OUTDOOR 101

Introduction to the Out of Doors

Participant Packet

Prerequisite: GIRL SCOUTING 101

This adult learning course is a self-study packet that focuses on age appropriate activities, outdoor progression, reservation procedures, and safety hazards in the out-of-doors.

At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

• Define the roles and responsibilities of an outdoor certified adult.
• Identify and understand grade and level appropriate outdoor activities.
• Name the nine steps in outdoor progression.
• Demonstrate knowledge of various safety hazards in the out-of-doors.
• List the procedures for reserving a Girl Scouts of Central Maryland property.
• Explain how the various levels of GSCM outdoor certification piece together.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Outdoor 101 Participant Packet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist to Complete this Participant Packet:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s Outdoor Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Outdoor Education Philosophy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl/Adult Partnership in Outdoor Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop and Girl Readiness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Progression</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Begin Outdoor Progression Safely</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is My Role as the Outdoor-Certified Adult?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Tips to Remember – Building the Outdoor-Certified Team</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Paperwork and Campsite Reservations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralism and Diversity During Outdoor Program Activities Camp</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Program With Girls With Disabilities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Resources</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before Taking Girls Outdoors, Think About:</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep Your Eye on the Ever-Changing Weather</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to Wear in the Outdoors</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Camp Animals You May Meet</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison Ivy, Oak &amp; Sumac</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Ticks</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Impact Camping and Hiking</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave No Trace: Principles of Outdoor Ethics</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Camp Vocabulary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikes to Take</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM)
Outdoor 101 Participant Packet

We welcome you to outdoor activities with the Girl Scouts, and are excited to offer you this pre-requisite participant packet as the first step in GSCM’s outdoor education. Taking a group of girls into the outdoors can be fun and exciting, but also a bit daunting! The responsibilities are great, but the rewards are plentiful for girls and adults alike.

The goal of GSCM’s outdoor learning opportunities are to prepare adult volunteers to lead Girl Scouts in planning and participating in safe and enjoyable activities so that they gain an appreciation and respect for the outdoors, while offering you flexible learning options depending on the scope of your outdoor activities.

The GSCM Outdoor 101 Participant Packet does not qualify you to take girls camping, but is the pre-requisite for all other components of Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s outdoor education. It is the introductory course providing you with background information. You may complete this packet at your own pace and on your own time. A skills-assessment answer sheet is to be completed and returned to GSCM to receive credit for this adult learning opportunity.

Upon receipt of notification of completion of Outdoor 101, you are eligible to participate in Basic Troop Camping course and then the Tent Camping module. Please plan accordingly and allow time for processing. You must complete Outdoor 101 prior to taking Basic Troop Camping.

You will need to refer to the following resources to complete this packet and in planning troop activities:
- Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s Volunteer Essentials
- Guide to Council Properties
- Girl Scout Resource Packet for Trips and Travel.

These are available on our website at http://www.gscm.org/about/resources/ . You will need to refer to these materials to complete this packet. Troop leaders should be familiar with these materials and may have copies for your use.

Checklist to Complete this Packet:

- Read the information in each section.
- Record your answers on the Answer Sheet provided. If you have questions, jot them down on the Answer Sheet.
- E-mail, fax, or mail your answer sheet to our office. The answer sheet is a separate fillable form.

E-mail to vbrooks@gscm.org. Please include your name and “Outdoor 101” in the subject line.

Fax – 410.358.9916 Phone – 410.358.8711, ext. 220
Mail - Girl Scouts of Central Maryland
         Valerie Brooks, Adult Learning Specialist
         4806 Seton Dr.
         Baltimore, MD 21215

Submit the answer sheet only. Keep the remainder of the packet for your records.

Please allow at least two weeks between the submission of the Outdoor 101 Participant Packet Answer Sheet to receive your completion notice.
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s Outdoor Learning Opportunities

Upon successful completion of GSCM’s Outdoor 101, you will be notified by email making you eligible to participate in subsequent outdoor training courses in the GSCM, including Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking, Tent Camping, and other outdoor modules.

Listed below are the next steps in our outdoor education.

**Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking**
*Prerequisite: Outdoor 101*

This adult training is required when using an open fire for cooking and/or when planning to troop/group camp with girls at GSCM or non-GSCM sites with established restrooms and sleeping facilities such as cabins, screened in shelters, and platform tents/yurts. This course will demonstrate how to prepare girls for camping in the out of doors. This training includes an online training portion that must be completed before the in person planning session, a 2.5 hour planning session and an overnight at one of our local camps.

**NOTE:** This course qualifies GSCM volunteers to have campfires. It is required for any open fire building and cooking at any site – including non-GSCM properties. For example – If you are having an event at a local park with girls and “just want to toast marshmallows for s’mores” you must have an adult who has completed this training present.

**Tent Camping**
*Prerequisites: Outdoor 101 and Basic Camping Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking*

This 2.5 hour training is required when your troop/group will be using tents when camping in the out of doors at GSCM or non-GSCM sites with established restrooms/latrines and fire circles.

GSCM offers additional outdoor workshops such as geocaching and novelty cooking which will help enhance your outdoor experiences with the girls.


**Girl Scout Outdoor Education Philosophy**

In Girl Scouting, outdoor education is accomplished by girl planning partnering with adults. Outdoor experiences afford every girl an opportunity to:

- Explore nature and learn to appreciate and protect the outdoors
- Learn new skills.
- Progress from one skill level to another
- Be challenged to grow in new ways.
- Develop independence, leadership and team work.
- Improve self-esteem.
- Teach others what she knows.
- Develop values to guide her actions and provide foundation for sound decision-making.
- Be safe, have fun, and make new friends.

