



Backpacking Guide

Introduction

You've joined Boy Scouts for the adventure, right? What could be more adventurous than putting all the gear you'll need on your back and heading off into the woods? No phones, no video games, just you and nature! High adventure trips are fun and help you learn all sorts of new skills. The confidence you gain in the outdoors will help you your entire life. But, it's not smart to just head off into the woods without some preparation! A well-trained and well-equipped Boy Scout makes for a smart outdoorsman. This guide is intended to give a young scout, and his parents as much information as possible to make those first few weekend trips a whole lot of fun! If you're not comfortable, you won't enjoy the beauty of nature and the fun activities of the troop. So let's get started with the basics, and we'll try to pick up a few nifty tricks along the way.

Planning

The most important element of getting out into the great outdoors is planning. A lot of the planning of any troop activity will be coordinated at the troop level by the Scoutmasters and the Trek Leader. However, it's very important that the scout plan ahead, so that packing and pulling together the right equipment isn't left until the last minute.

Gear

For some, the idea of "gearing" up is an adventure all it's own! For others, it can be an intimidating, and expensive, experience. We're going to talk about the gear that is necessary for a Scout to have a good first experience, ways to do it inexpensively and then we'll talk about some smart first purchases once a scout has decided that he's going to stick with backpacking for some time.

Backpacks

The most obvious need for a backpacker is a backpack. There are two main categories of backpacks, internal and external frames. We'll discuss both, and give you a recommendation that will help you decide what is best for your scout.

Internal Frame packs

Internals feature a long, narrow profile. With a snug fit, internals have become extremely popular. They have an internal support mechanism featuring stays that are often adjustable. They have many advantages, including:

Balance: Since they are designed to hug your body,



your center of gravity stays centered. Climbers and those who go off trail enjoy internals.

Stability: With plenty of compression straps, your load is cinched down tight, avoiding shifting loads that can throw you off balance.

Fit: Internals have lots of straps, which allow for a highly customizable fit.

Maneuverability: With its tight fit and narrow profile, there is plenty of room to move your arms and the pack stays put during jumps and other tricky moves.

The disadvantages of internals include:

Heat: Because they are snug to your back, they get don't allow for much ventilation and make for a sweaty back.

Organization: With just one large pocket (some feature a smaller compartment at the bottom for a sleeping bag) internals make it difficult for a scout to stay organized. Everything ends up coming out of the bag each time a he needs something.

Cost: Internals tend to cost more than an external frame pack of the same size.

External Frame packs

External frame packs feature a “ladder” type frame, with a pack bag attached to it. External frame packs have been the standard for years, although internals have become extremely popular. Externals put the majority of the load directly on the hips, keeping the weight off of a boy's shoulders. It's very important that the hip belt be correctly fitted for the boy. Often, young boys have very narrow hips and the belt won't pull tight enough. Be sure the belt fits! It can make all the difference to a boy on a long hike. Some advantages of an external frame include:



Cool: An external is cooler to carry because the load is not directly on the boy's back. There is significant airflow between his back and the pack.

Weight distribution: The pack won't sag, like an internal might. The boy's center of gravity is higher, which allows him to walk in a more upright position.

Organization: With 5 or more pockets and compartments, an external frame pack is easy to organize. Water in one, clothes in another. It's also much easier to

strap on a sleeping bag, tent and pad. (Strapping a pad onto an internal frame is not easy!)

Cost: External frame packs are almost always less expensive than an internal frame of the same carrying capacity.

Top loading externals versus panel loaders:



Sport Chalet exclusively rents a panel loading external frame pack from Jansport. They also tend to recommend it for scouts. (In fact, the model pictured is called the Scout) This particular pack, unless adjusted correctly, is often problematic for the beginning backpacker. If you are considering the purchase of a pack, consider first the top loading packs from Kelty or REI. They are often less expensive, and require less maintenance. In addition, the ability of a boy to add a tent or strap on a sleeping bag is diminished with a Jansport due to the curved nature of the frame. I always recommend a top loader for scouts.

