

Troop 255 Backpacking 101 – 05/18/08 (revised)

PRELIMINARIES:

FLAG: The **Crew Chief** will display the National Color (US Flag) on the outside of his backpack. This is a Philmont tradition that clearly identifies the leader.

PLANNING: The **Crew Chief** will discuss the trek plan with the **lead adult**. This will include the overall plan (where we are going, how, and when). The evening before, or morning of, they will discuss the coming day's selection of destination, route, and target arrival time.

DUTIES: The **Crew Chief** makes a duty roster for jobs (discussed below): Cook Team, Clean-up Team, Bear Bag Team. On the hike he designates Hike Leaders, Navigators, and Sweepers. Depending on size of the Crew, more or less teams might be appropriate.

COMMON "CREW GEAR" will be distributed equitably between all members. Plan on an additional 10 pounds and a space the size of a large shoe box.

RAIN: When hiking or at camp - Have your pack cover and rain gear where you can get to it quickly. PLAN FOR RAIN - It probably will – BE PREPARED. As an important added precaution, everything in your pack that you don't want wet should be placed in zip-lock plastic bags or waterproof stuff sacks, or both. **Pay particular attention to your sleeping bag (your life line). It MUST be packed in either a waterproof stuff sack or a durable trash bag (one that won't tear when used for 7 days).** You cannot be too prepared for wet.

TENTS: Keep your screens zipped at all times if you don't want to share space with bugs, etc. Whenever you go out of sight of your tent, have it rigged for rain (even if you think you will be right back). Rains frequently come up quickly without warning. Be sure your tent is not located in a low spot where water will collect in a rain. Be sure your ground cloth is not visible outside your tent where it can serve like a super-highway directing water under your tent.

DRINKING WATER: Stay well hydrated. As a rule your urine should be "Clear and Copious" – a Philmont term. That means it should be clear or pale yellow and there should be lots of it. On a hot day drink frequently and expect to pee at most rest stops. Proper hydration helps prevent common hiker ailments like altitude sickness, hyperthermia, and other feelings of illness. Serious dehydration, besides making you ill, can lead to dangerously impaired mental function and judgment. This can lead to injuries and death. "Camel-up" (another Philmont term referring to a camel's habit of storing up water), which means drink frequently and a lot. Drink before setting off on a hike. Chug down a lot of water whenever you are at a water source. Never miss an opportunity to have a drink and to fill up your water bottles. ALWAYS START A HIKE WITH FULL WATER (for this trip you should be carrying 2 quarts or liters). All water must be treated with either an iodine or chlorine product - supplied by the adults. Plan for a wait of 30 minutes or more (varies with water temp) before the water is ready to consume.

LATRINE KIT: One Crew member will carry the Latrine Kit (consisting of trowel, aka small shovel, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer) on the exterior of his pack so that it can be quickly and easily obtained by whoever needs it. Stuff happens – BE PREPARED. The trowel is kept in a separate bag because of its unclean nature – please be sure to place it in its bag before returning it to the Latrine Kit stuff sack.

LEAVE NO TRACE: Everything we pack in must be packed out, except bodily waste. Carry a plastic bag for your personal trash. If you temporarily place trash in your pockets, be very careful that it cannot inadvertently fall out on the trail or around camp (a common problem).

SETTING OFF ON DAY'S HIKE:

WATER CHECK: The **Crew Chief** should ask if each person's water supply is full.

HIKE LEADER, NAVIGATOR, & SWEEPER: The **Crew Chief** will pick a Scout to be **Hike Leader** for the next segment of the hike. He will also select someone to be **Navigator**. These duties should be rotated among all the Scouts, including the **Crew Chief**. The **Crew Chief** will give the map to the navigator and will explain his "intent" (where he wants the Crew to go) and together they will review the route. They will check the compass to verify the present location and direction of the hike. Afterwards, the navigator will show the route to other members of the Crew. The navigator should refer to his compass and other landmarks, such as blazes, as often as necessary to make sure the Crew is on course. The **Crew Chief** will also designate a **Sweeper** – usually an adult - to be the last hiker.