Our outdoor education philosophy follows the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Development Model. These are the three parts of the Girl Scout Leadership Development Model which follow a girl-centric approach. Leadership development is the core of the movement and is the aspect that connects every experience a girl has in Girl Scouts.

Based on the Girl Scout philosophy of leadership to become leaders, girls need to:

- Discover - Understand their values, and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.
- Connect - Care about, inspire, and team with others.
- Take Action - Act to make the world a better place.

Discover, Connect, and Take Action are the three keys to leadership and represent activities differentiated by age that engage girls in practicing leadership skills based on the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Through this model, the mission of Girl Scouting comes to life:

*Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.*

For more information on the Girl Scout National Program read Chapter 2 of Volunteer Essentials.

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**Girl/Adult Partnership in Outdoor Education**

As girls gain experience, they can do more, and the outdoor-certified adult should do less. Here are some tips to help guide you through the planning process:

**Recognize the amount of time needed for planning.**
It will take more time for the girls to plan something than it would for you. But Girl Scouting is about empowering the girls and helping them to make decisions in partnership with adults.

**Sometimes things will not go as planned.**
Part of teaching the girls to be good decision-makers is allowing them to sometimes fail in a safe environment. Many times we learn more from our mistakes than we do from our successes. Use the opportunity to help the girls figure out what could be done differently during planning that would allow for future successes. Then let them try it again the next time, using the failure as a stepping-stone for future plans. You want to check out GSCM’s taped webinar on Girl and Adult Planning. You can find our webinars here [http://gscm.org/leader-tool-kit/](http://gscm.org/leader-tool-kit/).

**Take into account the maturity level of the girls in your group as you guide decision-making.**
With younger girls, you will find that giving them choices between two or three things makes it easier for them to make decisions. Older girls may have lots of ideas but need your help to focus and remember deadlines.

**Be sure that all girls get a chance to be part of the planning.**
Sometimes the more outgoing girls take over the discussion. Have each person give an idea for the planning, or have girls pair up to discuss some of the planning. This makes it easier for every girl, even the quiet one, to participate.

**Help other adults plan with girls, not for them.**
The girl/adult partnership is a cornerstone of Girl Scouting. Volunteers and parents help the girl members by utilizing the girl/adult planning process. If you must, give the other adults in your group a separate task or topic to discuss with the girls, preferably in another room, so the planning is largely girl-centered.

**Stop and “smell the roses.”**
You and your troop will be planning a wonderful camping experience. When you get to camp, remember you and your troop are there to learn and to enjoy the outdoors. Having a schedule for your time at camp is fine, but don’t pass up a chance for the girls to watch a caterpillar come out of its cocoon, or see a deer in the forest because the schedule says the troop eats at 5:30 pm. Relax. Breathe. Watch the mother bird feed her babies (from a distance). Dinner can wait until 6:00 pm. The unexpected moments sometimes turn out to be the most memorable!
Troop and Girl Readiness

Before girls go to camp, make sure they have had several good experiences with the troop in the outdoors. Girl readiness means that an individual girl is prepared for a particular activity, such as going troop camping. Readiness is based on physical and social maturity, in addition to her abilities, skills and knowledge. Not all girls will be ready for a camp experience at the same time. Leaders, outdoor-certified adults, and parents should work together to determine a girl’s readiness level. Use the list below as a guide.

Each girl is ready for a troop camp trip if she:

- Is not afraid to be away from home.
- Wants to go on the trip.
- Is willing to sleep, eat, play and work with all girls, not just her best friends.
- Can cope with the unknown – unfamiliar facilities, dark, spiders and insects.
- Can manage with little or no privacy.
- Can function as a group member.
- Has been on day trips or to day camp.
- Has been on an overnight away from home.
- Has attempted the needed skills.

The outdoor-certified adult should consider the comfort level of each individual girl, and provide activities to help each girl reach a level of competence and confidence to have a comfortable and enjoyable camping experience.

If there are girls that may not seem ready for an overnight, talk with their parents. Give parents a list of indicators that will help them decide if girls are ready. Parents are very helpful in preparing the girls for the trip, or may decide that they are not ready.

Outdoor education activities can help meet the needs of today’s girl by:

- Helping her to be accepted by the group.
- Giving her control over the activities being planned.
- Providing a sense of security, free from social and physical harm.
- Offering new adventures and discoveries.
- Challenging her skills and offering a feeling of accomplishment.
- Sharing leisure activities with a positive role model.

Activities will depend on what the girls want to do and how they want to spend their time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to choose an activity at a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter.

Outdoor Progression

What is progression in Girl Scouting?

Progression is the key to success in Girl Scout activities. This involves acquiring the skills needed to progress to more difficult or highly skilled activities. Girl Scouts provides girls with growing experiences to gain confidence and move into more difficult tasks. Progressive experiences allow a girl to learn at her own comfort rate and skill level. By having new adventures that are exciting, a girl can test the limits of her skill and feel a sense of accomplishment. Activities provided in a progressive manner increase the rate of a girl’s success around a given activity.
**What is progression in the outdoors?**

Progression in the outdoors means that a girl learns simple camping skills and participates in introductory outdoor activities before going on an actual overnight camping trip. For instance, a girl would learn simple knots before starting a macramé project. A troop would scout a local area and backpack on local trails before progressing to the Appalachian Trail.

Try not to pack too many new skills into one experience with the girls. Spread the learning of these outdoor skills across numerous outdoor adventures allowing the girls to grow into the new activities. Experience, rather than age, should be used when determining which skills to teach your girls. Camp skills and outdoor activities could be integrated into the entire troop program for the year. Let each outing be a stepping-stone for the next outing.

