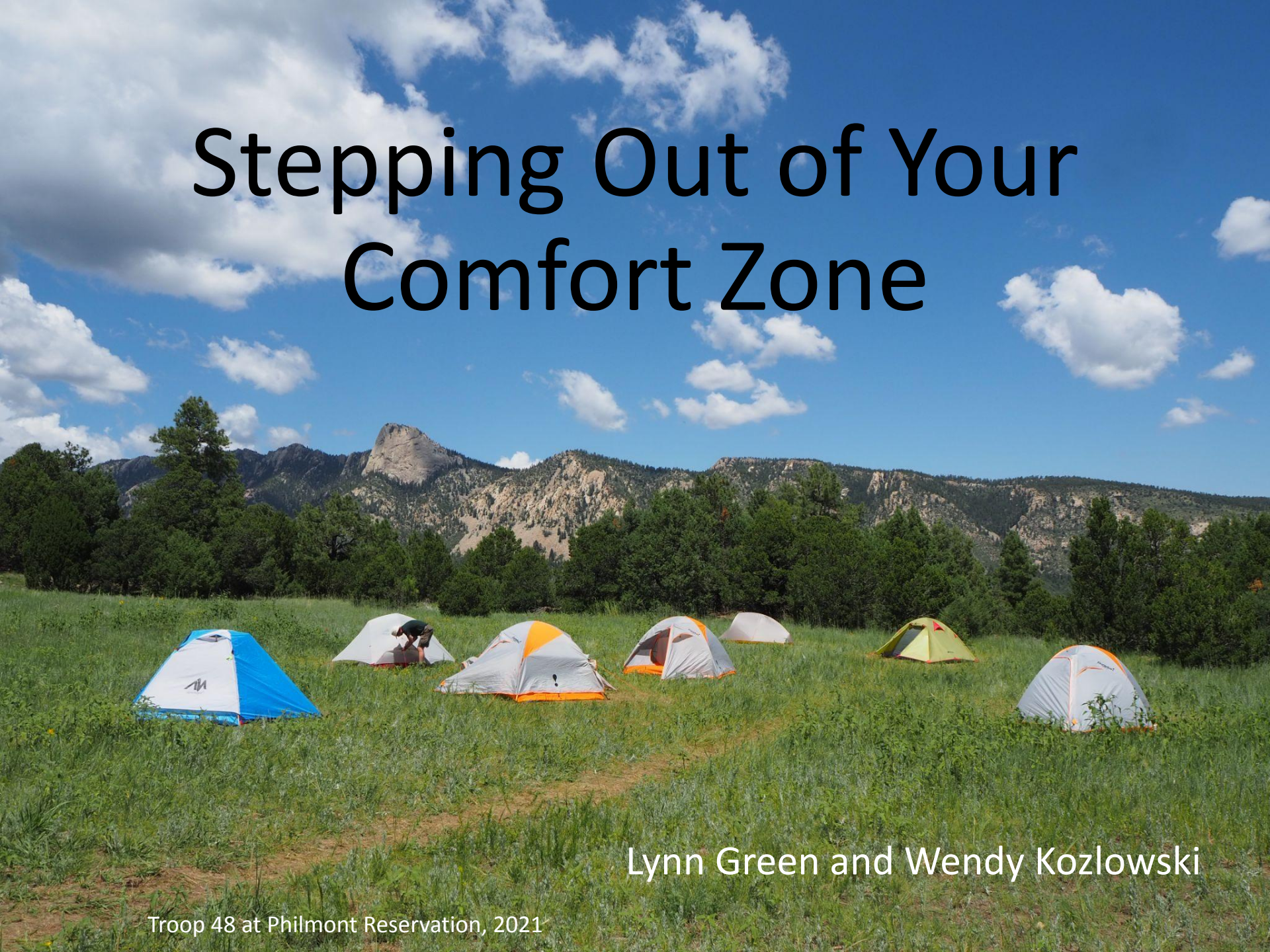
Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone



Lynn Green and Wendy Kozlowski

Troop 48 at Philmont Reservation, 2021

Some things some people might not like about the outdoors? What about you?