Rentals:

Just because I said that top loaders are best for young scouts, that doesn't mean I think you should run right out and buy a Kelty! Renting is a wonderful way for a scout to get acquainted with the equipment, and find out if backpacking is something he'll want to pursue. Rent a backpack for the first couple of weekend trips, it could save you big money in the long run.

Fitting a backpack

It's very important to get a backpack that fits. If it's too long, the hip belt won't hold the load correctly, and if it's too short it can be very uncomfortable. Backpacks are measured by torso length. With a friend, use a flexible tape measure (like the ones for sewing) and measure from the lump at the base of your neck down your spine. You should put your hands on your hips, so that you can feel the two bumps on the front of your hips. Hold your hands there, with your thumbs behind you. Drawing an imaginary line from your thumbs, that's where you stop measuring. Your measurement will fall into one of three basic categories:

Small: Up to 17 1/2 inches

Med: 17 1/2 to 19 1/2 inches

Large: Over 20 inches

It's always best to try on a pack before buying. Don't be afraid to ask the store personnel to help you adjust the pack so that it fits you perfectly. Be sure to put some weight in the pack as well. A completely empty pack will fit and feel very different than one that's loaded down with 25 or 30 pounds of gear! Many stores have sandbags that you can put into the packs. If they don't, you should bring two, gallon milk jugs, filled with water, and put them into the pack. Walk around for a little while in the store to make sure it fits you right.

Weight

How much weight should you expect to carry in your pack? A good rule of thumb for Boy Scouts is that you shouldn't be carrying any more than one quarter of your body weight. This is difficult for small boys, who may only weigh seventy-five or eighty pounds! Under no circumstances should a boy carry more than one-third of their weight.

However, just because a scout may weigh a hundred and eighty pounds, that doesn't mean he should be carrying forty pounds or more. Beginning backpackers should pack light. It's always easier to add a few things the next time than to carry an extra five pounds on your first trip.

Straps and Covers

We've talked a bit about the difficulty of strapping pads and sleeping bags onto an internal frame pack. It's much easier to strap tents, sleeping bags and pads onto an external frame back. But there are a few tricks.

Never use rope to tie sleeping bags and pads onto a backpack. Never, ever! I have never seen a scout be successful with his gear tied onto his pack with rope or cord. It always is too loose, with the gear either swinging back and forth or just falling right off onto the ground.

Bungee cords can work, although they tend to be a little heavy, and there is always a risk of getting hurt when a cord isn't attached correctly and comes flying at you! I always prefer nylon straps with clips. The trick is to always snap them back together when the gear is taken off the pack, and never let them lie in the dirt. Small pieces of sand can get in the snaps and really make it hard to open later.



There are several ways to cover a backpack, one of the simplest is a large garbage bag. This can be helpful when there is a lot of dew or a light rain. They don't work terribly well when you're hiking however, so a real pack cover may be a wise investment. Make sure it fits your pack, they have a habit of slipping off and becoming lost on the trail. (If you see a blue one, it's mine!)

Sleeping Bags and pads

The proper sleeping bag can make all the difference between an enjoyable outing and a miserable one. You should take care to make sure you get a sleeping bag that will keep you warm under the most extreme conditions we might face.

A sleeping bag works by trapping and holding air next to your body. Your own body heat warms up this air and keeps you warm. The bag's ability to maintain this heat coupled with its weight will determine how much it costs. The lighter and warmer the bag, the more expensive.

When you are looking for a bag, consider these key points:

1. Shape. Mummy bag or square? You should always be considering a mummy bag shape for camping with the troop. They are warmer, lighter and stuff much better than rectangular bags. Why? There is less open air space in a mummy bag for you to warm up, and they stuff better with less material. Try to avoid the "Coleman" bag in except the most mild weather.
2. Comfort rating. What is the lowest temperature the manufacturer thinks the bag will operate effectively? Remember, this is not a hard and fast number, many things will influence how a bag performs. Use these numbers as a guide, but you should check with other sources to determine how accurate a bag's rating is. Scouts in Troop 288 should have a bag that is at least rated to 20°. Buying a bag that is slightly warmer than you think you'll need isn't a bad idea. In warmer weather, you can always unzip it a bit. But on those really cold winter nights, you'll appreciate the warmth.
3. Type of Fill. Is it a down bag or synthetic? Down is the very small feathers next to the body of certain types of birds. Goose down is the most desirable. Down is very light, it compresses well and keeps you very warm. It is also very expensive. Down will also not keep you warm if it gets wet. One fall in the creek with a down bag on your back will make for a very cold night! Synthetic fills are usually less expensive, and they can keep you warm even if it gets wet. I usually recommend synthetic fill sleeping bags for Scouts.