When planning the troop activities throughout the year, allow sufficient time to complete the steps in outdoor progression before the actual troop camp date. Inexperienced girls need time to learn and practice the skills and to make or obtain the equipment.

Getting a troop to a point where they are camping in remote areas will take a few years. Along the way, many earned grade-level badges and awards may be completed as the troop members learn and practice the skills needed for outdoor activities.

Helping parents/guardians understand the Girl Scout philosophy of progression in the outdoors will help them to understand whether or not their Girl Scout is ready for the planned outdoor activities planned by the troop/group. Help them decide whether to give permission for their daughter to participate in outdoor troop activities.

**How to Begin Outdoor Progression Safely**

- **Look out**
  Your troop is just getting started to observe the out–of-doors. Do an activity that gets them looking out the window at nature. Do a nature craft.

- **Meet out**
  With this step, your troop steps out of your meeting place to observe the sight, sounds and smell of nature. Teach the girls some nature songs and games and help them learn about protecting and improving the world around them.

- **Walk out**
  The next progression is to have the girls walk around the block to see what they can see. Do an activity to help them explore nature a short distance from home - look for tracks, trails, and traces of living things; touch a tall tree; learn to use the buddy system; watch the clouds. Have the girls discuss what they discovered.

- **Hike out**
  For the next level of outing, change the location to local hiking trails, or a nearby park that is mostly wooded. Take a hike with a purpose (Bird Hike, Alphabet Hike, Color Hike). Add the ideas of how to dress in the woods, what footwear is appropriate, take a lunch and eat it while you are out. Think about sunscreen and bug repellents, rain gear, water and sit-upons. Begin explaining minimal impact camping concepts. Talk about not picking wildflowers, and do look to identify poison plants. Be sure to leave no trash, and stay on marked paths. This is a great time to introduce daypacks. Have each girl carry her own personal gear, such as water and a small first aid kit. **Note:** Girls should carry a water bottle at all times when in the out of doors, not just summer.
Eat out
You may want to incorporate this step with your hike. Start with a simple snack and progress to a nosebag or hobo lunch. Teach the girls proper hand washing and sanitation in food preparation.

Sleep in
This is the troop’s opportunity to prepare for an overnight, such as a slumber party. The girls can learn how to do a kaper chart for an overnight and plan what to eat. This step will also give you an opportunity to help the girls learn how to pack for their overnight and prepare their gear.

Before engaging in the next Outdoor Progression Steps, a registered Girl Scout adult with the group must have completed Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking.

Cook out
Before heading out for your overnight, it’s time to introduce a simple fire. Maybe you will be roasting marshmallows the first time. It is imperative to instruct your girls on safety around the fire, and on how to handle sticks and flaming marshmallows! The next step with a fire could include a pot of soup, or perhaps a one-pot meal. This is also a great time to introduce the girls to knife safety and care.

Camp out
Basic
When you have developed outdoor living confidence in yourself and your girls, it is time to progress to an overnight at camp. Depending on the ages and abilities of the girls, you may want to camp in a lodge or cabin, then progress to the yurts or platform tents. In this step, you will have the opportunity to teach and have the girls practice all the skills learned in the Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking training.

Before engaging in the next Outdoor Progression Steps, a registered Girl Scout adult with the group must have completed Tent Camping. The troop should have experience in lodge or cabin and yurts or platform tents before Tent Camping

Camp out
Advanced
As the girls progress in their outdoor skills, the next level of camping is tenting where the girls will pitch their own tents and set up the campsite. Figuring out the logistics of what gear is needed and how to carry it becomes critical to the overall experience. Tent set-up and maintenance, along with weather emergencies can make or break the trip. As the girls become older and more experienced, they may want to try more extensive outdoor activities such as backpacking.

There is no reason to push outdoor living comfort levels. The end of second or third grade is good timing for simple troop camping overnights, if progression steps have been met. Each troop will be different, and different girls in the same troop will progress at different rates. Older girls may progress much faster. Some troops may not progress beyond lodge camping. Others might delight in platform tent camping, go on to pitching their own tents, and then on to an overnight backpacking trip. Only experience can tell what is right for your girls. If you can assist in the setting of goals, you will have given them a life-long skill that could possibly change their outlook on the outdoor world.
What is My Role as the Outdoor-Certified Adult?

An outdoor-certified adult is the person who has taken the required outdoor education adult learning opportunity components as required for the type of camp experience. She/he must be at camp 100% of the time the group is at camp.

To make sure the camping experience is safe and fun for all, you should:

- Learn and follow Girl Scouts of Central Maryland camp policies and procedures.
- Help the adult leadership guide the girls through the planning of their camp program.
- Seek clarification for any Safety Activity Checkpoint questions.
- Train the girls in skills and planning (preferably 6 weeks to 6 months before the trip).
- Meet with parents of first time campers to answer questions and explain procedures.
- Share information with chaperones and helpers who will be attending camp.
- Make sure all attendees know what equipment to bring and what the site will be like.
- Encourage all adults to chaperone when the troop is preparing for the trip.
- Explain camp etiquette to the other adults, including smoking and no alcohol policies.
- Understand check-in/check-out procedures for GSCM sites – you will get this information in your campsite confirmation packet.
- Be present at any fire or when cooking over an open flame is being done (Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking course is required).
- Be present for tent camping at any council owned or non-council owned property or out (Basic Troop Camping and Open Fire Cooking and Tent Camping is required).

Safety Tips to Remember – Building the Outdoor-Certified Team

Make sure that you secure the appropriate number of adults for your camping trip, as per Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials. As per GSCM policies all adults who will be responsible for the supervision of a group must be registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA and have completed GSCM’s volunteer application process.