Weather:	too hot and sunny
	too cold
	too wet
	too stormy
Animals:	small or large and furry
	skinny and reptilian
	eight-legged and similar
	small, six legged and biting/stinging
Cleanliness:	toilets
	showers
	cooking and dishes
	lack of water
Comfort:	where to sleep
	how to sleep
	seating
	a lack of good food?
Getting lost:	map and compass
	GPS and apps
Injuries:	

Plan and prepare!

Talk through fears and allay where possible

Weather – too hot and/or too sunny

Dehydration is the biggest difficulty so make sure you have enough water
1/2 to 1 cup every 30 to 45 minutes
Water is **THE** most critical survival item - whether in the wild or at home.

- Wear a big-brimmed hat with a (detachable) neck-cape. Mesh hats are good in hot weather.
- Wear sunglasses, particularly with snow or water. Use a strap on them so they don't get lost.
- Use a wet towel, hankie or similar to cool off, particularly wrists and elbows and back of the neck; areas where veins are close to the skin.
- Wear breathable, wicking light-colored clothes.
- Go for a swim or other water activity.
- Apply ice or a cold water bottle to pulse points ...
- Keep high exertion activities to early mornings or later evenings. Sunrise and sunset are beautiful!
- Make plans to stay in the shade
- Apply and re-apply sun lotion (SPF 30) to any exposed skin including ears, nose and lips. Also under the chin, inside the nose in snow and bottoms of the feet in water
- Be extra-careful at high elevation and/or in the desert
- UV rays can pass through clouds

Weather – too cold

- Appropriate clothing in **layers,** but make sure you don't cut off circulation
  - gloves, spare gloves, liner gloves
  - hats, spare hat,
  - face mask
  - socks, spare socks but no constriction
  - Thermal base layers (breathability, lightweight, high wicking, quick drying, isothermic
- Hand and toe warmers – but remember they have to be carried out!
- Bottles you can fill with hot water, add in to socks to allow them to dry
- Winter boots
- Sleeping bag (or bags) – layers underneath (pads) are critical in cold weather.
- Wool blanket
- Stay hydrated
- Pace yourself to prevent sweating
- Don't get too hot, it chills you later
- Eat!
- Drink
- Use a thermos
- Sit on your pack or a sitter
- Worship the sun! If it shines, make the most of it
- Stay dry

Chestnut Lean-to on Finger Lakes Trail near Ithaca

Taughannock District Klondike Winter Camporee 2022, realfeel -20 °F

Weather – too wet

- Use bag liners and/or pack covers and/or Ziploc's or a combination to keep the contents of your pack and the pack itself dry.
- Keep gear easy to find and minimize the number of times you open the pack
  - i.e. the tent on the top and snacks and waterproof layers in the outside pockets
- Make sure to choose your tent site well
  - watch for ditches and depressions
  - use available shelter
- Tent pitching
  - Keep the inner dry if possible
  - Tighten sagging rain-flies to maintain gap between inner and outer
- Make a porch and/or shelter area
- Make sure you stay dry, if necessary have sacrifice layers and sacred layers
  - Maintain sacred socks – keep a pair in your sleeping bag
- Use Gold Bond or equivalent to stop chafing
- Keep gear clean
- Remember where you store everything!
- Wear a lighter around your neck
- Never leave a dry bag open
- Wear your hood
- Compactor bags are good for dry bags
- Take "camp" shoes that if necessary you can get wet, e.g. river crossings
- If boots get wet but you DO have dry socks – use bread bags as a layer between the two to keep your socks dry.

Chile, 2019

Weather – too stormy

- If you see a lightning flash, count the seconds until you hear thunder. Divide the number of seconds by 5 to approximate the distance in miles.
- Take a tarp and rope and set up a lean-to

30/30 Rule

If less than 30 seconds, between lightning and thunder, find shelter.
Shelter until at least 30 minutes after hearing the last roll of thunder.

Stay low if possible.

- Avoid lone trees
- Seek shelter in a low stand of trees.
- If you are above treeline, seek shelter in the lowest area you can reach, preferably with large boulders around so you can get some protection from driving rain behind some smaller boulders.
- Put on your raingear and remove your backpack.
- Keep 100 ft between yourself and other people or metal objects (poles, metal backpack frame etc
- If no shelter, make yourself as small as possible by crouching, with minimum contact to ground, heels together, hands covering ears (protect hearing) and keeping head lower than the tallest point

Hail storm at Philmont

Animals – small or large and furry (or feathery)

- **Prevention**
  - Hang or store food and other smellables (including garbage) in odor-proof bags or cannisters
  - Don’t drop crumbs and drips
  - No smellables in tents
  - Cook and eat 200 ft from camp
  - Clean up

Black Bear at Philmont Scout Reservation, taken with a long zoom lens!

