

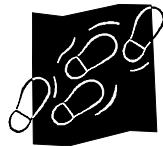
Grant MacEwan Mountain Club

Beginner Backpacking Workshop

Welcome to the Beginner Backpacking Workshop! The following pages should give you some idea of what to expect from this workshop and how to prepare for your first backpacking trip.

The first part of the workshop is designed to cover the gear you will need for a backpacking trip and any preparations you should do prior to leaving for the mountains. The second part of the workshop is a two-day backpack trip where you will have the opportunity to put to practical use some of the information you picked up during the in-town workshop.

The most important thing to remember during this workshop is to ask questions. We will try to cover all of the basics but inevitably we'll miss something so don't hesitate to speak up.



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If you have never backpacked before the task of organizing equipment, food and clothing into a manageable package may seem quite daunting, but never fear- it can be done! After a few trips you'll have the basic equipment down pat- the extras, those little "luxuries" we like to carry with us, will vary from trip to trip and individual to individual.

The information covered in this workshop is by no means *everything* you'll ever need to know about backpacking, but it should provide you with the basics. Like just about everything else we do in life, the best way to learn is by "doing", and by participating in a few of the Club's beginner backpacking trips we hope you'll come to enjoy backpacking as much as we do.

Before we talk about the type and amount of equipment you're going to need for your mountain foray, there are a few common sense rules we probably don't need to reiterate here but just in case. . . Whenever you're heading out to the mountains (whether backpacking, day hiking, skiing or climbing) you should:

- ◆ Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return and then check in with them when you do return.
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with the area you'll be visiting (talk to others who have been there, read the trail guide, look at a topo map).
- ◆ Call the Parks Service to check on trail and weather conditions.

On all trips organized by the Grant MacEwan Mountain Club there are specific responsibilities (outlined in the Club's Safety ByLaws) to be assumed by the Trip Coordinator, Trip Leader and Trip Participants. These responsibilities are reprinted from time to time in *Mountain High*, the Club's newsletter, but in case you're not familiar with them the following responsibilities apply to trip participants:

- ◆ Choose a trip suitable to your physical fitness and skill level.
- ◆ Call the Trip Coordinator prior to the trip.
- ◆ Be prepared to rent equipment if pooling of equipment is not possible or if certain equipment is required due to safety considerations (ie: avalanche transceivers for winter ski trips).
- ◆ Inform the Trip Leader of any medical conditions, allergies or health problems prior to the commencement of the trip.
- ◆ Know the suitability and condition of your equipment and communicate any potential for problems to the Trip Leader.
- ◆ Participate in group discussions and decision-making to the best of your ability. If you feel uneasy about a situation that the leader or group is suggesting, it is your responsibility to let the group know of your feelings.
- ◆ Respect the judgment of the Trip Leader and the fact that you are part of a group.
- ◆ Respect all financial arrangements.
- ◆ When on the trail, try to stay in eyesight of the other group members. At least walk in pairs and stop periodically to regroup.
- ◆ If you have any questions, contact the Trip Leader or Coordinator.

On a beginner trip, like the backpacking workshop, you aren't expected to be completely familiar with your equipment and the trail because this is intended as a learning weekend. However, if you are having problems with your equipment or are concerned about your

ability to participate in the trip, please discuss your concerns with the Trip Leader.

If you read the “Trip Participant Responsibilities” carefully you may have caught the phrase “financial arrangements” and wondered what that was all about. Generally, “financial arrangements” refers to ‘paying your share’ and dividing a group expenses equally among trip participants. For example, the Trip Coordinator will arrange car pools so that we take a minimum number of vehicles on each trip. Those participants who are taking their vehicle should start the trip with a full tank of gas, which they pay for. After that, keep track of all the money spent on gasoline for the trip, plus a fill-up when you return to the city, and divide that amount by the number of people in the vehicle and-voila! - financial arrangements. The same principle would also apply to any expenses pre-paid by the Trip Leader (hostel or campground fees, equipment rentals, etc.).

Now, on to the fun stuff. Probably one of the first questions you’ll have will deal with what equipment you’ll need and how much it is going to cost you to acquire it all. Don’t worry. Other than a pair of good boots, the best thing to do is beg, borrow or rent what you need for this workshop. This will give you the opportunity to “try before you buy” and to look at the various types of equipment your fellow backpackers are using. However, **don’t** borrow boots - they may be broken in and fit their owner’s feet perfectly, but they’ll cause you nothing but grief. If you’re having difficulty finding a particular piece of gear, let us know.