COMMUNICATION: The **Crew Chief** should always welcome comments and questions. He can address these immediately, or if appropriate, suggest that discussion be deferred to a better time. Anyone can ask for a Crew meeting at any time. The **Crew Chief** will call the meeting at a convenient time and will lead the discussion. The successful **Crew Leader** will keep his Crew fully informed at all times. Everyone is entitled to know what is happening and why. **ALL: DO NOT HIDE UNHAPPINESS. VOICE YOUR COMMENTS/CONCERNS TO THE CREW CHIEF, OR LEAD ADULT, IF THE CHIEF IS PART OF THE PROBLEM. DO NOT ACCEPT INACTION AS A RESPONSE. GO TO ANY ADULT IF NECESSARY. Crew Chief: You are obligated to take action. Discuss with adults if needed.**

STARTING: The **Crew Chief** will announce when it is time to "Mount Up". Everyone will put on their packs. **THE CREW CHIEF WILL MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS PRESENT.** The **Hike Leader** will ask "Is anyone not ready?" If there are no responses, then he will lead off.

REST BREAKS: Anyone can call for a rest stop at any time. Anyone can use the Latrine Kit at any time. Rest stops will be either "Short" or "Long". The **Crew Chief** will announce the stop and its type. Short rest stops will be limited to 3 minutes as timed by the **Chief**. The **Chief** will call "Packs Down" or "Packs On". Long rest stops will be at least 20 minutes. The logic here is that when stopped for more than 3 minutes waste products build up in one's muscles. After 20 minutes this is cleared. When resuming the hike **THE CREW CHIEF SHOULD BE SURE THAT EVERYONE IS PRESENT** – we don't want to leave someone doing business off the trail. The Sweeper should check that nothing was left behind (common).

SPEED OF MARCH: For planning, we have found that crews hike at approximately 2 miles per hour on easy terrain and 1 mile per hour on difficult terrain, like ascents and descents.

STAYING TOGETHER: The entire Crew must stay within communication at all times. The **Hike Leader** should always be first along with the **Navigator**. He sets the pace with consideration given to the abilities of the others to keep up. If the last member is out of communication, then the **Hike Leader** should stop and wait for the Crew to get together. He should adjust his pace so that the Crew stays together. Crew members should be sure that someone knows if they go off in the woods so that you are not left behind.

WATER CONSUMPTION: Drink, drink, drink – Clear & Copious. And, let the **Crew Leader** know if you are beginning to run low. **Crew Leader**, you need to do something about this. Consult with the **lead adult** if necessary to locate a nearby water source.

ARRIVAL AT CAMPSITE:

ANNOUNCE ARRIVAL: At places like Lenhok'sin or Philmont, the Crew will stop outside of the outpost area. The **Crew Chief**, alone, will go to the Outpost, identify the Crew and ask to enter to set up camp. The Chief will be given a specific or general area to camp.

LOCATE BEARMUDA TRIANGLE: Upon arrival at camp, Scouts will work as a unit and will not pick tent sites until later. Scouts will locate the cook area, sump (for liquid food waste), and bear bags. **Locating a suitable spot for bear bags is sometimes time consuming. This is the job of the Bear Bag Team.** This area will form a triangle, in Philmont-terms the "Bearmuda" Triangle. All food preparation, consumption, and clean-up will be done within the Bearmuda Triangle. Tents go outside of the triangle. The scheme is that bears will be enticed by the Triangle and will avoid the tents. Of course, this only works if you put all of your Smellables (in Philmont terms) into the bear bags and are careful not to do anything involving food outside of the triangle. The Crew Chief will announce the boundaries of the Bearmuda Triangle.

SET UP RAIN TARP: Next ALL SCOUTS WILL set up the rain tarp inside the Bearmuda Triangle over the cook area. BE PREPARED. Rain can occur at any moment. ADULTS will set up their tents while the Scouts are setting up the rain tarp.

BREAK OUT CREW GEAR: After the tarp is up – **EVERYONE will place their common "Crew Gear" in a single location under the rain tarp.**

DUTY ROSTER: The **Crew Leader** will have already established a roster of Scouts assigned to **Cook Team, Clean-up Team, and Bear Bag Team.** Members of these teams will not be tent mates, for reasons that will be apparent later.