- Bears
  - Look for signs (prints, scat etc)
  - Make noise in areas with high chance of bears
  - Bear spray for high-risk areas
  - Hike in groups

- Mini-bears (chipmunks, mice etc) and other medium-sized pests (raccoons, skunks etc) plus our feathered friends
  - Cute but annoying – mini bears will chew through canvas, nylon, and plastic to reach food

Animals – skinny and reptilian

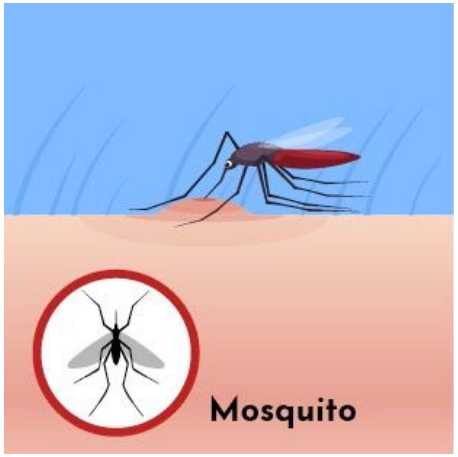
Snakes

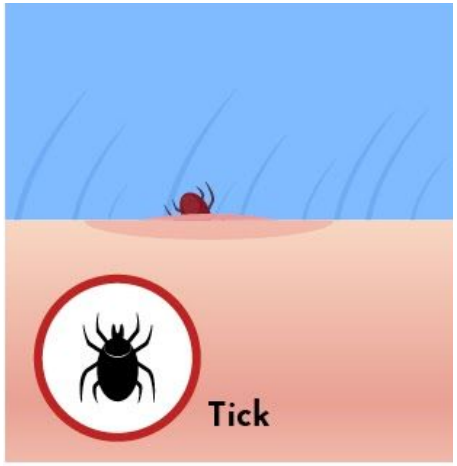
Rattlesnake at Philmont Scout Reservation, taken with a long zoom lens!

- Prevention
  - Keep your eyes and ears open.
  - Wear boots - feet and ankles are the most common bite locations
  - Don't step or put your hand someplace you can't see.
  - Stay on the trail
  - Avoid grass, weeds, and brush.
  - Use trek poles or walking stick. They will be a bit ahead of you and to the sides so snakes may strike them instead of you.
  - Use caution when picking anything off the ground - wood, rocks, even your shoes or pack after it has sat for awhile.
  - Look around before sitting down.
  - Hike with a buddy.
  - Respect wildlife - do not harass snakes.

- IF you get bitten
  - Keep calm
  - Clean and dress the wound
  - Identify the snake or note its markings and the time of the bite
  - Remove jewelry and other potentially constricting items before the swelling begins.
  - Minimize exertion if the bite may be venomous. Many bites are “dry”.
  - Transport the victim as quickly as possible to a hospital for anti-venin treatment.