GEAR

In this section we will cover the “big” items- those that will fill a good portion of your pack and the ones which you definitely wouldn’t want to leave behind.

Generally, on Club backpacking trips we share stoves (2 people per stove) and tents (usually 2 people per tent, depending on tent size). This reduces the amount of weight each person has to carry and saves you the expense of purchasing all your equipment at once. We don’t usually attempt to fit two people into one sleeping bag although there have been rumours. . .

BACKPACKS

There are three different types of backpacks - internal frame, external frame and travel packs. The most popular type is the internal frame pack although each type has its advantages.

- ♦ 3 types of packs - daypack, alpine pack (slightly larger capacity; good for skiing), backpack.
- ♦ 3 types of backpacks - external frame, internal frame, travel pack
- ♦ Travel packs - good if you also want to use them as a suitcase but don’t buy one if you’re looking specifically for a backpack
- ♦ External frame- used to be the only type of pack available. Replaced in popularity by

internal frames. New external frames on the market that are very good.

- ♦ Internal frame- most popular.

Pro's and con's - external frame:

- ♦ + carry a heavy load better than an internal pack; more equitable distribution of weight
- ♦ + lots of pockets/compartments for those of us who like to know exactly where TP is
- ♦ + not as hot as an internal frame pack
- ♦ + easier to carry bulk of the weight on your hips because of the more rigid frame
- ♦ + carries the weight higher with the centre of gravity more directly over your hips; therefore you can maintain a more upright stance which is less tiring
- ♦ - not great for bushwhacking, narrow trails or when balance is crucial
- ♦ - springs and clasps tend to break and bad times

Pro's and con's - internal frame:

- ♦ + can be more stable & therefore give you better balance
- ♦ + better for bushwhacking & narrow trails
- ♦ - hotter than an external pack
- ♦ - “stuff sack” style with minimal pockets (some pockets can be added on)

General info:

- ♦ make sure pack fits you - have someone at the store where you purchase the pack help you
- ♦ some packs are adjustable to various torso lengths (these packs have a “ladder”), others are not. If you buy one that isn't then make sure you buy the right size (torso length, not capacity)
- ♦ when fitting a pack, check pack size (not capacity) *and* suspension (hip belt, shoulder straps, back support)
- ♦ check the hip belt padding- especially women. You can beef up the padding with insulite pads if necessary. 80% of the weight you will carry should be carried on your hips - it is therefore crucial to have a well-fitting hip belt
- ♦ check padding and positioning of shoulder straps- most internal frame packs have shoulder straps which cannot be adjusted and many are designed to fit men (they are designed for wider shoulders). Some companies now make packs designed for women; shoulder straps should stabilize pack but carry minimal weight
- ♦ wear sternum strap but remember to undo it before taking your pack off or you'll strangle yourself!
- ♦ pack bottom should be made of a heavy, abrasion resistant fabric
- ♦ try the pack on with weight in it before you buy it; an empty pack fits very differently (rides higher) than a full pack
- ♦ heaviest items should be packed in the middle of your pack, near your back
- ♦ load pack then tighten compression straps to secure load and prevent shifting
- ♦ zippers are weak spots - they blow at inconvenient times and they can allow water into your pack
- ♦ top loading - awkward to reach gear at the bottom but no zippers to worry about
- ♦ use waterproof stuff sacks, plastic bags or a pack cover

TENTS

For backpacking, the weight of each piece of equipment is important in determining it's suitability. The large canvas tent your parents used when they took you camping as a child is definitely not suitable for backpacking. Most backpacking tents sleep two people (three if you're very good friends) and weigh somewhere between 2 kilograms and 5 kilograms. Tents are defined as 2, 3 or 4 season- more on this in the workshop. If you decide to purchase a tent, don't forget to seam-seal it!

