

First Camping Trip tips

April, 2007

The troop will provide tents and cooking gear.

The patrols are responsible for preparing their menus and buying their food. For the April camping trip, Troop Guides will prepare a menu and bring the food for the new Scouts.

Things Scouts will need to bring for the April campout:

- ✓ **A water bottle.** Boys tend to forget to drink enough on campouts, and can dehydrate. We'll try to keep them drinking plenty of liquids. Don't buy a canteen; refillable or disposable water bottles are much easier.
- ✓ **Layers of clothing.** At this time of year, it can get quite warm during the day and cool, even cold, at night. It's best to have layers of clothes to add/remove. T-shirt, long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt, jacket. If the weather forecast looks like it might get cold at night, a knit/fleece hat would feel really good.
- ✓ **A change of clothing.** Clothes will get wet. They will get dirty. And, it's much warmer to sleep in clean, dry, clothes (including socks) that you've just changed into. (That saves having to change into COLD clothes when you wake up, too!) A great tip is to pack clothes in the big 2 gallon zip-lock bags. You can press all the air out before you seal the bags, which makes the clothes small, they'll stay together till you open them, and they'll stay dry if an "accident" should happen to your bag.
- ✓ **Rain gear.** We still camp even if it's raining, so be sure to bring a waterproof jacket and hat. Waterproof pants can be nice, but most boys don't want to wear them.
- ✓ **Mess gear.** A plastic plate, a plastic bowl, a plastic mug, and reusable plastic knife/fork/spoon are all that's needed. You can buy them at Dick's or Sports Authority. Many of the boys like to use one of the larger, flat disposable food containers in place of the plate and bowl. They put their silverware inside and shut the lid to pack it all together. Avoid metal mess gear. It looks great in the store, but it often gets too hot to hold, and food gets very cold in them very quickly. Any silverware is fine, but don't be surprised if it doesn't all come home!
- ✓ **Sleeping bag.** Your sleeping bag should be rated for at least 10° less than you expect it to get at night. The sleeping bag companies are very optimistic in their ratings. If your bag isn't rated that low, or you aren't sure, bring a blanket or a fleece sleeping bag to "double-bag".
- ✓ **Ground pad.** Get a closed-cell foam pad. They range from inexpensive to fancy inflatable/foam combinations. Any of them will be just fine for this kind of camping; don't feel you have to spend lots of money. The ground is MUCH colder than the air at night, since you press all of the loft out of the bottom of your bag when you lie in it. Ground pads keep you warm...and they make the ground a lot more comfortable, too.
- ✓ **A duffle bag.** Duffle bags are the easiest things to pack for close-to-the-car camping. They take all shapes of objects, they have handles, and they don't take up much space when they're empty.
- ✓ **Scout book and a pen or pencil.**
- ✓ **A flashlight.**