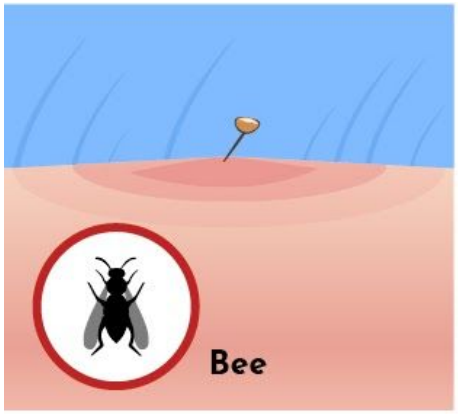
Small non-mammalian animals

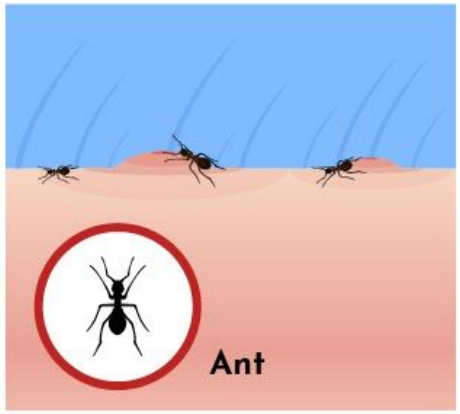


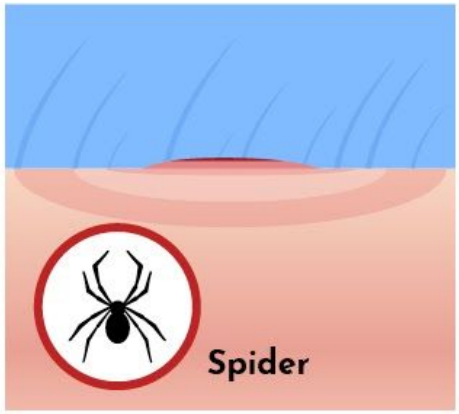


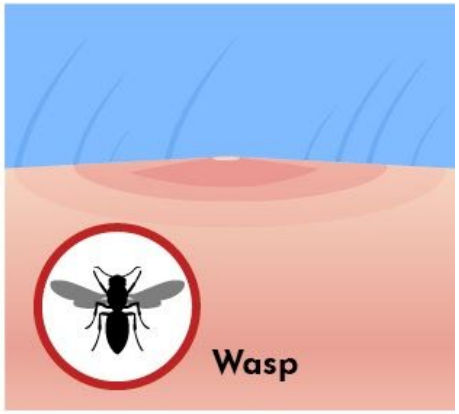
General prevention:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Spray clothes with permethrin
- Wear light-colored clothes - to see bug easily and physically remove them
- Check regularly
- Tuck pants into socks
- Wear a hat
- Use a DEET-based insect repellent on exposed skin – ideally 25%-30% solution
- Stay on trails and avoid brush, tall grass
- Wear an insect screen hat, jacket, or full body suit. After your hike, take a shower and check all over your body for ticks.









Animals – Eight-legged and similar

Spiders

Prevention:

- You should be able to prevent spider bites:
  - Never reach someplace that you can not see - under rocks, into holes, around branches.
  - Shake out clothes, gloves, boots before putting them on.
  - Take a stick and wave it in front of you to knock down webs
  - Look before you sit down or lean against a tree to rest.
  - Wear gloves when doing any outdoor work.

Treating Spider Bites

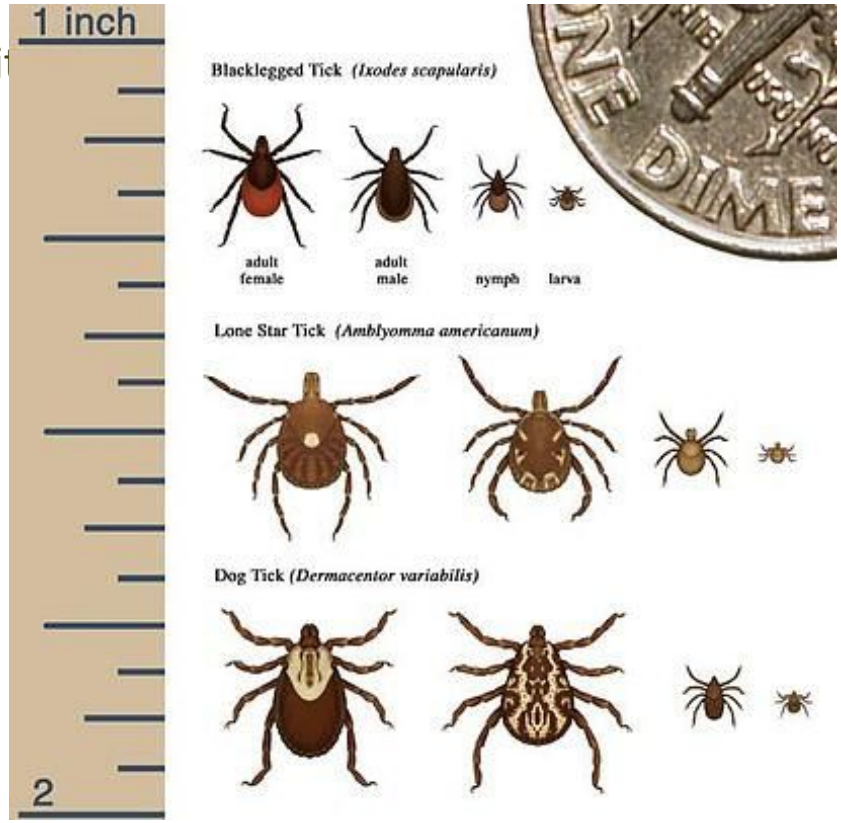
- Wash the bite area with soap and water.
- Place ice pack or cold water towel on bite area.
- Elevate and rest the wounded spot to reduce swelling.
- Watch for symptoms and record them.
- Call or visit a doctor as soon as you can.
- Try to identify the spider. If it is available, take the spider's live or dead body with you to the doctor.