- ♦ 3 season tents - just like it says - spring, summer, fall
- ♦ 4 season tents - suitable for winter weather
- ♦ expedition tents - suitable for worst possible conditions
- ♦ tents that shed snow well may not be good in wind, tents that withstand windstorms may collapse under a heavy snowfall

Tent Construction

- ♦ floor should be a strong, waterproof fabric with as few seams as possible; material should come at least 6" up the side (tub wall)
- ♦ tent walls should be constructed of non-waterproof fabric such as rip-stop nylon; walls must be breathable to allow excess body vapour (approximately one pint of water per person/night) to escape. There will always be some condensation so it's best to keep tent windows open at night.
- ♦ poles - most are shock corded and there are 3 types: aluminum, fibreglass or a carbon/fibre composite.
- ♦ aluminum poles- most common, lightweight, inexpensive
- ♦ fibreglass poles - prone to breaking, inexpensive
- ♦ carbon/fibre - light, strong, expensive
- ♦ pegs - snow, sand, aluminum

Tent Shape

- ♦ A-frames, domes, tunnels
- ♦ free-standing (can be set-up anywhere and are easily moved) vs pegged (may be more stable)

Fly

- ♦ Usually coated on one side to make it waterproof
- ♦ Full-length fly is a must!
- ♦ Try not to let it touch the tent - stake it out if need be

Tent Care

- ♦ seam seal when new (annually?)- all seams in tub wall & fly.
- ♦ clean it out each time you use it - pebbles inside the tent can cut holes in the fabric when the tent is rolled

Extras

- ♦ gear loft, vestibule

SLEEPING BAGS

There is nothing worse than shivering in your sleeping bag all night, and being cold certainly doesn't contribute to an enjoyable weekend. Remember, the temperature ratings on sleeping bags are not comfort zones - if your bag is rated to minus ten degrees that means you won't freeze, although you may not be toasty warm, at minus 10. The addition of a sleeping bag liner or overbag can add greatly to your comfort. When choosing a bag weight is a consideration, as is the amount of space it will occupy in your pack and the type of fill used in the bag. (Hint: if you tend to get really cold at night, wear a toque or a sweatshirt with a hood to bed and keep your head covered. You won't win any fashion awards but it's better to put up with morning toque hair than to wake up chilled.)

Ratings

- ♦ Summer - just what it says. Bear in mind that night time temperatures sometimes drop pretty low in the mountains- know what temperature you are comfortable in
- ♦ 3 season - approximately -10 degrees C
- ♦ 4 season - approximately -15 to -20 degrees C
- ♦ winter - as low as -40 degrees C
- ♦ sleep warm guarantee on some new bags

Down

- ♦ excellent insulator, compacts extremely well, lightweight, lasts longer than a synthetic bag
- ♦ loses most of its insulating value when wet; takes a long time to air dry; allergy problems

Synthetic

- ♦ does not compress as well as down; retains insulation value when wet; dries faster

Styles

- ♦ Mummy, modified mummy, rectangular

General info

- ♦ check to see if bag is 'sewn through' - if so this could create cold spots
- ♦ shell is wind resistant- some expensive bags have Goretex shells
- ♦ shake bag when taking it out of your stuff sack - the loft creates air spaces which means warmth
- ♦ sleeping bags come in varying lengths- buy the appropriate size
- ♦ hoods, yokes, draft tubes
- ♦ liners - keep bag clean & add warmth
- ♦ overbags - add warmth

Sleeping pads

- ♦ insulite
- ♦ ridge rest
- ♦ thermarest (3/4 or long, regular or ultralight)

STOVES

Although there are a number of lightweight, backpacking stoves available, the two most popular types are the MSR Whisperlites and the Colemans (Peak, Apex and Feather 400). More info (and demos) during the workshop.

- ♦ people are very loyal to their brand!
- ♦ multifuel vs other
- ♦ clean & oil stove regularly
- ♦ carry extra fuel. Remember - cool, wet weather requires more fuel for soups, beverages, etc
- ♦ windscreen decreases cooking time and fuel consumption
- ♦ generally 2 people/stove so a good idea to plan your meals in twos if possible (or multiples of 2)

Suggested Gear

Tent/Fly/Ground Sheet/Pegs
Stove/Windscreen/Extra fuel
Sleeping bag
Insulite pad, Thermarest, foamie or other sleeping pad
Backpack

CLOTHING

The secret to being comfortable is layers, layers, layers. Mountain weather is extremely changeable and a variety of layers will enable you to dress (and undress) for whatever conditions you encounter. Think of your clothing as “the three W’s”- layers designed to **wick**, keep you **warm**, and keep out the **weather**.