Emergency Contact Person

Assign an “at home” emergency contact person. This person will be accessible by phone for the duration of the trip and has agreed to forward any urgent messages from the leaders to parents and vice versa. The emergency contact person’s name and contact information should be on the portion of the permission slip that the parent/guardian keeps. If the emergency contact lives in a cell phone “dead zone” they must have landline phone access.

The emergency contact person should have:

- A list of the girls and their parent/guardian contact information.
- The contact information for the camp and the ranger.
- A general schedule for the trip’s activities and locations.
- The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s emergency number. (443) 421-0025

In the event of an emergency at camp, the troop/group leadership will contact the emergency person, who will call the parent/guardian. If there is an emergency at home, the parent/guardian will contact the emergency contact person who will call the adult in charge at camp. If that person cannot be reached by phone, please contact the GSCM emergency number. (Please use this number for emergencies only).

When faced with an emergency situation, such as a serious accident, injury, or illness that has occurred during a Girl Scout program and is after business hours, you are advised to call the GSCM’s emergency line at (443) 421-0025 after appropriate care has been secured. A copy of our emergency procedures can be found in each new troop packet or in the Safety section of our Volunteer Resource page online - http://www.gscm.org/about/resources/.
First Aider
At camp, the First Aid/CPR certified adult is responsible for handling injuries and medical emergencies. This First Aider also holds and distributes all medications that girls and adults bring to camp. Medications sent to camp must be in the original container for the First Aider to be able to distribute them according to the dosing instructions written on the package. All medications are to be in the possession of the First Aider for the event and under lock and key, for safety purposes.

Chaperones/Helpers
Any adult attending the overnight who will be responsible for the supervision of a group of girls must complete the volunteer application process. Additional parent helpers attending will need to be advised of their role and the rules and regulations of camp. Adults with daughters in the group will want to encourage their daughters to be part of the group. Younger girls sometimes find it hard to share the time and attention of their parent with others. Adults accompanying a group are chosen for patience, flexibility and good judgment.

They should know and understand their responsibilities during the trip, which include:
- Encouraging girls to try new things.
- Watching, guiding, directing.
- Intervening before injuries occur, being safe is of utmost concern.
- Being knowledgeable about the activity to be supervised and the potential for injury.
- Serving as a role model to girls.
- Knowing where the girls are at all times.
- Being easily located by girls who need help.
- Helping girls who need assistance with various tasks.

Prior to the trip, the outdoor-certified adult and the leader should meet with all adults that will be attending the trip to:
- Explain their roles and her/his expectations.
- Discuss the plans the girls have made.
- Explain safety systems and the buddy system that the girls have learned.
- Discuss transportation safety standards as per Safety Activity Checkpoints, emergency procedures for the site, and travel to and from the site.

Required Paperwork and Campsite Reservations

The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland web site at www.gscm.org has the required forms and information for outdoor activities. In addition to reviewing the guidelines for travel in the Girl Scout Resource Packet for Trips and Travel, review the Appendix: For Travel Volunteers in Volunteer Essentials.

Reserving a GSCM Campsite
To give the Leaders and Event Directors more flexibility and to make the reservation process easier, properties can be reserved online up to 90 days in advance of the desired reservation date. Detailed information on reserving a campsite for troop use and Service Unit Encampments can be found online at http://gscm.org/camps/.

Girl Scout Trip Application (03-828)
This form must be completed and approved by the Service Unit Manager or Membership and Community Development Specialist two weeks prior to the trip. See the Girl Scout Resource Packet for Trips and Travel (02-828) for additional travel information.

Parent/Guardian Permission Form (02-002)
This form is required when activities take place outside of the scheduled meeting place; involve overnight travel, or focus on sensitive issues. All Parent/Guardian Permission Forms must be in possession of the adult-in-charge for the duration of the activity. A copy of this completed form should also be submitted to the SUM with the Trip Application.
**Girl Health History Card (02-779)**
The leader needs to keep a copy of this card with her wherever the troop goes. The information on these forms is confidential.

**Crisis Communications Plan for Council Volunteers (00-600)**
Packet that includes information for troop volunteers on handling communications during a crisis. Leaders should have this packet at all troop activities.

**Incident/Accident Report Form (07-127)**
This form must be completed when an accident or incident (involving people, property, theft, fire, behavioral issues, or other) occur at a Girl Scout sponsored activity. GSCM must be informed within 48 hours.

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**Pluralism and Diversity during Outdoor Program Activities**

Pluralism is a system with individuals or groups differing in background, experiences, and culture that allows for the development of a common tradition while preserving each group’s right to maintain its cultural heritage. Pluralism is a process involving mutually respectful relationships with others.

Diversity is the state of being different. When used to describe people and population groups, diversity encompasses differences in age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, parental status, professional background, marital status, etc.

A pluralistic attitude is gained through an appreciation of the diversity in people. Having respect for diverse people and lifestyles is as important internationally as it is nationally.

A camping trip or an outdoor experience offers many opportunities to the troop/group for meeting the Girl Scout commitment to pluralism. If you are working with a girl that has a specific need and you want to find out how to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parents/guardians. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

**Activity Dates and Religious Observances**
When choosing dates for outdoor activities and camping trips as a troop, be conscious of dates of religious holidays for the troop members. Try to schedule activities to avoid conflicts with religious observances.

**Singing Grace at Meals**
Singing grace before meals is a Girl Scout tradition. Consider the religious practices of the girls and the spiritual words in the song when choosing graces. Modify the wording to make the grace comfortable for all. The phrase “Lord we thank thee” (sung to the tune of Frere Jacques) can be changed to “We are thankful.”

**Program at Camp**
When planning a campfire, Girl Scouts Own, or other program to be held at a campsite, help the girls recognize the variety of beliefs of the troop members. These programs should include readings, songs, pictures, etc. that are inclusive of all.