Animals – Eight-legged and similar

Ticks

Removing Ticks

- Grasp the tick with a sharp pointed tweezers right down where it is entering your skin.
- Pull it straight away from your skin with a slow, steady pressure. Don't yank it; don't twist it; don't rock it back and forth.
- Clean the wound
- If >24 hours since exposure, consider a doctor visit



Animals – Small, six-legged and biting/stinging

Mosquito

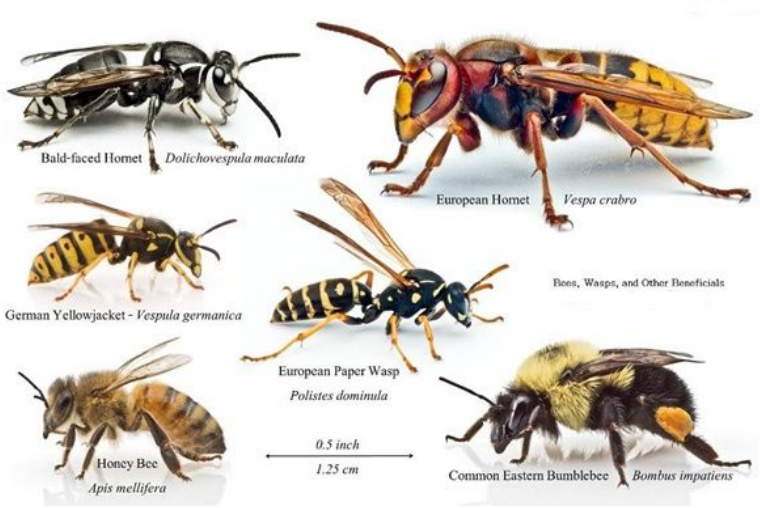
Prevent as much as possible – West Nile virus

If bitten:

- Don't itch it!
- Clean the bite area
- Apply an anti-itch medicine (Calamine lotion, After Bite, tea tree oil).

Animals – Small, six-legged and biting/stinging

Bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets



Prevention:

- Avoid perfume and scented lotions.
- Avoid wearing shiny jewelry.
- Avoid strongly-odored food that may be attractive.
- Don’t dress like a flower!
- Look in your drink before you drink from it.
- Keep your food and garbage sealed in plastic bags.
- Don’t swat, instead move slowly away

Treating Stings

- Stay Calm
- If necessary, brush off the insect and leave the area quickly.
- Remove stinger (if present) with credit card or tweezers
- Apply ice or cold water to the sting area
- Control itching and swelling with over-the-counter antihistamines
- Don't itch or rub the sting spot
- If allergic reaction symptoms appear or the victim is known to be allergic, get medical help immediately. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, swelling of tongue, mouth, or throat, and hives.

Cleanliness – Toilets

Plan ahead and work out what will be available and when

If no toilets are available:

Peeing:

- **Small bodies of water:** Never go directly into a small pond, stream or lake. Always move 200 feet (about 70 steps) away from a water source.
- **Large bodies of water:** If you're in a rafting group camping along a very large river, Leave No Trace recommends peeing directly in the water; the river volume will dilute it, and the camping area avoids getting over-saturated.
- **Alpine areas:** Up high in mountain goat territory, peeing on a rock surface is recommended. Goats are attracted to the salts in urine, and may dig up fragile vegetation to get the salt.