There are several types of thermal pads around, from the simple and inexpensive to those with price tags as thick as the pad. The most important part of a pad's function is insulating the body from the cold ground. A sleeping bag will compress against the ground, giving almost no insulation against losing body heat to the earth (or snow!) below.

The simplest type is a closed cell foam pad. Often less than \$10, these pads are very light, and provide fine protection against the cold, hard ground. More expensive types of pads exist, including the "Therma-Rest" brand pads. These are usually self-inflating pads, and can be very comfortable. They provide fine insulation too, but they are heavier. For young scouts, a closed cell foam pad is best. There are too many other things that need to be carried, so wasting valuable weight here is not a good idea.



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The Ten Essentials

Each scout should carry, on every outing, the ten essentials as outlined in his Scout Handbook, page 224. What are the ten essentials?

1. Pocketknife. Pocketknives are a really important part of scouting. Each scout will learn how to safely use a knife, how to sharpen it and how to care for it.



There are official BSA knives that are fine, as well as other brands. When buying a knife, do not buy the cheapest one you can find! It's really important that the steel be capable of

holding a good edge. More accidents happen with a dull blade than a sharp one. Please do not buy any fixed blade knives or overly large ones. There is really no need for these types of knives. Also, consider the weight. Multi-tool knives, like Leatherman or Gerber's are very heavy and should not be used.

2. First Aid Kit. It is very important that each scout carries his own first aid kit. The exact contents should include everything that is detailed in the Scout Handbook for a personal first aid kit. (Eye protection can be excluded) In addition, each scout should bring those items that he often needs such as special medications, bandages, etc. Purchasing first aid kits complete from a sporting goods store can be very expensive. It's usually much more cost effective to put your own kit together. The troop will carry it's own first aid kit, usually with a more comprehensive selection of items. This is not to be seen as a substitute for each boy having his own kit.
3. Extra Clothing. This often can include a shirt, or warm outer layer. On backpacking trips, extra clothing is important in case the scout gets wet, or clothing is torn.

4. Rain Gear. This might be self-explanatory, but every scout should be prepared. A poncho is the absolute minimum that a scout should have, but it is far better to have a full rain suit. It provides protection from the rain when it's coming in from an angle, and can also be layered with other clothing to provide extra warmth. A pack cover should also be considered. Trash bags don't work terribly well, but will do in a pinch. Putting your sleeping bag in a trash bag inside your stuff bag (lot's of bags!) will save you the experience of spending a wet, clammy night.

5. Water Bottle. There are as many types of water bottles as there are scouts. It is not advisable to carry the store bought sports bottle type. They leak and are difficult to refill. Each scout should have a real, refillable water bottle.



If a scout has a hydration pack, like Camelback or Platypus, they should also have a refillable water



bottle. Nalgene, or other wide purifiers perfectly and are very hydration packs are great for on the all that is need is the bladder and backpack. It's recommended that hydration system (just the bag and Scouts should not bring Gatorade or any other flavored drink. They should never put drink mix in their personal canteens. The troop will bring a large container to mix drinks in, and it will be hung in the bear bag each night.



mouth bottle fit our water useful for camp tasks. The trail. For most backpacks, the hose, not an entire each scout have both a the tube) and a water bottle.

6. Flashlight. Even for a day hike, a flashlight is important. If we are delayed, or if we find a small cave, a flashlight will be helpful. There are several different types of flashlights, but the key concern is weight. A Maglite with four D cell batteries is not going to help out a young scout. Consider something with two AA batteries, and remember to pack an extra set. Head lamps are becoming very popular, but they are still expensive compared to typical hand held flashlights.



