

2025 Backpacking Information for Scouts, Adults, and Parents

THIS IS A BACKPACKING TRIP

IF YOU DON'T PACK IT, YOU WON'T HAVE IT!

ADULTS ARE TAKING JUST WHAT THEY NEED SO THEY WON'T HAVE ITEMS YOU FORGET! PLAN AHEAD, CARRY WHAT YOU NEED BUT NO MORE.

It is the intention of this trip to provide everyone with a realistic backpacking experience like you will encounter at Philmont or backpacking in other wilderness areas. - Plan accordingly.

Logistics For 2025 – DRIVERS: STUDY THIS INFORMATION

- We will be camping Friday Night at the Antietam Hiker-Biker Campground. We will drive to the starting locations south of Harpers Ferry for the long and short hikes Saturday morning. See separate driving directions. We will camp near the Blackburn Trail Center on Saturday. On Sunday, we will tour Harpers Ferry if time permits.
- The long hikers will start at the Harpers Ferry National Historic Park parking area. This is pay to park. It is free with a National Park Pass. The short hikers will be shuttled about to their start in Keys Gap. The driving directions have detailed directions for all of the shuttling.
- Blackburn Trail Center has limited parking, so we plan to shuttle vehicles Sunday morning. We won't know the details until we have a count of people going on each hike. Bring an extra set of keys for your vehicles.
- Scouts and adults should be divided into long and short hike groups at the shed. Ideally, adults should be transporting scouts who are doing the same hike they are doing. It will make shuttling easier.
- We will need at least two adults to help with the shuttling and to transport some water to our Saturday camp. These adults do not have to backpack the trail, but they must carry all their gear into camp in a single backpack and not bring anything to Saturday's camp that they would not willingly carry on the long backpacking hike if they were hiking. This is to keep the spirit of a backpacking trip. Once in Saturday's camp, their vehicles are off limits, except for emergency use, until we are on the trail again on Sunday. This is to keep the spirit of a backpacking trip.

Water – IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SURVIVAL

- There is no reliable water in the forest where we will be hiking and camping.
- We will be camping near the cars on Friday night at the Antietam Creek Campground. Water will most likely be turned off at the campground. The Troop will have to bring water with us to refill bottles before we hike on Saturday morning.
- There should be water available at the Blackburn Trail Center. It will have to be carried up the hill to camp. It would be best if the advance crew could carry some water to camp and have some containers available to carry more. Each patrol and some adults should

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bring empty gallon jugs for transporting water back to our camp which they can do when they arrive.

Menu

- Patrols should bring a Cracker Barrel for Friday night. Plan for a quick no cook breakfast for Saturday. For Sunday morning, plan a no cook or one that only requires hot water like oatmeal. Plan on a hot drink mixed with water. Take foods high in energy and carry trail mix or a power bar for the hike.
- **Adults and Scouts should bring their own Saturday lunches and trail snacks from home in a resealable plastic bag** (which can double as a trash bag during the hike).
- Saturday dinner should be a meal requiring only the addition of boiling water and waiting. We will have about 5 backpacking stoves to heat water for everyone, and **we will not be able to cook meals on the stoves for Scouts.**
- **Patrols** have the option to cook a combined one pot meal for the patrol Saturday evening or have patrol members bring individual meals. At most we can heat your pot for a maximum of 5 minutes after you add the hot water. If you bring individual meals, we recommend you bring a freeze-dried meal. If cooking as a patrol, search the internet for “one pot meal” & “backpacking” and you will have many simple menu suggestions from which to choose. Choose something easy to clean up afterwards – avoid sticky sauces (e.g. cheese sauces).
- Patrols should all eat together regardless of how the meal is cooked.
- **Adults should each bring their own meals this year.** It is suggested you bring a freeze-dried meal with 500-1000 calories. You will expend a lot of energy backpacking. You can also bring a one pot meal that requires less than 5 minutes to cook in your own pot. You will have access to the stoves after all the water is heated.
- Everyone should avoid canned foods; they are heavy and create a disposal item. You can precook some items at home so they will be better preserved and easier to prepare. Transfer and transport food in resealable bags. You can also purchase meats and fish in sealed foil bags instead of cans.
- Bring hot chocolate mix or cider mix for hot drinks Saturday evening and Sunday morning. It will help warm you up.