Your inner layer of clothing should be constructed of a fabric designed to “wick” or draw moisture away from your body and into your outer layer of clothes. Wearing clothing that wicks is particularly important with socks and, during colder weather, tops. Polypropylene is a fabric designed to do exactly this and poly socks, long johns and tops are available under a variety of brand names.

Your next layer provides warmth. The new fleece fabrics and old-fashioned wool are good choices, cotton isn’t. If you opt for fleece, it will dry quickly if it becomes wet (it also makes a great pillow at night) and will even retain its insulating value when wet. The wool will also keep you warm if the garment becomes wet but is considerably bulkier and heavier than fleece.

Finally you want a layer that will protect you from the elements- something that is both

windproof and waterproof. A Gore-Tex-type fabric (something that repels water but still “breathes”) is ideal.

What about pyjamas? Many folks will tell you you’ll be warmer if you don’t wear anything inside your sleeping bag. Hmm. Maybe. Warmth aside, there is another reason for covering up before you crawl in - without anything between you and your sleeping bag, the bag will tend to pick up your body odour. So, if you decide that nothing should come between you and your sleeping bag, think again and at least use a liner. It’s much easier to wash a liner than a sleeping bag. Also, if you tend to get chilled at night, try wearing either a toque or a hooded sweatshirt to bed - by keeping your head covered you’ll stay much warmer.

Don’t forget both a sunhat and raingear; a toque and gloves are also a good idea, even in the middle of July. A pair of gaiters are also a handy item to tuck into your pack.

BOOTS

There are many different types of boots on the market - the best advice is to buy your boots from a reputable store that has knowledgeable staff. Tell them what type of hiking you’ll be doing (light day hikes, backpacking, offtrail bushwhacking) and make sure you stomp around the store with the boots on before you buy them. Your “stomping” should include walking up and down a ramp to give you some idea how the boot is going to feel when hiking up and down hills. If you’re purchasing your boots from a store that doesn’t have a ramp you may want to consider shopping elsewhere. Don’t forget to waterproof your boots before leaving home.

Suggested Clothing

1 short sleeved T-shirt	2 pairs outer socks (wool or wool blend)
1 long sleeved T-shirt	1 extra pair of socks
1 long sleeved shirt	Underwear (don’t leave home without them!)
Fleece pull-over or sweater	Something to sleep in
1 pair shorts	Sunhat
1 pair lightweight pants (not jeans)	Toque
Wind/rain pants	Gloves
Wind/rain jacket	Boots
2 pairs inner socks (made of some type of ‘wicking’ material)	Camp shoes or sandals
	Gaiters

FOOD AND DRINK

Would you like the good news first or the bad news? Okay. The bad news is that your food will likely be one of the heaviest components in your pack and of all your food, lunch will likely weigh the most. The good news is that the amount of food you're carrying decreases as you get further into your trip!

If you're used to car camping there is one essential difference to bear in mind when preparing for your first backpacking trip: you'll have to **carry** everything with you - into your campsite and back out. That one little fact may make you think twice about packing a bottle of wine for dinner or a carton of juice for breakfast!

Many Club members favour pasta and rice dishes for main meals carbohydrates are great energy foods, the weight is minimal and cooking time is short (definitely a plus after a long day on the trail). Dehydrated foods are also a good choice although the commercially prepared ones tend to be overpriced. A number of Club members dehydrate their own fruits, vegetables and meats- ask and they'll share their "secrets" with you.

You'll also want to carry one or two water bottles with you. Fill the bottle(s) before you start hiking and don't be stingy with the amount of water you drink - the last thing you want is to become dehydrated. Most backcountry campsites are located near a water source (river, creek, lake or even a water pump) but **always** treat the water before you drink it. Water can be treated by adding iodine tablets, by boiling, or by using a filtering system.

Don't forget your trail snacks and munchies- a handful of nuts, a granola bar or a piece of chocolate is a great energy booster when you feel yourself starting to tire.

While there certainly aren't any rules about what foods to bring with you, or how much you'll need, the following sample menus should give you an idea as to how much food you'll want for an average two day trip. (It's also a good idea to carry an extra meal with you in case of emergency.)

