

# Trekking *At Sabattis Scout Reservation*

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So you've signed up for a trek this summer at Sabattis Scout Reservation James "Marmaduke" Seton Trek Center, what's next? In order to have a smooth and enjoyable experience, you should *Be Prepared!*

## **What to expect**

A day on the trail: Wake up, pack. Take down the bear bag and distribute the food among the participants' packs. The scouts assigned cook breakfast, and lunch for the day is packed where it is easily reached. Everyone makes sure their water bottles are full, then set out for the day around 8-8:30am. Trek for several hours, taking water breaks as needed. Lunch- a simple uncooked trail meal- is often early, around 11, to keep up energy levels. Make sure each trek participant is drinking their water! Trek on, again taking water breaks as needed, until around 4pm when the group locates a campsite. Set up camp, with different Scouts tasked with setting up the water filter, cooking dinner, washing dishes, and setting up the bear bag. Remember all scented items go in the bear bag! Bears will even eat scented soaps.

Enjoy the outdoors, have a good night's rest, and then do it all again!

## **Physical Fitness**

If this is your first trek, it's difficult to know what kind of demands the trek will present- whether it is a hiking or canoe based trek. Each member of the trek should be able to carry their own equipment- and the additional weight of food and cooking materials provided by the trek center- for several miles at a time. On a hiking trek, participants should be comfortable with their footwear (wear your chosen boots for gradually increasing time and distance starting *at least* one month prior to your trek), and have taken several day- trips with a loaded pack. If you are canoeing, it is expected that you are familiar and proficient with canoeing technique (see the canoeing merit badge, requirement 10, for a list of strokes), as the weather conditions may become difficult for inexperienced paddlers. Canoe portages can be physically demanding as well- participants should be aware of the challenge if they are portaging for the first time while on their trek.

## **Knowledge and Skills**

Leave No Trace is an important facet of trekking knowledge. When washing yourself or dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater. Cat holes should be dug 6-8 inches deep 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Minimize the impact of fires, using established fire rings. Pack it in, Pack it out!

While on a trek, focusing on maintaining good social and safety minded behavior is essential. What may normally be a minor issue at a Troop meeting, can escalate due to the difficulty of trekking and the long amount of time you spend together. Stay together on the trail in case of emergency. Every safety rule is doubly important. Consider this- at the end of a long day, whittling in the fading light at an unfamiliar campsite; you may think you are being safe, but another trek member is not aware and is cut- now there is an injured person far from professional care. Make sure to double and triple check your safe area for fires, knives or axes, and swimming areas- remember you must wear your life jacket to swim outside of camp! Ensure everyone knows of these areas while they are in use, especially because the site will be different each night. Your guide will assist in establishing safe areas and in risk management assessment. Listen to your guide at all times- they have the final say, as they are responsible for your safety.

Other knowledge and skills to brush up on include tent site selection and set-up, trail sanitation, water purification, cooking simple meals using backpacking stoves, map and compass skills, and how to hang a bear bag.

## Tips for packing

When packing your backpack, place a trash bag inside your pack first, and pack inside of that. This will help to keep your gear dry from rain or splashing water, especially if you do not have waterproof dry sacks to pack in. Keep your water and rain gear easily accessible, as well as the lunch for the day- you don't want to empty your bag out to get to something on the trail! Pack light when possible. For example, carrying a full size camp chair is overkill on a trek, but a pad or small stool is better. Make sure everything is secure and doesn't move, otherwise things may fall off of your pack or cause you to lose your balance when hiking.

Remember the Scout Outdoor Essentials!

1. Pocket knife or multi-tool
2. First aid kit
  - a. Duct tape is great in a first aid kit (just don't put it directly on an injury!)- and you can use it to patch up gear on the trail too
  - b. Hand sanitizer is great to have for both general cleanliness and for ensuring clean hands before treating any injuries
3. Clothing
  - a. Synthetic fabrics are recommended- cotton can keep heat in leading to heatstroke, or stay damp leading to hypothermia. Check thrift stores for exercise clothing if you're looking to keep your budget low
  - b. A head net is recommended to keep flies and mosquitoes out of your face during tough hikes
  - c. A hat can help keep the sun off of you, and when used with the head net can hold the mesh away from your face
  - d. Beyond your hiking boots (even for canoe treks! Portages often have rough terrain), water shoes or camp shoes are also recommended. Closed toe is best to prevent any sticks or rocks from injuring your feet at the campsite
4. Rain gear
  - a. Ponchos are not adequate when it's windy! Only a fitted jacket will keep you dry, and rain pants are recommended as well. This outer layer can keep you warm even when it is not raining
5. Flashlight
  - a. And extra batteries! Leave the rest of your electronics at home, and experience the outdoors
6. Food
  - a. Provided by Sabattis Scout Reservation, but you can bring supplemental items- just remember to put all scented items in the bear bag! Putting these items in a separate bag in your pack will help you remember them all
7. Water
  - a. 2 water bottles (of the Nalgene style) are preferred over water bladders, as they are easier to fill. Water treatment methods are provided by Sabattis Scout Reservation, but feel free to bring your own as a backup
8. Matches or Firestarter
  - a. Cooking equipment is provided by Sabattis Scout Reservation, but bring your own equipment if you would like to use it on the trail. Check with your assigned trek guide to ensure compatibility with BSA and trek safety standards. Don't forget your mess kit!
9. Sun protection
  - a. A necessity! Bug spray is also a must have
10. Map and compass
  - a. Learn your trek route in advance and have the Scouts navigate- the guide will provide direction if necessary, but this is your trek!

## Resources

Trek Safely

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-125.pdf>

Safety Afloat

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Aquatics/safety-afloat.aspx>

Safe Swim Defense

<http://www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics/safe-swim.aspx>

Camping Safety (including Treated Drinking Water)

<http://www.bsa-cvc.org/home/healthandsafety/gss/gss03>

Hiking Merit Badge Requirements

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit\\_Badge\\_ReqandRes/Hiking.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Hiking.pdf)

Backpacking Merit Badge Requirements

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit\\_Badge\\_ReqandRes/Backpacking.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Backpacking.pdf)

Canoeing Merit Badge Requirements

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit\\_Badge\\_ReqandRes/Canoeing.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Canoeing.pdf)

Leave No Trace Guidelines

<https://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>.

Backpacking 101 (useful tips, packing lists, and information)

<http://www.backpacker.com/skills/beginner/backpacking-101/>