

Turtle Tips #2 – Group Equipment 2013

Guide: I suggest that as a backpacking leader, you find and read a good backpacking book. I like Colin Fletcher's *The Complete Walker III*. However it is a bit dated and may be out of print. Version IV is out and may still be in print

The text of these Turtle Tips and associated lists will be posted on the District Web Site (<http://www.SKCBSA.org/buckeye>) shortly after they are delivered.

Group Equipment: Group equipment includes cooking gear, stoves and fuel, sanitation supplies, water treatment supplies, a group first aid kit and repair and spare items. The key is pack lightly but take the things you will need. A generic group equipment list is attached.

It is important to have a list, use it when packing, and update it when you get back from the trek.

Cooking Gear: Generally speaking, you should plan meals so you will only need two, nesting pots per cooking group. The pot size will depend on the number of people being served

Group Size	Recommendation
1 -3	1.5 liter + 2.5 liter
4-6	2 liter + 3 liter
6-8	3 liter + 4 liter

Typically the smaller pot is used to prepare the meal and the larger to heat water for drinks and clean-up. Each pot should have a flat lid. Most pots designed for back packing do not have bails as they add unnecessary weight. The cooking gear should also include a large spoon and a pair of pot tongs. I sometimes bring a small aluminum griddle with the handle removed. On long trips, pancakes and corn fritters taste very good.

Stoves and Fuel: There are fewer locations every year that permit the use of open fires for cooking. The prudent back packer therefore must plan to carry his cook stove with him. There are many types of stoves compatible with back packing requirements, but the most popular are stoves that use canned, compressed gases like propane, butane, iso-butane or a mixture of these or stoves that use white gas (Naphtha or Coleman fuel). The former stoves are easier to light, maintain and adjust. However, they do not work well at high altitudes or in frigid weather. The fuel for white gas stoves is nearly universally available but the stoves are harder to light and maintain. The Whisper-Lite style stoves are the hands down favorite for most hikers. You will need to use experience to determine how much fuel to carry.

Sanitation: Each crew should have a small amount of a biodegradable soap like Campsuds, a plastic scrubby pad ($\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of a ScotchBrite pad) and a 2' X 2' square of 2-4mm polyethylene. (Do not use the pads with sponges attached as the sponge adds unneeded weight and a great place for bacteria to grow.) Sanitation should start with the cooking crew. Make sure they wash before starting your meal. (Everyone can also take a bandana bath while supper is being prepared to take off salt and trail grime. A wet bandana is all that is needed. However, every crew member should wash his hands with soap before preparing food or eating.)

Cleaning dishes is a necessity but hardly a high point of the day. Semi-clean cooking gear can bring a trip to a very miserable state if backpackers encounter either soap-runs or food poisoning. The work of cleaning up starts with menu planning - bring enough food so that everything is eaten down to the last scrap. It is perfectly acceptable to lick the bowl and the pot clean. Once this is done it is much easier to finish the dish washing. To wash your dishes heat up water in the larger pot. Put a little in the smaller pot with a drop or two of the soap. Finish washing the inside of the pot and then the rest of the crew gear. Stack the washed gear and rinse with hot water. Rinse the small pot and rinse everything one more time. Bring the water in the large pot to a roiling boil and carefully scald each of the clean, rinsed dishes in the boiling water. Spread on the plastic and allow to air dry. The key is to put the pots back dry. Sometimes paper towels work fine.

Water Purification: It is safe to assume that every water shed in the continental United States is contaminated with viruses, bacteria, Giardia, protozoa, or tapeworm cysts. Knowing which of these you are likely to encounter will help you determine which method of water purification will be the best for your situation. There is little a back packer can do to purify water that is chemically contaminated. There are three practical types of water treatment available - chemical, filtration and purification. Chemical treatments use peroxide, chlorine or

iodine to kill bacteria and some cysts. Iodine works better than chlorine in killing Giardia cysts, but neither will kill tapeworm cysts. Filtration devices prevent anything above a certain size from passing through. Filtration works well for tapeworm and Giardia cysts and several other water borne bugs. Purification uses a further reduced pore size and adds a chemical sterilizer like silver particles. Purification will remove nearly all water borne pests including most viruses, however the useful life of a purification cartridge is quite limited and is especially sensitive to particulates in the water. It is a good idea to carry a back up method of purification for whatever method you choose as your primary (adding extra fuel to boil water before consumption is a possibility) and it is very prudent to add a disposable or cleanable, coarse filter to the inlet tube of a filter system.

Make sure that an older scout or adult monitors the water filling and purification process. It is easy for scouts to fill a water bottle and forget to add Iodine or otherwise cross contaminate.

Group First Aid Kit: Each hiker should be carrying a small personal first aid kit with band aids and moleskin any necessary personal medication. The group kit should be targeted toward larger problems. It is a good idea to include a large Ace bandage, gauze pads, topical antihistamines and anti-bacterials, adhesive tape, bandage scissors and latex gloves. Depending on the location and difficulty of the trek additional items might be necessary and prudent to have on hand. Make sure everyone knows what is in the kit and how to apply to a first aid emergency.

Repairs and Spares: Bring the basics to keep you going. Repairs that can affect you survival are repairs for tents, boots, and stoves. A needle with carpet thread can sew up nearly any cloth rip (tent or pack). Pins can repair zippers. Check your stove manufacturer for spares you should be carrying with you. A small metal tube 3/8" in diameter and 6" long will allow you fix most tent pole problems. For external frame packs make sure you have at least one of each size clevis pins and a couple of split rings. But never forget one of the critical and most useful basics - duct tape rolled on small pencil. Plan on taking about 15 feet. There are few things that cannot be fixed with a little properly applied duct tape.

Organization: I find that the Group First Aid Kit and Repairs and Spares are best in the leaders pack. The Cook Gear, Stoves and Fuel, Sanitation Gear, and Water Purification usually go with the chief cook. The Tents and Food are distributed among the group according to the hiker's ability to carry the weight. I find that a set of large stuff sacks (8" dia x 20" long) work well to pack group food and equipment for distribution among the hikers.