Sample Menus

Saturday Breakfast

Hard boiled eggs (boiled at home and brought with you)
Muffin
Juice (made from powdered juice crystals)
Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Saturday Lunch

Cup of soup (if it's very cold or you're very hungry)
Pepperoni (this keeps well even out of the refrigerator)
Cheese
Crackers, pita bread, bagel, or nan
Carrot sticks, radishes or celery
Apple
Granola bar
Water or juice

Saturday Dinner

Cup of soup (if you're really hungry)
Pasta with sauce (the Mayacamas and Knorr-Swiss sauce mixes are excellent; for a real treat add dehydrated onions, peppers, and mushrooms to the sauce)
Carrot sticks, radishes or celery
Granola bar or cookies (or both!)
Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Sunday Breakfast

Instant oatmeal (yuk!)
Muffin
Juice (you'll learn to like juice made from powder)
Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Sunday Lunch

Pita bread or bagel with peanut butter and jam
Orange
Granola bar
Water or juice

Snacks

Trail mix
Chocolate bar
Lots of hot chocolate

ALL THAT OTHER STUFF

It's almost impossible to provide you with a list of **everything** you should, could or might want to take with you on a backpacking trip; after a few trips you'll know what works best for you. However, you may want to use the following lists as a guide for your first few trips (don't forget to include the equipment, clothes and food listed on the previous pages!).

The Basics

Pots (1 medium/1 small)	Toilet tissue (very important!)
Pot lifter (if needed)	First aid kit (see list below)
Plate or bowl	Matches or lighter
Mug	Water bottle
Cutlery	Headlamp or flashlight and spare batteries
Dishsoap/scrubber/towel	Duct tape
Rope (to hang pack with)	Whistle
Several plastic garbage bags	Sunscreen
Toiletries *	Sunglasses
Swiss Army knife (or equivalent)	Bug spray

* A note about toiletries - it is best to avoid anything that is scented or perfumed; instead, opt for unscented soap, deodorant, hand cream, etc.

The Extras

Bakepacker (a nifty little item that lets you make cakes and pizzas on your stove)	Playing cards, dice or a book
Outback Oven	Topo map
Guide books (trail guide, flowers, birds, etc.)	Compass
Camera	Pack cover
Binoculars	Candle lantern

FIRST AID KIT

On all Club trips the Trip Leader will carry a first aid kit but it is always a good idea to carry your own, particularly if there are specific medications you require. **Don't forget to let the Trip Leader know if you have any medical condition, allergies or health problems that could occur during the trip.**

The container for your first aid kit should be clean and, if possible, waterproof. It is a good idea to label your first aid kit (so that someone rummaging through your pack would recognize it) and keep it handy, either in an outer pocket or near the top of your pack. Remember to check your kit periodically to ensure none of the items have reached their expiry date.

Wilderness First Aid Kit

First Aid Manual	Cold Buster bar
Paper and pencil (not pen)	Safety pins
6 triangular bandages	Flat-tipped tweezers
4 4x4 sterile dressings	Scissors
2 abdominal pads	Sunscreen
Assorted bandaids	Mild soap
1 2" roll of gauze ('Cling')	Water purification tablets
Tensor bandage	Whistle
Antibiotic ointment	Mirror
Moleskin	Waterproof matches
Second Skin	Candle
1 roll adhesive tape	Emergency blanket
Disinfectant (hydrogen peroxide or sterile swabs)	Emergency telephone numbers
Aspirin	Change for a telephone
Throat lozenges/cough drops	
Energy bar	

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SAFETY

The Grant MacEwan Mountain Club has an excellent safety record but it is your responsibility, as a trip participant, to recognize that there is an inherent danger in activities such as mountain climbing, scrambling, backcountry skiing, backpacking and even day hiking. This certainly isn't meant to scare you off, but rather to make you aware that you will be in a wilderness environment and exactly what that entails. On overnight trips, whether skiing, mountaineering or backpacking, you will likely be several hours away from help should you need it. The Trip Leader will always carry a first aid kit but you are encouraged to carry one of your own. Before you begin your trip the Leader will ask those people who have first aid kits and/or first aid training to identify themselves so that you will know who to turn to if you require assistance. Each year the Club offers a Red Cross Wilderness First Aid course which all Club members are encouraged to take.