**Meal Planning**
The troop leader and outdoor-certified adult should guide the girls when planning meals. Consider religious restrictions, health conditions and/or food preferences when making food choices. It’s important to create menus that all of the participants can enjoy. Avoid the suggestion that an individual bring her own special food. Encourage the girls to come up with meal suggestions that are creative and acceptable for all.
Outdoor Program With Girls With Disabilities

Camping and outdoor activities are both important aspects of Girl Scouting. It is as important for any girl with a disability, as for those without. Check the Guide to Council Properties (07-147) for handicapped accessible buildings and units at any of the GSCM sites.

Suggestions to help all girls enjoy their outdoor experiences:

Readiness for camp on the part of the girl and her parents.
As mentioned earlier, a girl’s readiness for a camping experience should be judged on the basis of her total emotional and social adjustment rather than on the degree of her impairment alone. Readiness also applies to the girl’s parents and how they feel about letting her go to camp. Some parents, especially overprotective ones, may be fearful about letting their child go away from home, or they may question the value of a camping experience for their child. Try an overnight in town, in a secure environment such as the leader’s home, a church fellowship hall, or a community center. If reassurance does not change their minds, it is not advisable to try to force the issue.

Information from parents.
Ask her parents about any food or activity restrictions that the girl may have. Also inquire about any medications which could affect her behavior or which she might need during the camping trip or outdoor event. Be sure to have written permission to administer any medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter.

Pace and flexibility of activities.
The more flexible the camp activities and the more these activities are based on the needs and interests of the campers, the more likely it is that girls with disabilities can be included. Allow for a choice of activities during the outing. This does not mean that all activities should be changed or limited in order to include the girl with a disability.

Accessibility.
Consider the physical setup of the camp (buildings and terrain) or area in relation to the girl’s ability. Are there ramps or is everything on one level? Are ramps, doors, paths and restroom facilities adequately lighted at night? Are paths paved? Are restrooms or latrines large enough for a wheelchair?

For more tips, please check out our webinar “Working with Girls of All Abilities” on our website.

In Conclusion:
- Don’t be afraid to take a girl with a disability into the outdoors.
- Prepare yourself and the girls.
- Use your imagination.
- Look on this as an opportunity.
- Enlist the help you need.
- Promote independence. Resist the urge to do for the girl.
- Don’t look for new or special activities. The Girl Scout program is broad enough to include all girls.
- Feel free to consult people who can help.

For more tips, please check out our webinar “Working with Girls of All Abilities” on our website.
Planning Resources

There are many resources to assist leaders in planning for outdoor activities. As part of the planning process, Girl Scout leaders and outdoor-certified adults work with the girls to develop essential outdoor skills, identify additional resources needed, and divide responsibilities through patrols and kaper charts.

Here are some resources to help your planning process:

Volunteer Essentials – available on our website
Safety Activity Checkpoints – available on our website
Girl Scout Resource Packet for Trips and Travel – available on our website
Guide to Council Properties – available on our website
Girl Scout Journeys – available for purchase in the GSCM stores
Girls Guide to Girl Scouting – available for purchase in the GSCM stores
Leader’s Tool Kit – available on our website. (check out the Outdoor Program section)
Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting – available for purchase in the GSCM stores.

Before Taking Girls Outdoors, Think About:

Who will be going?
Have you met the required girl/adult ratio as per Safety Activity Checkpoints?
Have you secured the proper parental/guardian permission slips?

Will men be accompanying the troop?
Make sure to review and meet the requirements as described in Volunteer Essentials, Chapter 4.

Where and when will you go, and where will the activities take place?
GSCM has many sites for your use. Plan well in advance for site reservations. Sites may be reserved online. For information please visit http://gscm.org/camps/.

What activities are planned?
Have girls been involved with this decision? Do they tie in with requirements for grade-level Journeys and/or badges? Is it a service project? Is it a Service Unit event? Is your trip just for fun?

Keep Your Eye on the Ever-Changing Weather

When in the out of doors, weather can definitely influence plans. The outdoor-certified adult will need to know how to address their group, in the event of severe thunderstorms, tornado warnings, flash floods, etc. The outdoor-certified adult should be aware of predicted weather conditions for the duration of the group’s stay and be in contact with the ranger or outdoor program manager regarding site-specific emergency procedures. Be aware that the temperature at night, in the woods or near the water may be much cooler than “back Home” and weather is unpredictable.
What to Wear in the Outdoors

In order to make the outdoor experience a fun and comfortable one for everyone, careful thought and planning should be given to what is worn. Obviously the time of year, the type of activity, and the weather will enter into the decision.

The secret to being comfortable in the out-of-doors is to dress in layers. Each garment traps a layer of air which acts as extra insulation. Layers can be added as the temperature drops and taken off as the body warms up. It is usually 10-15 degrees cooler in the woods than in town.

**Head gear** – bandanna, knitted cap, broad brim hat for sun protection

**Dress in Layers** – for warmth

**Raincoat, poncho, and boots** – when necessary

**Lightweight jacket, warm gloves or work gloves** – depending on weather and activity

**Socks** – protection against blisters, poison ivy, insects, etc. In cold weather wear 2 pairs of socks. The inner sock should be cotton to absorb moisture; the outer pair should be wool to maintain heat.

**Sturdy Shoes with closed heels and toes** – no sandals, heels, flip-flops, etc.

Listed below are some suggestions to assist you as you train your girls.

- Wear clothing that allows for freedom of movement, is comfortable and practical, and which can (and probably will) get dirty. Long pants and long sleeve shirts are better than shorts and sleeveless tops in the outdoors. They protect arms and legs against sunburn, poison ivy, insects, ticks, bruises and scrapes.