7. Trail Food. How much food will a scout need? It's very surprising, but scouts will need less food than you think, especially at high elevations. Bringing along a few snacks, perhaps one energy bar and one fruit snack per day will be plenty on a long hike. The weight really adds up when you're going to be on the trail for 9 days! We often bring trail mix, or GORP (Good Old Raisins and Peanuts) as part of our food preparation. Do not pack super smelly items or things that will melt.

8. Matches and Firestarters. We require every boy to bring matches to each outing. It is not "safer" if they don't have matches! If we can't light our stoves, lanterns or make a fire, we will not be very



comfortable. Rest assured, each scout will be taught proper usage and be supervised. Parents please, do not take your scouts matches away!

9. Sun Protection. This is not limited to sunscreen. A scout should also have a hat that covers his ears, and eye protection. The troop has outdoor hats that meet this need.
10. Map and Compass. Every scout should own a compass . We use them on every hike, every camping trip. There are several requirements related to knowing how to use a compass . While there are many types of compasses available, the one that best suits the needs of a Boy Scout is a base-plate or orienting compass. This type of compass allows a scout to orient maps and take bearings easily. Other types of compasses, especially those without a base plate are typically frustrating for a scout. No scout should bring a GPS.



Food Preparation

Stoves

There are several different types of stoves that are used for scouts. The easiest to use and least expensive is the type that screws on to a propane bottle. They are very inexpensive, but are heavy and the empty bottle must be hiked out.

For backpacking however, propane just doesn't cut it. At high elevations or in extreme cold, propane bottles will freeze and reduce their heat output to a bare trickle. For many situations we use butane stoves. These are simple to use, easy to light and maintain their usefulness under most conditions.



For long term backpacking, especially in severe conditions, there's nothing like white gas stoves. They put out a tremendous amount of heat, are economical and will get water boiling quickly. We use the MSR Dragonfly because of its ability to adjust the flame and simmer. Boys are always taught how to safely use the equipment, and adults will fuel these stoves.

We also use the Primus Himalaya. It can use either butane canisters or white gas. Depending on the scout and their level of training, they might use this stove with either of the two types of fuel.

Cooking and Eating Gear

Crew Gear

Each crew will bring it's own cooking gear. While there are many different types of backpacking cooksets made out of exotic metals with space age finishes, we've discovered that good old aluminum works wonderfully for Boy Scouts. There's no finish to get scratched and the heat distributes throughout very evenly. A pot or two usually suffices, but if pancakes are planned, a frying pan is a must.

The basic cooking utensil for backpacking is a large spoon. Many of our meals are one pot pastas, rices, or beans. Occasionally, a spatula is needed. The other utensil that is necessary is a knife. Pocketknives and one or two Lexan personal knives are great for a crew. Each crew should be sure they have the proper gear, either from the troop supply or their own.

Personal Gear

As far as personal eating utensils go, less is better. A sierra cup and a spoon is all that is really necessary. Some like to bring a complete set of



Lexan eating utensils, a plate and a cup. Frisbees make good plates, and you can play with them after dinner too! Very few people carry extra eating utensils, so remember to bring your own, every time!



It gets very tiring trying to borrow something to eat with at every meal.

What to Cook

Now that we know what to cook with, we've got to make some decisions about what we're going to eat! Here are a few suggestions.

Dinners - when we backpack we usually like to have big dinners because we're so hungry when we set up camp. I try to find dinners that require a good deal of water in preparation to help us rehydrate.

pastas: couscous, orzo, dried cheese tortellini, ramen, fusilli

sauses: Knorr's pesto mix, tomato soup mix, mac&cheese cheese packet

rice and beans: dehydrated refried beans, lentils, minute rice

breads: tortillas, pita bread, bagels

vegetables: instant mashed potato flakes, dried black mushrooms, sun dried tomatoes, dried green onions

soups: corn chowder, black bean, chicken veggie, pasta/rice primavera, split pea, hot and sour, chicken soup, tex mex

meats: beef jerky

extra: pinenuts, pulverized potato chips

Lunches - we usually don't like to pull out the stove when we break for lunch. Most of what we eat for lunches requires no cooking whatsoever and is fast and easy to prepare.

bread: pita bread, bagels, tortillas
meats: beef jerkey, dry salami, pepperoni
dried fruits: dried apples, dried cranberries, prunes, dried peaches
vegetables: carrots, corn, jicama (these are for shorter trips)
other: cheese, hummus, crackers, GORP

Breakfasts - Quick and easy is usually the way to go, so that we can get out on the trail right away. Sometimes, we'll hike for a little bit then pull out the food on the trail.

