

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST FOR WILDERNESS TRAVEL

The following is an attempt at a packing list for personal gear. It isn't meant to be a final specification, as your list may vary, but it does set out to be a guide for the sorts of things that are needed. That is, you will want all of the items below, or their equivalent. Take it as our advice, if you have any doubts.

You will be carrying all items for your trip on your back. This has two consequences, that must be balanced against each other:

- 1) Make sure you bring everything you need. If you didn't bring it, you won't have it. There is no "going back" for anything, so be complete!
- 2) Everything you bring weighs something, and you have to carry it all. Therefore, go as light as possible.

Obviously, these two demands are in direct contradiction to one another, and compromise between them is required. The first rule can be interpreted to mean "bring everything that is absolutely necessary," whereas the second means "avoid bringing anything that is not vital." Bear in mind that the lighter your load, the easier a time you'll have.

The list below attempts to steer a course between these two requirements. It follows two general principles:

- 1) Try to make each instance of each item as light, durable, non water-absorbent, and (for clothing) as warm as possible. Synthetic fabrics are, in general, to be preferred to cotton. **PLEASE DON'T BRING JEANS!!!!!!**
- 2) Ask yourself how many duplicate items, like t-shirts, socks, and underwear, you really need. Cotton underwear might be worth having for comfort, but ask yourself how many are necessary to your well being. The other consideration being, well, smelliness – but bear in mind that we will be in the great outdoors, and you probably won't notice smelliness too much until you come inside when we return, at which point you can take a shower.

This is a serious calculus, because you must be prepared to handle any circumstances you may encounter. Because of the weight and space limit to what you can carry, a few items must be sufficient for a broad range of situations. The following list covers items we feel you will need. Note that weather in the high mountains is unpredictable, and potentially extreme even in August, up to and including snow. Be prepared!

YOU WILL BE DEPENDENT ON WHAT YOU BRING, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, AND WE WILL HELP YOU FIND WHAT YOU NEED!

CLOTHING

_____ Fleece/pile/wool sweater or pullover (bring two, so you can put them both on if it gets cold)

_____ Down Jacket or equivalent – should be warm and puffy, for use at night, around camp, and rests. It's important to have something warm to put on when you're not exercising.

_____ Gore-Tex or other breathable, waterproof Jacket.

_____ Long underwear (it can be useful to bring two pairs, one for active exertion in the cold (synthetic fabrics work well for this), and one for sleeping (this should be comfortable, and can be cotton); pound for pound, long underwear offers the most warmth for the least weight of any clothing you can bring)

_____ T-shirts (2 or up to you)

_____ Durable wool or synthetic long pants suitable for use as an outer layer, ideally made from a fabric that will dry quickly (1 pair)

_____ Gore-Tex or equivalent breathable waterproof rain pants (1 pair)(this isn't strictly necessary; usually it won't rain continuously, and your regular pants should be enough)

_____ Shorts (if you like to wear shorts!)

_____ Underwear (2 pairs or up to you)

_____ Socks (2 or 3 pairs of medium or heavy wool socks, whatever is comfortable in your boots)

_____ Hiking footwear (See the Footwear section below)

_____ **optional** Teva-style sandals or lightweight tennis shoes for being at camp (very handy to have!)

_____ Wool/fleece stocking hat

_____ Wool/fleece mittens or warm wool/fleece gloves (it can get surprisingly cold at altitude!)

_____ Gaiters (1 pair) (not strictly necessary, but if there is much snow, you'll be glad you have them! Make sure they work with your footwear)

_____ Sun hat -- baseball cap, beach hat, something to keep the sun off (this is an important item in the high Rockies!)

EQUIPMENT

_____ Tent – **Please talk to us about this!** Obviously, not everyone needs a tent, as we can share. If you have a tent that you think will work, let us know; if you don't, let us know that too, and don't worry about it. We will coordinate based on who is coming, and will make sure that we have enough.

_____ Backpack – big enough to hold a weeks worth of gear and carry it comfortably. We might be able to help with this; please ask us if you have trouble obtaining one.

_____ Sleeping bag, preferably down (20° or warmer is a must – it's cold up high at night!)

_____ Insulating pad (there are now many options; the new inflatable pads like the ones by Big Agnes or Nemo or Thermarest are light and very comfortable! Closed cell foam is warm, but not very comfortable)

_____ Cup and spoon; plastic cup; and metal, wooden, or heavy-duty plastic (NOT disposable!) spoon

_____ Sunglasses – adequate for snow travel, wrap—around or with side-visor are great.

Make sure they block ~100%UV

_____ Headlamp – LED models are best, ideally with a red setting that can be directly turned on rather than having to cycle through white or other colors.

_____ Notebook and pen

_____ X-large heavy duty trash bags (enough to line your pack and wrap anything that is strapped to the outside)

_____ SUNSCREEN: waterproof, SPF 30 or higher – I like the alcohol-based non-greasy sort, as it leaves less residue after a week.