Fires

- We will have a campfire on Saturday night if permitted. We won't know for certain until Friday of the weekend. The fire must be completely out and cold by morning. There can be NO fires in the morning because water to put it out completely will be scarce.

Cleaning cooking pots and personal eating utensils:

- Choose finger-foods, eat-in-package items, etc. for breakfasts and lunches to avoid using personal eating utensils. If you don't use it, you don't have to clean it!

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- Bring some nylon scouring pads, a very small container of dish soap, and paper towels in a Ziploc bag as part of crew gear.
- Consider less gooey one-pot meals to make cleaning your cooking pot easier. You can also line your pot with a plastic oven bag to eliminate pot clean up.
- Try to cook only what you'll eat and eat all you cook to avoid having to remove excess food from your pot.
- As soon as you finish your meal, squeegee out your personal bowl and spoon and rinse with a small amount of water. If you do this right away, the food won't have a chance to stick. Rinse again with hot water to sanitize. Store your bowl and spoon in a resealable bag. An alternative with less cleaning up is to bring a resealable plastic bag for each meal. Turn the bag inside out and put it over your plate or bowl. Eat off the bag and when done turn it back the correct way, seal it, and pack it out.
- As soon as you are done, empty out your pot of food into a resealable bag you brought from home and add water before food starts to dry out.
- NEVER dump leftovers into lakes, streams, etc. OK to use this water but either, dump excess food in an out-of-the-way place away from the campsite or preferably strain it through a colander, strainer or other and dispose of strained food you trash.
- Immediately scrub with the scouring pad and paper towels to clean out your pot. Rinse and rinse again with hot water. No soap in lakes, streams.
- Adults will provide small quantities of hot water for cleaning pots.

Trash disposal:

- We practice *Leave No Trace* while on backpacking trips and we *Carry In/Carry Out*. Eliminate items that will become trash by repackaging your food items before you leave home. Leave all the unnecessary packaging at home (bring your food preparation instructions) - you will have less to dispose of and a lighter pack. Unlike most trips, **your patrol is responsible for your own trash** during a backpacking trip as there are no trash cans or dumpsters around.
- **Be sure to have several plastic resealable bags to put trash in to carry out.**
- Crush and consolidate your trash so it takes up less space in your pack.
- Never bury trash in the woods! It should always be carried out with you to be disposed of at home or other approved places.
- Keep your site clean as you create trash. Policing will be much easier later.

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Patrol Gear

- All crew gear is to be divided fairly among all crew members. (younger, smaller members will not be overloaded; larger, stronger Scouts should take more of the load)
- All packs will be checked by seniors and adults before we hike to make sure crew gear is fairly distributed and so no unnecessary items are carried.
- You will need tents for your patrol, 3 scouts per tent. The tent should be split among the Scouts sleeping in it. Standard Troop's stakes are very heavy; we have some lighter ones. **Bring your own plastic or other lightweight stakes** if you have just in case there are not enough lightweight troop stakes. You need 8 stakes to pitch a Troop tent
- Ideally, each tent is split between Scouts on the same hike. Otherwise, it can't be set up until both hikes reach the Saturday camp spot.
- If patrols are making a combined meal, then bring one 6-8 qt pot (smaller if fewer Patrol members) with a tight-fitting lid for cooking your meal and cleaning your dishes. **DO NOT** take a larger pot – it is heavier and the water may not boil in it.
- Large serving spoon (and ladle if your one pot meal will be watery).
- Nylon scrubbing pad, a VERY SMALL bottle of soap – you don't need much, some paper towels, trash bags.
- One empty gallon jug for every 4 scouts for carrying water from the source to camp.

Adult Group Gear

- All adult crew gear is to be divided fairly among all adults. Adult crew gear will consist mostly of stoves, fuel, pots, extra empty water containers, tarp & stakes, and toilet trowels.
- Bring a Troop tent or your own backpacking tent – if you want to carry less, arrange for a tent mate before you leave and take a tent for the two of you. The Troop's stakes are very heavy. Bring your own plastic or other lightweight stakes if you have them instead. You need 8 stakes to pitch a Troop tent.
- Adults will be identified who will bring at least five high output backpacking stoves with fuel bottles and necessary accessories. We need at least 6, 6-8 qt pots with tight fitting lids. Some of the adults supplying stoves will also be supplying pots.
- One or two lighter weight dining flys with ropes depending on the number of participants.
- At least two metal trowels for digging cat holes.
- Compasses, maps, first aid kits, radios, and cell phones for the long and short hikers.