Cereals: oatmeal, granola with fruit and powdered milk
Rice: Minute Rice with powdered milk and brown sugar
Eggs: powdered eggs with cheese, or as a breakfast burrito

Snacks – Trail mixes, energy bars and hard candies are all great ways to keep up your energy on the trail.

Packaging

Don't forget to repackage all your food for the trail! That will mean taking off any extra cardboard, putting things in Ziploc bags and bagging your trail mix. Don't carry anything into the backcountry that you don't absolutely need, or that you'll have to carry out again as trash.

Dishwashing

The most difficult thing about backcountry dishwashing for boys is the preparation. It is very important that no food be left on their plates or cups, or in the pot. The more food there is, the more our limited supply of water is polluted. Plates and cups should be licked clean, before being washed and sanitized. Putting a little hot water into the cup and swishing it around before drinking it not only helps clean the utensils, but also gets a little more water into them for hydration. Any leftover water should be emptied into a six inch deep cathole, strained for food debris. All leftover food and garbage must be packed out.

One cool trick is to use a platypus to rinse the dishes. By squirting a little water onto the dishes, you can rinse them quickly and thoroughly, and use very little water.

Personal Gear

What should the well prepared Boy Scout be wearing? As with all outings, scouts in Troop 288 should wear their Class A uniform shirt when traveling.

While hiking, scouts should be comfortable. Cotton is a very comfortable fabric, but it can also be a dangerous one. Cotton absorbs quite a lot of water, which robs it of any thermal value. It also is a wonderful breeding ground for bacteria, which makes it smell pretty bad after a day or two on the trail. Denim is not a useful fabric on the trail, it is very heavy and once wet, blue jeans take forever to dry! Various types of synthetic fabrics work great on the trail, and long pants will help a scout avoid cuts and scrapes.



Layers are important and work much better than bringing a single, bulky coat. Thermal underwear, a long sleeved shirt, a sweat shirt or synthetic fleece and a shell or windbreaker will cover almost every situation.

Footwear

There are several schools of thought regarding good footwear for hiking. They are usually boiled down to two main camps: Boots vs. Sneakers. Boots provide support and protection, while sneakers are lighter. It's been said that one pound on your feet is the equivalent of six pounds on your back. However, for young people, the ankle support and protection from rocks are very important.

There are many types of boots, but for young hikers on a weekend outing it's not imperative to spend hundreds of dollars. KMart, WalMart and Target all stock inexpensive hiking boots that are usually under \$25.00. They don't last forever, but they will do fine for weekend outings. For longer trips a slightly more expensive boot might be needed in order to take the pounding a 50 miler might entail. Be sure that the boots are broken in, although most of the inexpensive boots don't need too much to soften them up.



Skater shoes, or other casual wear that is not properly tied is not acceptable. Blisters on the trail can ruin an otherwise great trip. All shoes must provide adequate support. It's very important that scouts keep their feet clean and dry, and wear appropriate socks. Wearing two pair of socks is the best system, with a lighter, polypro liner underneath a pair of wool, or synthetic socks.



Toiletries

There isn't much that's needed in the backcountry in the way of toiletries. A toothbrush is good, but toothpaste isn't essential. 90% of the value of brushing is completed by the brush itself, not the toothpaste. Toothpaste is a "smellable" and needs to be put away in the bear bag at night. It also leaves a mess when the scout spits it out. Soap is useful, but mostly for washing dishes. A small bottle of Campsuds is useful, but it needs to be used

far away from water sources like a stream or lake. Even if it says it's biodegradable, we never foul the water. A small towel can be useful, but small is the operative word. Even a regular bath towel is too big. A hand towel is fine. Deodorant isn't needed; much of what can be accomplished with it is better suited to baby powder. Baby powder helps the scout rid himself of chafing, or foot problems. Besides, the best defense against others smelling bad is a good offense!