_____ Water bottle (1 liter Nalgene bottles are good)

_____ Water-proof matches or lighter

_____ Pocket knife (e.g., a Swiss Army Knife – very handy!)

_____ **optional** compass, star-chart, binoculars

_____ **optional** Still Camera (and film, if necessary; remember that batteries and a charger are not going to be readily available)

PERSONAL

_____ Toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, small (2oz? 1oz?) plastic bottle of something like Dr. Bronner's soap, toilet paper.

_____ Glasses or contacts as needed

_____ Zip-loc or other bags for your notebook and other things that should be kept dry

_____ Any munchies you can't get along without (e.g., chocolate)

_____ Lip balm with sunscreen

_____ Any necessary medication

_____ Athletic tape or moleskin for blisters -- we'll have a first aid kit for group use, but if you know you have problems with blisters, it might be good to bring some

_____ Insect repellent – containing DEET works best, though it is smelly and artificial. Use your judgement!

We will provide the food and communal supplies for cooking and navigating.

We will all do our final packing together, so can look at your gear prior to departure and can make sure it is suitable for the trip. We may discourage certain gear (that wouldn't do a good job, or that is unnecessary) from being taken on the trail, and will try to address any serious needs before we actually set out on the trail. There will be time for this enroute, and we are happy to help.

SLEEPING BAGS

Sleeping bags should be rated to 20° or below (preferably lower). All bags appropriate for backcountry use will carry such a rating, but this is only a guide; your sleeping pattern should determine whether you bring a warmer bag. Bags should be insulated with either down, which we prefer despite its intolerance of water, or a quality synthetic fill such as of Qualofill, Hollofil, Polarguard, MicroLoft or LiteLoft, etc.. Flannel, cotton or low-quality bags are great for backyard campouts or sleepovers but are insufficient for backcountry use. Most areas have mountaineering shops that can tell you if your

sleeping bag is appropriate. Appropriate sleeping bags are expensive, especially for one-time or once-a-summer use. We have a VERY LIMITED number that we can loan out, and it may be possible to rent one locally. Talk to us if this is an issue for you.

FOOTWEAR

This trip involves leaving established trails, carrying a pack through rugged terrain, and lots of scrambling in the mountains. If you have any doubts about your boots, please talk to us about it! We will help you come up with something that works.

The two most important considerations from my point of view are, first, that they be **comfortable**, and second, that they be **waterproof**. Speaking from experience (!), if your footwear doesn't at a minimum have both these properties, you are likely to be unhappy!

That said, there are several more things to consider:

- your footwear should offer foot and ankle protection for carrying a heavy pack. I once tore a foot ligament while carrying a heavy load while wearing running shoes -- don't risk that! Consider your footwear to be foot and ankle defense against rough terrain and missteps
- are durable and in good condition -- don't bring something that might fall apart!
- stiff lug soles, that can handle snow, scree, talus, and scrambling on rock. The stiffness is especially important for climbing or crossing snow.
- please don't bring high top tennis shoes!
- if you are getting new boots please break them in prior to coming to the trip! Breaking in a new pair of leather boots can involve several weeks so make sure you do it before you arrive!

There are many options available for adequate footwear. For this trip, we will have to cross some snow, but mostly we won't be on snow, so you don't need the heaviest sort of boots. Except for the first three miles, the entire week will be spent off-trail, mostly in meadows and various sorts of rock, loose and not. Mountaineering or outdoor stores should be able to offer advice if you need it, or feel free to ask us!

A second pair of footwear, while not critical, is really good to have to wear around camp. Sport sandals, such as Tevas or Chacos, work very well for this and can also be used for stream crossings in the backcountry. Running shoes also work but do not dry as quickly. Your feet will get wet at some point, and there is nothing like putting on a dry pair of shoes while your main shoes dry!

CLOTHING

Wool and synthetic materials like polypropylene, Capilene, and fleece are best for backcountry use. We encourage you to bring these fabrics instead of cotton and similar materials. Cotton loses its ability to keep you warm when damp or wet. In contrast, wool and synthetic materials retain their insulating properties when wet and dry significantly faster. The use of cotton is strongly discouraged for anything but underwear! Insulation,

whether it be the fill in your sleeping bag or the clothes on your back, keeps you warm by trapping dead air space that your body can then warm. The most efficient way to accomplish this with clothing is to layer several thin garments, rather than wear one bulky parka (the exception being a warm parka to wear at night in camp). Multiple layers are lighter, warmer and allow for much more flexibility as conditions change. Your parka is either on or off, and you are either hot or cold. Wearing several layers lets you make much more precise adjustments. Rain gear should be completely waterproof, rather than simply a water-resistant windbreaker. It should also be breathable: please do not bring a coat that is completely waterproof and non-breathable, as these become dripping greenhouses that paradoxically do not keep you dry if you're working at all – and we will be! Laminates such as Gore-Tex work very well.