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Personal Gear – Scouts and Adults

Pack light and you will enjoy backpacking more. Bring just what you must have and no more. Choose the lightest of items you are considering. Avoid cotton items; instead take polyester, fleece, nylon, or wool. It is important that you and your son have a good pair of hiking socks – preferably 2 good pairs. Plan your clothing in layers for different temperatures – you should be wearing just about everything you brought when it is the coldest. Shed items of clothing as you get warmer and put back on as you get colder to avoid moisture build up in your clothing.

In car with you

- lightweight flashlight or head lamp with fresh batteries
- lightweight rain suit (jacket & pants) with hood or waterproof hat

In Pack

- pack cover (heavy duty plastic trash bag works also)
- sleeping bag in plastic bag in nylon stuff sack; sleeping clothes inside bag
- sleeping pad – $\frac{3}{4}$ or full length, lightweight
- in cold temperatures, one or two 8-hour hand warmers to put in sleeping for each night to keep feet warm
- 2 – 1 liter water bottles – full, 1 platypus bladder bag with drinking hose (optional). If using a bladder, bring at least a $\frac{1}{2}$ L bottle to have if your bladder runs dry.
- your share of a tent with ground cloth and stakes
- In Ziploc bags:
 - 1 pr. Underwear
 - fleece jacket
 - pants (if not wearing them)
 - an extra pair of wool hiking socks
 - extra T-shirt (polypropylene preferred)
 - knit or fleece hat and gloves
 - fleece or flannel PJ bottoms or long underwear (for extra warmth if needed)
- lightweight rain suit (jacket & pants) with hood or waterproof hat
- extra ziploc bags
- compass, trail map, 25' small cord, small towel
- eating kit (in a Ziploc): small plastic bowl, spoon, cup, plastic Ziploc bag to line your bowl for each meal
- toiletry kit (in a Ziploc): powder, toothpaste/brush, small bottle of sunscreen, camp soap, plastic washbasin (made from the bottom of a 1 gal. milk jug – optional), **toilet paper – NOT optional** (in a Ziploc)
- personal 1st aid kit, small (in a Ziploc), including moleskin and Band-Aids
- several plastic grocery bags (trash, protect feet from wet shoes, etc.)
- enough room for crew gear including share of tent, food, cooking gear etc. (see separate list)

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Wearing

- hiking boots (broken-in) if you have them or sturdy shoes
- **wool hiking socks** with sock liners or smart wool socks
- pants, zip pants or hiking shorts depending on the weather
- t-shirt – polypropylene or thermal undershirt (pack what you don't wear)
- warm shirt or lightweight fleece
- waterproof windbreaker
- hat/cap
- bandana
- pocketknife
- Wear some bright colored outerwear, orange preferred, and something colorful on the back of your pack. (Think O's clothing or safety clothing)

Going to the bathroom in the woods:

- Always carry a small roll of **toilet paper** in a Ziploc bag in your pack. **You are responsible for carrying what you need.**
- Bring a small metal or durable plastic shovel as part of your Patrol crew gear.

#1

- easy – enough said – at least 200 feet from lakes, streams, tents, and camping areas, etc.

#2:

- Go #1 first.
- Find an out-of-the way, level, soft spot at least 200 feet from lakes, streams, tents, and camping areas, etc. Never pick trails or traveled areas or spots within sight of them. Use a small shovel, a stick, a rock, or your heel to dig a small hole (called a 'cat hole') no deeper than 5-8 inches (any deeper and waste will not decompose easily).
- **On this trip:**
 - Use the latrine on Friday and Saturday morning.
 - **At our Saturday Campsite - go in the designated area away from the campsite.**
- Squat over the hole (it is easier if you find a small tree to hold onto with one hand and lean back), wipe and bury everything including toilet paper. Use a stick to move items if needed. **YOUR SHOVEL IS ONLY FOR MOVING DIRT – IT SHOULD NEVER CONTACT YOUR WASTE.** Cover your waste with the dirt from the hole then cover the dirt with leaves and other nearby debris so it is not noticeable. Put a stick or other object over the spot so no one steps in it.