Bathroom Etiquette when there is no bathroom

When nature calls while you're in nature, what do you do? There have been books written on the subject (really!) so we won't go into intimate detail here. But the important things to remember are that you should always take care of business at least 200 feet away from any water source, trail or campsite. Never urinate directly on a tree or a plant, the salts will often cause wild animals to chew or claw at the plant, soon killing it. For solid waste, a cathole 6 to 8 inches deep should be dug, and then covered and hidden after use. All toilet paper should be packed out as trash. If you're not sure that your crew has a trowel, you might want to make sure you have one.

The best way to handle soiled toilet paper is bring along some brown lunch sacks and Ziploc bags. Put the toilet paper inside the brown paper bag, and then inside a Ziploc. This keeps the paper from being highly visible and it is kept clean and separate by the Ziploc bag. If open fires are permitted, then we may have the ability to burn the lunch sacks along the trail. But be prepared to pack it all the way out.

Wash your hands! There's nothing worse than getting sick in the backcountry. Use Campsuds, away from any water source. You should also get in the habit of using a hand sanitizer, that way all the dirt on your hands will be clean!

Safety

There are a few rules of hiking that we must cover. Always stay together. We don't separate our groups, keep within yelling distance. Whenever you come to a fork in the trail, stop and wait for the whole group to come together. We do this to make sure everyone stays on the same trail.

When you come across a horse on the trail, always listen to the rider of the animal. If they don't have any specific instructions, then move to the uphill side, facing the trail. Your backpack can look odd and scary to a horse, so you want to be facing the animal. You can usually speak softly to the horse, this often reassures the horse that you are in fact, a human.

Officially, bicyclists are supposed to yield the right of way to hikers. The truth is, they really can't yield much when they are flying down a trail! When you see a bicyclist, alert those around you and move off the trail.

Bears

One of the the things that worry parents the most is the thought of their child encountering a bear. This rarely happens, but it is something that we must always be cautious about. Each boy should have a “smellable” bag in his pack. This bag should contain everything that might attract animals. This includes all food, snacks, any sugared drinks and any container that might still have food odor. It should also contain all soaps, toothpaste, sanitizers and lotions. There should be nothing left in a pack over night that might attract a bear, or other animals.

We will hang all smellable bags in the trees, using the patented Troop 288 method. Each boy will be taught how to hang a bear bag correctly.

When we arrive in camp, we will set up a triangle, called the “Bearmuda” Triangle by those at Philmont. The three points of the triangle are our cooking area, our “sump,” and our bear bags. We will then set up our tents outside the “Bearmuda” Triangle.

Each scout should also have a set of clean clothes to sleep in. These should be clothes that are not to be used for anything else. This way, there are no left over smells from cooking or spilling in the tent. No scout should ever bring food into his tent.

Lightning

In the Sierras, lightning can strike with little warning. The safest way to avoid lightning is to keep an eye on the weather and be ready to move if it looks like rain. Stay off peaks and saddles, and don’t be caught as the highest object in meadow. It’s not usually a good idea to be under a tree, but if you are in a forest or near a bunch of trees of similar height it should be ok.

Stay clear of areas that might have falling debris and wait out the storm. Don’t try to “just get over the next ridge.” Stay low and play cards for a while.

What to do if you are lost

You may have heard the adage, “Hug a tree.” The idea behind this is to stay put. It doesn’t literally mean to hug a tree. Try to stay in the same place, out in the open a little. Give rescuers a chance to see you. Remember to stay warm. Hikers have the most trouble with exposure. You can stay well for several days without water, but you might not last long in severe cold. Signaling devices, like mirrors or whistles are good, but staying in one place will help the most. You can pack an old CD in your pack as a mirror, it even has hole in it to help your sighting.

What does a Troop 288 backpacking trip look like?