As a participant in a Grant MacEwan Mountain Club trip you will be asked to sign an

“assumption of risk” agreement. **Individuals who do not sign the agreement will not be permitted to participate in the trip.**

Now, a few other things to keep in mind:

- ◆ There are very few things more uncomfortable than hiking for several hours (or several days) with blistered feet - most of us know this from experience. If you find that you are developing “hot spots” anywhere on your feet, STOP. Hot spots are caused by persistent rubbing of foot against boot and will almost guarantee a good-sized blister by the end of the day. If you stop as soon as the problem occurs and use either Moleskin or, if a blister has already formed, Second Skin, you likely won't develop a blister and you'll find the weekend much more enjoyable. If you have never hiked before it's a good idea to stop after the first half-hour or so and take a look at your feet - it's something to do with that old adage about “an ounce of prevention...”
- ◆ Sounds dumb but. . . cut your toenails before heading out. Toenails pounding into the toes of your boot will hurt as much as blisters, and there's the added attraction of having the nails turn purple and fall off. Disgusting?!
- ◆ If you are hiking during your menstrual cycle be especially careful about disposing of soiled sanitary supplies.
- ◆ Keep a clean camp. Whether you are day hiking or backpacking, don't crawl into your sleeping bag without ensuring *everything* you have with you has been put away. If you are in the backcountry make sure that anything the squirrels, porcupines and bears may consider to be food (this includes soap, toothpaste, gum, and the towel you used to mop up the soup you spilled at dinner) is hung up in a bear pole. Most backcountry campsites have poles constructed specifically for this purpose. If you are at a backcountry campsite that doesn't have a bear pole, talk to the Trip Leader who will show you how to find a suitable tree to hang your oatmeal from. If you are car camping, stow everything in your vehicle, *not* your tent. If your food supply is raided, it will likely have been by squirrels or porcupines who seem to cause more grief than bears. Many animals also have a penchant for salt - this includes salt-stained hats (there's a story here, just ask!), boots and boot laces, and pack straps. The moral of this story is - if you want to keep it, put it away.
- ◆ If you are hiking during tick season (usually late April through early June), **CHECK FOR TICKS**. Check all of those dark, sweaty areas - the back of your neck, armpits, ankles, groin - as well as your hair (have someone else check your hair if possible). It's a good idea to read up on what to do should you find one of these nasty critters settling in for a meal. (See excerpt from Ben Gadd's “Handbook of the Canadian Rockies”.)
- ◆ Don't carry glass in your pack. If you're considering carrying wine, liqueur or some other treat with you, put it in a plastic container and then in a plastic bag before

putting it in your pack.

- ◆ If you are backpacking, you will need two separate backcountry permits. Your individual **backcountry pass** is like your vehicle pass, only for the backcountry, and is available through Parks Canada (yes, there is a fee involved). It is available as an annual pass or on a per trip basis and each trip participant must have their own pass. It is your responsibility to let the Trip Co-ordinator know if you have an annual pass, otherwise you may be stuck paying for a weekend pass as well. On Club trips the Trip Leader will arrange to obtain the **trail permit** (as of spring 1999 there still wasn't a charge for this). It is a good idea to leave a piece of paper with the trail permit number written on it on the dashboard of your car if your vehicle is parked at the trailhead.
- ◆ Were you wondering when we'd get around to mentioning bears? If you're going to spend any time hiking the trails in our national parks this summer, you stand a better chance of seeing a bear than if you spend the summer in downtown Edmonton, but that's not saying much. Most people who spend time in the backcountry never see a bear. Of the few who *do* encounter a bear, most report no problems. Occasionally, there is an encounter between bear and hiker that results in a mauling and then, usually, the destruction of the bear. These incidents are rare but when they happen they attract attention and consequently these are the stories we remember.