- Sarong or buddy for privacy
- Pee funnel
- Use trees for support!
- Bandana
- Funnel and bottle in a tent

One of the finest bathroom views in the world! Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park, Cananda

Different styles of “outhouse”

Pooping in the woods

Notes: Hide the contents of the TP bag using a foil liner, duct tape etc
Use a travel bidet to minimize TP use

Menstruation

Plan and Be Prepared

Choose your method - if it is different from usual, make sure you have tried it out

- Menstrual cup is reusable and light and eliminates waste but can take practice
  Lack of soap and water for cleaning is a drawback

- Tampons and/or pads. You have to carry in and carry out in a special “waste” bag. Double bag for security.

Either:
Take a “go bag” with supplies (Ziplocs for clean, Ziploc for waste, sanitizer, moistened wipes or TP or some medical gloves to avoid dirty hands!)

Cleanliness – Showers

Use a camp shower if available. Bring flip-flops or other water shoes. If not:

- Don’t use soap in a body of water directly, even biodegradable
- Use a pot to hold the water, give yourself a sponge bath and empty the dirty water on plants or lichen-covered rocks.
- Use a small, fast-drying towel
- Use a small piece of fast-drying towel as a washcloth
- Consider wipes

Cleanliness – Cooking and Dishes

Elevate your camp kitchen

- Patrols should have cooking gear, but don’t forget coffee!
- Pour-overs easier to clean than French press or percolators. Starbucks has good instant coffee packets!

Eat better than you do at home

Make sure you eat well, good food makes you happy!
Keep it simple but good if you are unsure about cooking on camp

Water

Water is **THE** most critical survival item - whether in the wild or at home.

Plan where to replenish if necessary
Treat
Filtering
Pump Filters - takes time and effort, but is a very popular method of filtering. Take care in the winter, frozen pumps don't work!
Gravity Filters - little effort since gravity is doing the work. While filtering water, you can tend to other chores.
UV Light - a relatively new this method is fast, inexpensive, and lightweight. It does require care with the device and extra batteries.
Chemical Treatment - water is collected and a few drops of chemicals are added. Easy, but takes time and tends to be more expensive overall. It is very lightweight since you carry no mechanical device. It does leave all the dead organisms in the water that you drink.

Cleanliness – Lack of water

If water is limited…

Use wet cloths for washing bodies and dishes, though possibly different cloths !

Wash up dishes using minimal water and cloths, then sanitize dishes in boiling water immediately before the next meal

Use of the sieve and sump after washing dishes for 12 at Philmont Scout Reservation

Comfort – where to sleep

Campsite can be:

Highly developed – with showers, flush toilets, firepits picnic tables etc
e.g. most state parks, Girl Scout camps, some BSA camps

Developed – water, toilet (of some sort), flat place to sleep
e.g. some municipal parks, some camping areas in the winter

Open – nothing provided
e.g. state forests, other wilderness areas

Comfort – How to sleep

Tent (and ground cloth) or no tent? Durability

- Amenities, e.g. inner stash pockets and vents.
- Groundcloth
- If there are places to tie things inside the tent, string a line back and forth inside for a place to hang clothes to dry
- If ground not level, sleep with your head uphill.