- Nylon & polyester type synthetic materials are cold in the winter & hot in the summer. They can cause severe burns if worn too close to a fire. Dangling or flapping clothing can be hazardous, especially around the campfire and stoves.

- Wool insulates better than other fibers and provides warmth even when wet. Cotton is very good for allowing air circulation and for staying cool.

- In cold weather a hat helps to retain as much as 40% of body heat and in very sunny weather it protects the head against the rays of the sun.

- Gloves or mittens should be worn in cooler weather to keep hands warm. Long-johns are worth their weight in gold. Keeping the trunk area of the body (vital organs) warm helps your overall comfort. Use sweaters and jackets that are long enough to come well below the waist.

- Always take rain gear along, such as a poncho or raincoat with head covering or a water-repellant jacket and pants. Take precautions around fires and stoves. The poncho must fit girls at the knees to avoid tripping.

- A sit-upon keeps your seat from getting chilled and damp.

- It is always good to have pair of light work gloves in warmer weather for gathering wood and for other tasks.

- Remember to tell the girls to bring lip balm and sunscreen, for sunny and windy days in any season.

- Change clothes completely before going to bed.
Here is an activity to prepare the girls for dressing in the outdoors.

**Relay Game:** Bring bags of all types of clothes from home—jeans, foot wear, rain gear, head gear, socks, jackets, pajamas, etc. Don’t forget to include some things you would definitely not wear like halter tops, sandals, short shorts, etc. Divide girls into teams with one bag of clothes per team. Each team selects one girl to be the “doll.” The leader calls out the type of weather to dress for and the team dresses their “doll.” When finished the doll is checked to see if it was dressed correctly.

### Health and Safety

You, the supervisor of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. Clearly communicate what the girls and parents are expected to do to maintain group safety. One of your responsibilities as a volunteer is to safeguard the health of the girls in your group and instill in them a sense of safety. Chapter 4 of *Volunteer Essentials* will provide additional information on Safety.

**Safety Activity Checkpoints**

*Safety Activity Checkpoints* is a listing published by Girl Scouts of the USA that contains safety and security guidelines, specific activity checkpoints and program and camping standards. As a Girl Scout leader and/or outdoor-certified adult, safety issues are important to consider when taking girls outdoors. All Girl Scouts, both girls and adults, are required to adhere to all content contained within the *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Your event may include several activities, so please take time to review all the *Safety Activity Checkpoints* that apply for your planned outdoor event. (ex. - Trip/Travel Camping, Archery, Canoeing). They can be found in the Volunteer Resource section of our website.

**Parent Permission Forms**

Parents must fill out GSCM Permission Form for activities away from the regular meeting place. See the Volunteer Resource section of our website for a copy of the form.

**Health Forms**

Parents must fill out a *Girl Health History card* and return it to the leader who keeps it with the troop records or in the First Aid Kit when the troop is away from the meeting place. Remind parents that it is very important that you are aware of all allergies and any medications that their child takes on a regular basis. It is also very important that the parents disclose any medical or behavioral conditions that the child may have, such as seizures, autism or bed-wetting.

**Transporting Girls in Vehicles**

When traveling in a vehicle, a completed *Health History Form* and a *Parent Permission Form* must be in the possession of a registered adult in the car in which the girl is traveling.

Any adult who is transporting any other child, other than his or her own, must be a registered adult member of Girl Scouting. Know the make, model and license numbers of all your vehicles. Have a copy with you and leave a copy with your emergency person. In case of an emergency, this information would help the police locate a missing vehicle.

**Medications, Sunscreen, and Bug Spray**

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl’s custodial parent or guardian. Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.
• Sunscreen - Although it is not a medication, the Maryland Department of Health recommends that authorization from parent/guardian is needed before applying sunscreen. The permission should include the girl's name, the parent/guardian signature, the date signed, the brand of sunscreen, and whether or not the leader or other troop adult may assist in the application of the lotion. We advise that adults may only apply lotion to areas that cannot be reached by the child – i.e. back. If sunscreen is not provided by the parents, you are permitted to provide it with parental/guardian approval. Look for sun blocks that have high SPF and are waterproof.

• Bug Spray - The same guidelines for sunscreen, should be used for bug spray. Girls should be able to properly apply bug spray on their own with limited assistance from friends/adults. Girls should wear natural-colored clothing (white and dark colors attract bugs). Be sure to use a bug spray that is non-aerosol and has a lower level of DEET (under 30%). DEET is harmful to children if ingested.

### Some Camp Animals You May Meet

Girls and adults should be aware that no snacks or candy are allowed in their tents, yurts, cabins, or shelters. When you arrive at camp, collect all food from girls (including gum/candy and all sweet-smelling chap sticks, toothpastes, shampoos, soaps, etc.) and store in a tin with a tight-fitting lid. Animals can become a nuisance if they find food left unsecured. Before snuggling down in your sleeping bag (which should be rolled up during the day), check for any unwanted visitors.

If you hear something moving around in the woods at night, it might be a small animal. If it sounds really big, it could be a deer. It’s fun to keep a flashlight handy to watch the night visitors. Sometimes, tree limbs falling or rubbing against something can create a spooky sound at night. You may be awakened by a “bang” from the garbage can being knocked over.

Quick movements and loud noises can be stressful to animals. Do not touch, get close to, feed or pick up wild animals. It is possible that the animal may harbor rabies or other diseases. Sick or wounded animals can bite, peck or scratch and send you to the hospital.

Always enjoy the beauty between you and animals from a distance. It is important that you understand the animals you may come into contact with while camping and how to stay calm. The camp ranger for each Girl Scouts camp can help identify specific critters located at each site.