It is a good idea to read the pamphlet Parks Canada distributes about bears and become familiar with their recommendations on how to handle yourself should you and a bear cross paths. A few other points to keep in mind:

- ⇒ **Never** approach a bear (or any animal, for that matter), whether you see the animal on a hiking trail or along one of the park roadways.
- ⇒ **Be alert** and watch for bear signs - diggings, droppings, tracks.
- ⇒ If you happen to come across an animal carcass while hiking, don't approach it to get a better look (sounds gruesome!). It could be a bear's food cache and they won't take kindly to "sharing" it with you.
- ⇒ **Keep a clean camp** so that you don't attract *any* type of wildlife. Don't store food in your tent - hang all your "food" (remember, this includes toothpaste, soap, etc.) at least 4 metres off the ground. Don't cook or eat in or near your tent - Ben Gadd recommends cooking at least 50 metres downwind of your camp. Don't hang your food bag near your tent.
- ⇒ **Make noise** while you're hiking, particularly if you're moving through chest high brush or coming around a blind corner. Usually, if you're hiking with a group of people, you'll be making enough noise just through conversation and movement that most wildlife will have moved out of your way long before you've even had a glimpse of them.
- ⇒ If you **do** meet a bear while hiking, **don't panic, don't run** and **don't make eye contact**. Running may trigger the predator/prey instinct and you know which one

you'd be. **Slowly** back away until you are out of the bear's line of sight then pick up your pace. If you need to get past the bear, make a wide detour around the animal; if it is a female grizzly with cubs, make your detour at least a kilometre. For more information, refer to the Parks "You Are in Bear Country" pamphlet; most trail guides also contain information on what to do in this situation, as does Stephen Herrero's excellent book "Bear Attacks: Causes and Avoidance".

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Don't wear plaid shorts with striped socks. Just kidding. Trail etiquette has nothing to do with how you look and everything to do with maintaining the backcountry environment. A few points to remember:

- ◆ Switchbacks on trails are there for a reason. Don't take a shortcut and head directly up or down a hill.
- ◆ If the trail is wet & muddy don't create a new trail by skirting the wet areas. Your boots should be able to handle a little water and mud after all the money you spent on them. If at all possible, stay on the trail.
- ◆ In fragile alpine areas: if there is no distinct trail spread out rather than walking single file which tends to cause more damage to the fragile alpine vegetation; if there is a trail- stay on it. Many of the plants in the alpine take years to bloom and half-a-dozen well-intentioned hikers can trample them in seconds.
- ◆ Remember to pack out everything you pack in. Backcountry campsites do not have garbage disposal facilities so that means orange peels, empty food packets and any other garbage you create must come out with you. Please don't leave your orange peels and apple cores along the trail "because they're biodegradable". Yes, sooner or later they will degrade but likely not before some backcountry critter has scented them out as food. Since you'll already be carrying your own garbage out, why not also pick up any other trash less considerate campers have left behind?
- ◆ Use the backcountry biffies (outhouses) Parks Canada has provided. They may not always smell as pleasant as you would like but they are there for a reason- use them, not the bushes. If the toilet has a lid, put it down when you're finished- this will help to minimize those foul outhouse odours.
- ◆ If nature calls and you're on the trail and not near an outhouse, move well away from the trail and any water sources (some books suggest a minimum of 100 metres). Carry a lighter along with your toilet tissue and use it to burn used toilet tissue. Pack used sanitary supplies out with you.
- ◆ **DO NOT** use the biffies as a garbage pit for your leftover dinner- share it with your friends (unless it tastes *really* bad), burn it (if you have a fire), or pack it out with the rest of your garbage.
- ◆ Most backcountry campsites do not permit fires. Respect this unless conditions are extreme and a fire is required for survival. If you are in a campsite that does permit fires, use the fire boxes and burn only deadfall.

- ◆ In the national parks, camp only in designated campsites while in the backcountry.
- ◆ In most backcountry campsites there are specific sites for tents (tent pads). Often these sites have a gravel base to minimize the impact of your stay there. Resist the temptation to bypass the gravel tent pad in favour of the grassy meadow.
- ◆ Dump grey water (water from dishes and cooking) well away from your campsite and water source.
- ◆ Use biodegradable soap.
- ◆ Do not wash your dishes or yourself directly in the river or lake- remember this is also your (and everybody else's) drinking water.
- ◆ Avoid bringing your Walkman into the backcountry. . . please.

That is just about everything but as we said way back at the beginning, “inevitably we’ll miss something” and we probably did. Let us know if you have any questions - they’re undoubtedly questions we each asked at one time or another so don’t hesitate to speak up. Most important of all, get out there and **ENJOY!**