeling that no one has been there before. And there is nothing more disheartening than working hard to reach a destination and encountering trash, food waste, or toilet paper. Please read and abide by the seven LNT principles on the following pages and contact us if you have any questions about what you can do to preplan and prepare. Thanks for taking the time to read this information.

"Take only pictures, leave only footprints."



Plan Ahead and Prepare

- A successful trip depends on careful preparation so, be prepared!
- Know the regulations and particular concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.

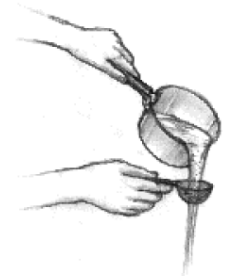
Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, or dry grasses.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- In popular areas:
 - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
 - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
 - Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas:
 - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
 - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.



Dispose of Waste Properly

- If you bring it in, take it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Double-check your campsite before leaving (i.e., police line). You will not only ensure that all trash is collected, but it will also prevent gear from being left behind.
- Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat-hole when finished.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.



Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.



Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Bring firewood (make sure it is purchased locally to avoid introducing destructive species). Walking through the forest around your campsite in search of wood only increases the damage to the area.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cold ashes.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach animals.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, or raising young.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.



** Adapted from LNT.org **

Wildlife Considerations

Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan and the wilderness parks visited by our High Adventure treks are in the Northwoods area. This area is populated with black bears, raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks, mosquitoes, sand flies, black flies, and ticks. This section will address how to camp comfortably with our animal neighbors.

Black Bears

When traveling, please remember that you are traveling through the home of the animals who live there.

- Travel in groups.
- Make noise. Normal chatter is sufficient because most bears will flee when they hear you coming (no need for “bear bells”).
- Never corner a bear (keep this in mind when placing tents).

If sighted:

- Avoid eye contact.
- Make yourself look large.
- Move away slowly, still facing the bear.
- Deter bear by making noise, banging pot, etc.

If approached:

- Remain calm.
- Avoid abrupt movements.
- Back away slowly, still facing the bear. If this agitates the bear, stop.
- Speak to bear in a quiet, monotone voice.
- DO NOT RUN. Even if charged, it is better to stand your ground.

If attacked:

- Keep your pack on; it may protect you.
- Experts feel that it is better to try and fight off a black bear. Fight aggressively using any object at hand and make lots of noise. Make yourself look bigger than you are, holding your coat as wide as it will go, gathering in a group, anything that makes you look more massive to the bear.
- Do not play dead unless you are sure the bear is a mother defending her cubs

General practices:

- Always put any items that emit an odor into bear bags.
- Cook and dispose of wastewater downwind from camp.
- When possible, cook on a streambed or shoreline at least 100 feet from camp.
- Do not deposit food scraps into the water around your campsite.
- Place bear bag far from camp or store food following the recommendations of the specific Land Manager.

Bear Bag Information (Where Recommended)

Hang bear bags between 12 and 17 feet from the ground and 6 to 11 feet from the trunk.

Bear bags hung or counter-weighted over a branch should be a minimum of 5 feet below it.

Suspend bear bags from a branch that is approximately 5 inches in diameter.

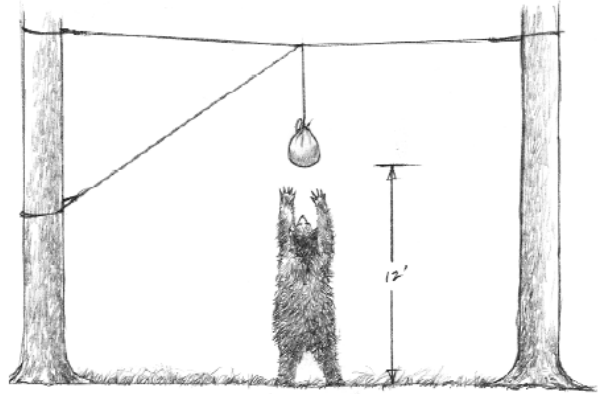
A bag of sand, a stick, or a water bottle tied to the end of a rope make it easier to throw over a branch.

As a general rule, hang bear bags 100 feet from your campsite.

Put items that smell like food into bear bags, including food, garbage, used first aid supplies, scented toiletries, cookware, and film.

Your bear bag may be too heavy to lift if all your dishes are inside. You may be better off leaving them on the ground 100 feet from your campsite.

Some places have bear poles. Use poles with hooks to hoist a rope over the top of it, then raise your food.



Raccoons, Squirrels, and Chipmunks

Small animals are mainly a nuisance. The best practice is to keep food in sealed bags away from the ground and in sight of camp during the day. At night follow the same methods as for bear bagging. Never keep anything “smell-able” in your tent.

Mosquitoes, Sand Flies and Black Flies

- Do not bring aerosol cans of repellent.
- Black flies and sand flies are relatively harmless, and long clothing is the best protection.
- Dress in natural colored clothing.

Ticks

- There are two types of ticks in the Northwoods. The wood tick is large and brown (about the size of a pencil eraser). Deer ticks are less common and much smaller. They can be hard to see and are only about the size of a pinhead. Check yourself often. It is the only way to find them.
- Ticks like warm, hairy, moist areas like armpits and waistbands
- When traveling through the brush, tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- Deer ticks can cause Lyme disease. Generally, it takes 3 to 4 months after someone has contracted Lyme disease before they feel flu-like symptoms for an extended period — Sometimes, a “bulls-eye” rash will also occur.

If you experience any difficulty, see a doctor early—Lyme disease can be treated with standard antibiotics if diagnosed quickly.

Safety and Sanitation

General

- Remember that medical help is not a phone call away. Practice sound judgment and manage risks to reduce the possibility of injury.
- Everyone should wear sunscreen and hats (possibly sunglasses).
- Stay hydrated – It is essential that everyone continually drink fluids.
- Carry hand sanitizer on all treks; use it often to prevent hand to mouth contamination.
- Before handling food or dishes, everyone should sanitize their hands.
- Don't pack fuel near food or place it above the food in your pack.
- Always wash hands after using the latrine.

Water Purification

- Each group will be given the option of bringing both a filtering system and a chemical purifier on their high adventure trek. Follow the directions for each to work correctly.
- Ensure that the proper amount of time has passed before drinking treated water and allow treated water to splash onto caps and threads of water bottles before drinking.
- Do not mix lemonade or any other drink mix into the water until after it is purified.
- If the quality of the water source is questionable, use multiple purifying methods to ensure reliability.

Meal Cleanup

- All excess food should be scraped from dishes and eaten or emptied into a trash bag. (Remember that what you don't eat must be packed out, so Bon Appetit!) Any residue left on plates and pans must be very minimal.
- Use the pot you cooked in as a sink, washing all group and personal dishes. Please use only as much soap as is necessary as this will help reduce impact.
- If there are any food particles visible in the dishwater, remove them with a strainer and place them in the trash. Pack out solid food scraps.
- Scatter the remaining liquid at least 200 feet from water sources and trails.
- Place all dishes, cleaning supplies, and food-related items with your bear bag.

Human Waste

- Always use a backcountry latrine when one is available.
- Dig cat holes 200 feet from trails, campsites, and water sources.
- Dig a hole 6 to 8 inches deep and 4 to 6 inches in diameter. When you finish, stir the waste and paper into the soil with a stick. Cover with 2 inches of soil and camouflage with leaves.
- Urinate far from trails and campsites and at least 200 feet from any water source.
- Urinating on rocks and non-vegetated areas is preferable to trees and plants.