Let's run down the chain of events that eventually leads to a wonderful backpacking trip. Each trip has two associated fees – the “camp” fee and the “food” fee. One of the really cool things about backpacking is that it is usually less expensive than a base camp.

Be prepared, the meeting before the outing, to have \$10 cash for food, and either cash or a check for the “camp” fee. This fee will vary, depending on the location, permits, transportation costs or other expenses. Your Trek Leader (the BSA Trained Adult in charge) will provide you with this information. Be sure to check for outing flyers and permission slips.



During the meeting just before the outing, all the scouts and adults attending will be placed into crews. Each crew will consist of no more than 12 people, and at least two adults. Each crew will then be broken down into eating units, usually four people. Each eating group will have a stove, a pot, a spatula and a large spoon to share. There are times that we can combine the eating units so that everyone can eat together, sharing stoves and hot water.

At the meeting several things will need to be decided. The complete menu will need to be made, a duty roster with each job assigned and arrangements will need to be made regarding the shopping. It can be split up, which may be especially wise if the items needed are at more than one store. You'll find a sample duty roster and menu planner in the Appendix of this Guide.

It's a good idea to look at the makeup of the crew to determine if anyone needs to perform certain duties in order to advance in rank. Cooking a meal, planning the menu, doing the shopping and sorting out cooking gear are all things that can be signed off for the scout who successfully performs these duties.

The scouts doing the shopping will need to prepare the food correctly for backpacking. This includes repackaging some items and removing packaging from others. The food should be sorted into individual food bags, one for each member of the crew. The weight and bulk should be roughly even.

Scouts should weigh their packs at home, with a goal of being under 25% of their body weight. Remember, they will need to leave room for crew gear, food and tents. Every scout should show up to each outing wearing their Class A uniform shirt. If we are leaving on a Friday evening, each scout should eat dinner before arriving at the meeting point or should bring a sack dinner to be eaten later. Not every driver allows food and drinks in their car.

As the crews prepare to leave, each scout will receive, in addition to their own personal gear, a food bag containing some items for their personal use and some “crew” items. This should be placed immediately in the scout's “smellables” bag. Each scout will

receive some crew equipment, such as a stove, a pot, utensils, water purifiers or other gear. Each scout will need to find a sleeping buddy, we do not allow scouts to sleep alone unless there is an odd number of scouts and we cannot find a way to put three into one tent. Each pair of scouts will receive a tent and a "footprint." A footprint is the ground cloth that fits under the tent exactly. The tent and footprint can add 3 pounds to each scouts pack, be sure to pack accordingly.

After a pack inspection by the Trek Leader or other qualified adult, everything will be loaded up and we'll head out for the trailhead.

If we've left on a Friday night, we'll be staying at a base camp the first night, then packing up all our gear and hitting the trail in the morning. If we leave early Saturday morning, we'll go directly to the start of the trail. Uniform shirts will be left in the cars, and the scouts should hike in something comfortable, a Troop 288 activity shirt is a good option.

We'll usually have lunch on the trail, hoping to arrive in camp before 2:00. We'll be checking to make sure that each scout is drinking enough water. The boys will pull all their food and smellables out of their packs and get the bear bags ready for hanging. After setting up our Bearmuda Triangle and tents, it's free time for the boys until the cooks need to report to make dinner. After dinner is completely eaten and all the dishes are cleaned, it's free time until bedtime. No scout is allowed to leave the campsite after dark. If a scout needs to heed the call of nature, he must go with a buddy. Lights out is never later than 10:00 PM.

It's up early, by 6:30 so we can get on the trail right away. Each scout should immediately upon awakening stuff his sleeping bag and start getting his gear organized. Often scouts wake up a little cold, so this activity helps them warm up. It also gets the packing up started. After patrolling the area for any trash, we'll leave the campground as soon as possible and eat breakfast a mile or two down the trail. If we get out early enough, we often stop at a fast food restaurant for lunch. If we have a long hike, we'll eat on the trail.