**Remember:**

- In a group setting with children, it is important to teach girls not to approach wild animals, even small ones.
- Never leave children unattended.
- Never feed a wild animal.
- Always keep a distance between you and the wildlife that you encounter while camping or hiking.
- Do not intentionally attract animals by having open garbage bags, cans or litter in areas where you are staying.
- Do not try to help sick animals; some may have diseases that can cause illness in humans (i.e. rabies).
- Tell girls to remain calm and call for help if they encounter an animal.
- Instruct children and adults that all food and scented items must be kept in a secure area as per procedures at that facility.
- Pack food in animal resistant containers, if available. Pack food in cars overnight if there is not a secure odor-free place to keep food.
Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac

Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are plants that can cause a skin rash called allergic contact dermatitis when they touch your skin. Poison ivy and poison oak can be found everywhere—the woods, fields, your own backyard, vacant lots, all depending on where you're living. In particular, these plants seem to have fondness for growing along fences and stone walls and they like the sheltered edges of forests, fields and sunny areas. "Leaves of three? Let them be!" or "One, two, three? Don't touch me."", as these plants have a cluster of three leaves at the end of a long stem. The red, uncomfortable, and itchy rash often shows up in lines or streaks and is marked by fluid-filled bumps (blisters) or large raised areas (hives). It is the most common skin problem caused by contact with plants (plant dermatitis).

Caution the girls when they collect firewood, as there could be poison ivy vines growing on it. The oil in the poison ivy plant is not damaged by fire, but will become suspended in the smoke if burned. Someone who stands in the smoke will possibly develop extreme discomfort in the eyes and lungs.

If you come in contact with poison ivy or develop the rash, wash the affected area with lots of soap and warm water. This cleaning should remove any oil still present on your skin. There are over-the-counter medications that you can purchase to aid in removing the oil from skin. As with all over-the-counter medications, the First Aider needs written permission to apply this to each camper in the event of contact with poison ivy.

Deer Ticks

Two diseases carried by ticks, Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, have come widespread in the United States and pose serious health hazards. However, of the two diseases, Lyme is more prevalent in the state of Maryland. The disease is a bacterial illness caused by certain ticks found on deer. When one of these ticks bites the skin, it can cause abnormalities in the skin, joints, heart, and nervous system. The disease is not contagious and is treatable with antibiotics at any stage. The earlier it is diagnosed, the easier it is to treat. Lyme disease develops most frequently in the summer when ticks are abundant, although ticks remain active well into the cold weather. Some of the ticks are half the size of the head of a pin and are difficult to spot.

Prevention:

- Avoid tick habitats whenever possible.
- Wear long pants with cuffs tucked into socks and light colored clothing to help you spot ticks.
- Protect yourself with repellents.
- Brush off your clothing before going inside.
- Undress and check for ticks; they usually crawl about for several hours before burying into the skin
- Remove any attached ticks by gently tugging repeatedly with tweezers at the place where the tick's feeling tube enters the skin. DO NOT squeeze or crush the tick. Drop it in alcohol to kill it and save in a container when possible to share with medical personnel.
- Disinfect the site of the tick bite.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- Check for any rash or red patch, especially one that slowly expands over several days. The red patch can get quite large (1-18 inches) and may be ring shaped.
- Flu-like symptoms (low grade fever, chills, headache) often occur in the early stages of the disease.
- Symptoms similar to meningitis such as stiff joints, difficulty in concentrating and remembering, as well as fatigue can occur in the later stages of the disease.
- The final stage of the disease (weeks to months later) involves elevated temperature, pain and swelling in one or more joints.
- If you note any of the above symptoms following a tick bite, call your physician.
Minimal Impact Camping and Hiking

“A Girl Scout always leaves a place better than she found it.”

Girl Scouts of all ages learn and practice minimal impact skills, a method that encourages each person to tread lightly on land and leave no trace of presence after a trip or activity.

With increasing numbers of people using parks and outdoor spaces, each person must develop an awareness of the environment, and the impact of our actions has on it. Many people can use the same outdoor area each year; if each is careful about his/her impact.

Outdoor activities should touch the earth lightly, leaving as few traces of human presence as possible. The challenge is to learn how recreational activities affect our natural world and learn how to change those activities to reduce pollution, erosion or damage the environment.

Minimal impact camping requires personal responsibility, as each individual must consider how to minimize the impact of an action on the environment. The group leaders and outdoor-certified adults have the opportunity to help girls develop an appreciation of the outdoor world, and an understanding of how to choose appropriate camping techniques for various situations.

Each girl can learn and practice simple activities that will lead to an understanding and application of minimal impact camping skills.

Here are a few examples:

- Do not litter. Even chewing gum can choke a bird or small animal.
- Walk only on established trails. Walking off the trail packs the soil down, kills plants and causes erosion.
- Never destroy animal dens, nests or homes.
- Never disturb wild animals, especially babies. The mother is probably nearby waiting for you to leave.
- Conserve water, our most valuable resource. Keep water sources clean.
- Each girl should use a mess kit and canteen (or washable plate, bowl, cup and silverware), not disposable dishes and utensils.
- Use a bandanna instead of paper towels to dry hands. Follow local health regulations if disposables are required.
- Turn off unnecessary lights.
- Leave your site cleaner than you found it. This does not mean raking or sweeping paths. This can cause erosion.
- Buy food that has minimal packaging and recycle what you can.
- Take nothing but pictures and memories, leave nothing but footprints.
- Set a positive example for others to follow.
- Avoid hanging or climbing on trees, breaking off branches or carving into them.
- Gather only dry wood from the ground for fires or stick cooking.