COOKING/WATER: **The Clean-up Team should immediately acquire water for use by the cooks and for personal use. The Cook Team,** if dinner time, will set up a stove, ignite it, and start a pot of water to boil. The **Cook Team** will set up under the tarp, if conditions dictate, or they so desire, and will have total control of the tarp area for dinner preparation. **All other folk will stay away from the Cook Team and let them do their thing – this is for safety and efficiency.**

TENT SET-UP: Other Scouts will set up their tents. The Cook Team's tent mates will set up their tents – this is why duty team members should not be tent-mates.

MEANWHILE: As the water boils, the **Cook Team** lays out all bowls, personal spoons, cook spoon, and tongs on a clean sheet. After a "rolling boil", the **Cook Team**, using the tongs, will submerge in the boiling water bowls, spoons, and cook spoon (anything that will be used in food preparation or consumption). This will sterilize everything. Items will be placed back on the clean sheet. The **Cook Team** will then proceed to make dinner using the sterilization water for the preparation. **Remaining Crew should wash socks and tend to body and equipment repair.** Forming blisters must be treated with duct tape or moleskin.

DINNER: When dinner is ready, the **Cook Team** will call the Crew to dinner. The **Cook Team** will serve the Crew and eat last. Adults are served first. It works best if Crew members get their food one-at-a-time, then quickly move out of the way so that others can be served easily.

THORNS & ROSES: During dinner, the **Crew Chief** will lead a "Thorns and Roses" discussion. Everyone is encouraged to offer negative comments (Thorns) and positive comments (Roses). This is an opportunity to vent – offer criticisms that might lead to a better trek and to give folks a pat on the back (if appropriate) and reflect on what is good about the

trek. It is also the time for the **Chief** to brief everyone on the next day's plan. **Chief** should go around the Crew inquiring about 1st aid (especially foot problems) & equipment status.

CLEAN-UP: Ideally, all food should be consumed. But, if not, then the **Clean-up Team** will consume whatever leftovers remain in the serving pot or bag. Each Crew member will be responsible for consuming every bit of whatever is in his bowl and on his spoon. Get your stuff as clean as possible. Use your finger or a plastic wipe to clean out what is in your bowl then eat it down. Lick your spoon clean. This way there is very little for the Clean-up Team to deal with – AND LESS FOR US TO PACK OUT.

CLEAN-UP PROCEDURE: The **Clean-up Team** will heat water. They will clean all of the eating equipment including the bowls and spoons so that they “Look” clean. They won't be sanitized – this will be done before dinner the next day. Leave all the eating equipment on the sheet under the rain tarp to dry. This will later all go into the Bear Bags.

SMELLABLES: Before bed, all Crew members will collect all their “Smellables” and place them in the Bear Bags. Change into your sleep clothes and put your day clothes, which contain food smells, into the bag. It is handy to put your own stuff in your own stuff sack, so that it will stay dry & you can easily identify it the next day when breaking camp.

BEAR BAGS: Prior to bed, the **Bear Bag Team** will bag all of the personal and common Crew Gear Smellables (this includes all the eating equipment and food) and string up the Bear Bags.

SLEEP: The **Crew Chief** will announce when quiet time begins and when the Crew will rise the next morning.

BREAKING CAMP:

FIRST THING: In the morning, when going to the bathroom, note the color of your urine. Start drinking water (“Camel-Up”). You want to hydrate yourself well while you are at camp where there is usually a source of replenishment water. **Be sure your water is full.**

BEAR BAG TEAM: The immediate duty of the Bear Bag Team, from the night before, is to retrieve the Bear Bags and place them under the rain tarp.

FOOD: The **Crew Chief** will distribute breakfast and the day's snacks.

RAIN TARP: Unless it is raining, the Scouts will take down the rain tarp and fold it. If it is raining, this task might be delayed until all other packing has been completed.

DROP TENTS & PACK: The entire Crew will break camp. Pack up all of your personal gear. Retrieve and pack your designated common Crew Gear. Eat breakfast while you pack, or save it for eating on the trail. The **Crew Chief** will designate a spot for a pack line. All Crew members will place their packs there when they have completed packing.

LITTER SWEEP: When the pack line is complete, the **Crew Chief** will lead the Scouts in a litter sweep of the area.

TIME GOAL: On hot summer treks it is desirable to knock off as much hiking as possible early before it gets hotter. Breaking camp should be fast. The goal is to have this done in an hour. A half-hour is better. It is a great reward to reach your day's destination in early afternoon.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS: Ask the **Crew Chief** - If needed, he will check with the **lead adult**.