Sleeping pad or cot

Temperature

Sleeping bag

Rating

Shape

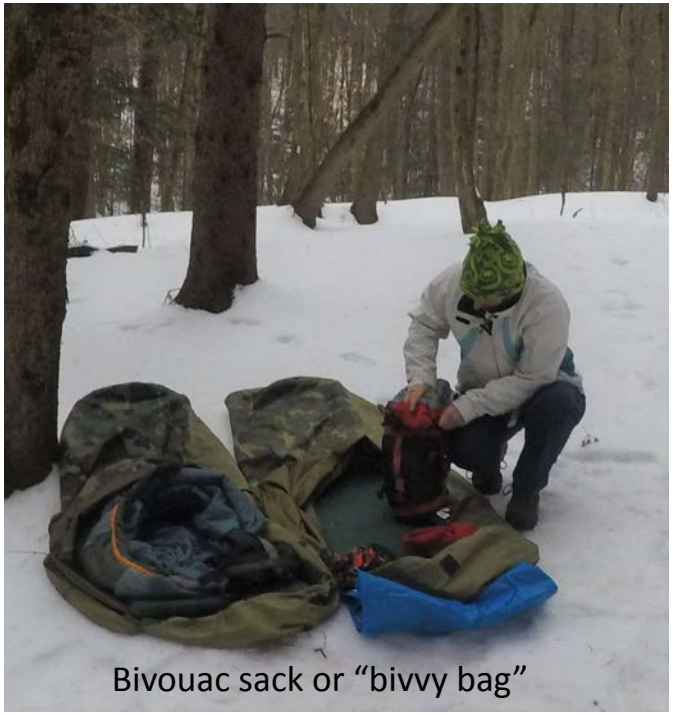
Pillow

Inflatable

Pillowcase and clothes

Earplugs

First time or new to the game?
Borrow or rent!



Bivouac sack or “bivvy bag”

Bring layers and prepare for cooler nighttime temperatures

Make sure not to overheat initially

Wear non-cotton

Wear a hat

Socks

Comfort – Seating

Pack a camp chair or hammock you can lounge in

comfortable camp chair
“backpacking” chair
stool
Hammock
Small Styrofoam square or insulated bubble-wrap
Amazon prime padded envelope!

Injuries

Most common:

- Blisters
- Knees

Equipment Acquisition (thanks to Doug Fink for this list):

How to “NOT BUY”!

- Use What You've Got. E.g.a Nike or UnderArmor hoodie make a great fleece top. Silky sweat pants/running tights as a base layer
- Borrow from a friend or parent, from the Pack or Troop. Bring it back clean and dry!
- You don't need lots, just different. Bring a variety of layers to maintain temperature.
- Cross-Uses? E.g. UV swim top in summer is a base layer in winter.
- Stained/Torn? Who cares if it is a layer in the backcountry?!
- Hand-Me-Downs. from siblings, relatives or friends.
- Free is a Good Price. Community or Church give-aways?
- Scout Swap? All Scouts are growing all the time. Can you give some of your outgrown clothing to a younger/smaller scout?

How to be thrifty:

- Yard/Rummage Sale.
- Thrift stores e.g. Salvation Army / Thrifty shopper/Ithaca re-use. May have clothing or equipment
    - Shop Women's/Kids sections
- Concession stores, e.g. Old Goat (Ithaca).
- Cornell Outdoor Ed (COE) Used Gear Sale. Screaming deals usually the first Saturday of December. Lines begin forming early in the morning. Your treasure awaits.
- REI Used Gear Sales (online or in stores).
- Craigslist / eBay. Beware of scammers
- Retail Closeouts.
- Buy generic not name brand. If you want name brand, buy in the shoulder seasons.
- Checkstores such as Dicks Sporting Goods or Cabellas or Bass Pro Shops for hunting gear; it may be cheaper than “outdoor” gear.

How to pay for it?

- Scout Account. Make sure you support your unit fundraisers and use money from the Scout account (if your unit does that)
- Amazon Gift Cards from popcorn fundraising.
- School Shopping? If you buy a new clothing item for the start of school, could it double as outdoor wear in the backcountry?
- Gifts for birthdays and holiday gifts.
- Try earning extra money for chores in the family or neighbors

Other Helpful Suggestions

- Extra hankie for washing feet / drying tent
- Going a lot? Make a checklist – print/copy for each trip
- Car camping - Clothes pins
- Carabiner for bathroom bag
- Tic Tac containers for spices
- Car camping – sheet for hot weather camping
- Wet wipes
- Hatchet – can buy firewood, but if kindling can't be foraged, a small hatchet is helpful
- Long trips – anti-diarrheal
- Headlamps, not flashlights!
- Scout camp – one plastic hanger – uniform!
- Entertainment – card games, dice games
- Earplugs
- Strap coolers closed – racoons can open even the ones with latches!

Wendy's Top Ten Packing List

1. Swiss army knife, with tweezers and scissors
2. First aid kit with moleskin, ibuprofen, allergy pills, hydrocortisone/Benadryl cream and anti-diahrreal pills
3. At least two clean cotton hankies
4. Headlamp & spare batteries (not a flashlight)
5. Solar powered lamp (car camping only)
6. Bug spray wipes (not just the spray)
7. Carabiners (not the heavy ones – just light, keychain types)
8. Flip flops or crocs – night time, showers, "camp shoes"
9. String – 6-8ft paracord
10. Deck of cards