Working together and following all established GSCM and Girl Scouts of the USA policies and procedures can achieve this goal.
**Leave No Trace: Principles of Outdoor Ethics**

*Leave No Trace* is a national outdoor skills and ethics educational program. The Seven Leave No Trace Principles of Outdoor Ethics form the basic framework of minimal impact hiking and camping.

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

**Plan Ahead and Prepare:**
Adequate trip planning and preparation helps backcountry travelers accomplish trip goals safely and enjoyably, while simultaneously minimizing damage to the land. Poor planning often results in miserable campers and damage to natural and cultural resources.

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you’ll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

**Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:**
The goal of travel is to effectively move while avoiding damage to the land. Travel damage occurs when surface vegetation or communities of organisms are trampled beyond recovery. The resulting barren area leads to soil erosion.

- Durable surfaces include pre-existing and established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- In popular areas:
  - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
  - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
  - Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas:
  - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
  - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

**Dispose of Waste Properly:**
Proper disposal of human waste is important to avoid pollution of water sources, avoid the negative implications of someone else finding it, minimize the possibility of spreading disease, and maximize the rate of decomposition. Proper disposal of tampons and maxi-pads requires that they be placed in plastic bags and packed out.

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods.
- Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.
Leave What You Find:
Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects of interest as you find them.
- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts of any kind.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts:
The use of campfires, once a necessity for cooking and warmth, is steeped in history and tradition. Some people would not think of camping without a campfire. Natural appearance has been degraded by overusing fires and increasing demand for firewood. The development of efficient camp stoves has encouraged a shift away from the traditional campfire.
- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, and then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife:
Learn about wildlife through quiet observation. Do not disturb wildlife or plants just for a "better look". Observe wildlife from a distance so they are not scared or forced to flee.
- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors:
One of the most important components of outdoor ethics is to maintain courtesy toward other visitors. It helps everyone enjoy their outdoor experience.
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Other Elements to Consider When Planning a Trip:
- Identify and record the goals (expectations) of your trip.
- Select destinations that match the group size, goals, skills, and abilities.
- Gain knowledge of the area you plan to visit from land managers, maps, and literature.
- Choose equipment and clothing for comfort, safety, and Leave No Trace qualities.
- Evaluate your trip upon return note changes you will make next time.
- Weather, terrain, regulations, restrictions and private land boundaries. Average hiking speed of group and anticipated food consumption. *(Leftovers create waste, which leaves a trace!)*
Girl Scout Camp Vocabulary

Girl Scouting, like other organizations, has a language all its own. Outdoor education and camping are no exceptions. See how many you recognize. Match the words with the corresponding definitions.

Camping words or terms:
   a. Mess kit
   b. Dunk bag
   c. S’more
   d. Nosebag lunch
   e. Sit-upon
   f. Gorp
   g. Fire-starter
   h. Chimney or sleeve
   i. Ground cloth
   j. Toilet kit

Definitions:

Snack food: good old raisins and peanuts

Mesh container used for sterilizing an individual’s dishes

Plastic used under sleeping bag as insulation from dampness at night

Non-cook meal; easily carried on a hike

Non-breakable eating utensils (plate, bowl, cup, silverware)

Square of waterproof material to sit on

Toasted marshmallow, graham cracker and chocolate

Collection of items needed for personal hygiene

Large can with holes; used to light charcoal briquettes

Separated cardboard egg carton dipped in melted wax

Hikes to Take

Every hike should have a purpose. The name attached to these hikes is often so stimulating to a child’s imagination that entirely new adventures develop.

Bird Hike:
Look for different birds – see if you know them by sight. You could also look for nests, but please do not touch.

Sound Hike:
Listen for all kinds of sounds in nature, close ones, far away sounds, soft, harsh, etc. This is a good quiet hike.

Inch Hike:
Find things that are only an inch long – no more – and still intact.

Seed Hike:
Look for plants bearing seeds, and bring some of each back, without disturbing the natural world. Mount, label, and display for others.
**Picture Hike:**
Using cameras, go to learn how to take good, well-composed photos. This is best if you have the opportunity to study the completed prints.

**Insect Hike:**
You can just look for and examine those that you find, or collect specimens for a nature display or exhibit.

**Spider Web Hike:**
This is a good early morning hike. Sometimes a camera can record wonderful patterns in dewdrops.

**Track Hike:**
Look for clear animal tracks that you know, or don't know.

**Penny Hike:**
Heads left, tails right. Flip the penny to tell you which way to go. This works well in State Parks, where the trails connect to each other.

**Four Senses Hike:**
Smell, see, touch, and hear – Find something for each sense. Tasting is not recommended.

**Color Hike:**
Find thing all the same color. If you walk in couples, one side could look for reds, and the other for yellows.

**Moonlight Hike:**
To see the entirely different nightlife of nature, or to study the stars.

**ABC Scavenger Hunt:**
You are to collect several different objects found in nature, each one beginning with a different letter of the alphabet. Example A = acorn.
- You cannot pick anything live.
- Live animals are allowed. However they must not be touched or harmed.
- Only natural objects found in the area will count.
- You may have objects checked off by judges at any time.
- Get together with your troop and make one list using the objects that were collected.

### Answers to Vocabulary Quiz

Snack food: good old raisins and peanuts:  F  
Mesh container used for sterilizing individual’s dishes:  B  
Plastic used under sleeping bag as insulation from dampness at night:  I  
Non-cook meal; easily carried on a hike:  D  
Non-breakable eating utensils (plate, bowl, cup, silverware):  A  
Square of waterproof material to sit on:  E  
Toasted marshmallow, graham cracker and chocolate:  C  
Collection of items needed for personal hygiene:  J  
Large can with holes; used to light charcoal briquettes:  H  
Separated cardboard egg carton dipped in melted wax:  G