Once we're back at the American Legion Hall, no one leaves until all the gear is accounted for, cleaned and put away. Several boys will go downstairs and give all the pots and utensils a thorough cleaning, while the others set up the tents to be shaken out and dried. We've been very fortunate that our equipment has lasted as long as it has, we believe it's because we take care of it. After all the gear is stowed, each scout will ask the Trek Leader if they can call their parents to pick them up. Parents, please do not come early, or try to take your son before the gear is put away. Many volunteers have spent their entire weekend helping your son enjoy himself in the outdoors. The least you can do help them by giving your son an extra twenty minutes to finish the job.

If you have any pictures of the trip, it's always nice to include them in the troop history book. Get "double prints" and donate the extra set to the troop. A little summary of your experience is nice too. Please note the names of the people in your pictures.

Backpacking Checklist

(Items in bold are supplied by Troop. Be sure you have them before you leave.)

Basic Essentials

- o Backpack, Pack Cover
- o **Tent, Vestibule, Stakes**
- o Sleeping Bag, Sleeping Pad
- o First Aid Kit, Prescription Medicines
- o **Water Purification**
- o Water Bottles – at least 2 liters
- o Matches, Lighter
- o Cup, Plate, spoon
- o Smellables Bag
- o Boots, Socks
- o **Pots, cooking utensils**
- o Soap, Towlettes
- o Washcloth, Towel
- o Flashlight, Headlamp
- o Extra Batteries
- o Sunglasses, Goggles
- o Sunscreen, Lip Protection
- o Insect Repellent
- o Knife
- o **Maps**, Map Case, Guidebooks
- o Compass
- o Signal Mirror, Flares
- o Mitt, Gloves
- o Hat, Visor, Bandana
- o **Ground Cloth, Tarp**
- o Pants, Shorts or Swimsuit
- o Shirts
- o Long Underwear
- o Duct Tape
- o Toilet Paper and bags
- o Vest, Parka
- o Toothbrush, Floss
- o **Stove, Fuel**
- o Can Opener
- o Rain Coat, Rain Pants or Poncho
- o **Scouring Pad, Sponge**
- o Repair Kit, Tool Kit
- o Insulated Pants, Windbreaker, Windpants
- o Watch
- o Ziploc Bags, Paper Towels (3 or 4)

Optional Items

- o Balaclava, Facemask
- o Cards, Games
- o Glasses, Contact Lenses
- o Handwarmers
- o Cold Drink Mixes
- o Hot Drink Mixes
- o Spices, Salt, Pepper, Sugar
- o Binoculars, Monocular
- o Camera
- o Daypack, Fanny Pack
- o Books, Magazines
- o Sleeping Bag Liner
- o Pillow, Sit Pad
- o Toiletries Kit, Kleenex
- o Hand Cream
- o Firestarter

Outdoor Conduct

Troop 288 follows the Principles of Leave No Trace camping. We respect and abide by the Outdoor Code. All scouts will follow the the LNT principles and the Outdoor Code.

The Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to -

*** Be clean in my outdoor manners.**

I will treat the outdoors as a heritage.

I will take care of it for myself and others

I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.

*** Be careful with fire.**

I will prevent wildfire.

I will build my fires only where they are appropriate.

When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out.

I will leave a clean fire ring, or remove all evidence of my fire.

*** Be considerate in the outdoors.**

I will treat public and private property with respect.

I will use low-impact methods of hiking and camping.

and

*** Be conservation minded**

I will learn how to practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy.

I will urge others to do the same.



Principles of Leave No Trace

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Know the regulations and special 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.

Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.

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

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods.

Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails.

Cover and disguise the cathole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

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.

Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.

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 cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

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.

Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.

Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.

Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Duty Roster

Fireman (1): Sets up for cooking, lights fire/stoves, prepares water for cleanup.

Waterman (1): Coordinates water pumping, gets water.

Cooks (2): Prepares entire meal. Cleans the stove.

Clean-Up (2): Cleans all gear, including personal gear of patrol. Cleans area and puts everything away.

Saturday Breakfast

Fireman	Waterman	Cook	Cleanup

Saturday Lunch

Fireman	Waterman	Cook	Cleanup

Saturday Dinner

Fireman	Waterman	Cook	Cleanup

Sunday Breakfast

Fireman	Waterman	Cook	Cleanup