

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR ALMOST HEAVEN, WEST VIRGINIA

CLOTHING: The following is some general information about layering. Check the weather forecast before you come. If warm weather is forecasted, you may not need all these layers.

Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. The layering procedure begins with a BASE LAYER of silk or "lightweight" synthetic long underwear and liner socks. These materials draw moisture away from the skin (this is called "wicking") and help keep you dry and therefore warmer. Some synthetic materials that we find work well include Capilene, Thermastat, polypropylene, Driclime, Helly Hansen, and Ultrawick. Over the base layer wear a second, MEDIUM-WEIGHT layer on your upper body such as "expedition-weight" Capilene or Polartec, and wool pants or a synthetic equivalent such as Polartec or Capilene fleece. Over the second layer, add a third HEAVY-WEIGHT layer. This should be a thick material such as wool, or fleece. The fourth and final layer is called the OUTER LAYER. This layer is for protection from wind and rain. Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put it on over your layers, can you still move your arms for paddling? Lastly, the wind pants. They should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots. Synthetic fabrics are often specified on this equipment list: Capilene, Thermastat, Polartec and Gore-Tex. In addition, there are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to natural fibers—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. Also, they tend to be lighter and less bulky than natural fibers. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics, but if you prefer not to spend the money, wool is a very good substitute. Cotton is not! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

RAIN GEAR: This could be your most treasured clothing. We recommend a waterproof/breathable fabric (such as Gore-Tex, HellyTech, Ultrex, Membrane, etc.). The advantage to having a waterproof/breathable rainsuit is that as you paddle and work up a sweat, your body's moisture is able to escape through the fabric to the outside. This will keep you much drier than a non-breathable rainsuit (vinyl, nylon). If your rain gear is breathable it can double as your wind proof layer. We do not recommend a poncho because it flies about in the wind. If you have rain pants, either breathable or vinyl, please bring them.

SHOES/BOOTS: Bring shoes that can get wet and will stay on your feet, such as high-top sneakers, athletic shoes, or Teva sandals. Tevas are preferred by many participants. Wearing neoprene wetsuit socks or wool socks with Teva sandals will keep your feet warmer than sandals alone. Be sure your footwear fits comfortably, without constriction, when wearing a thick pair of wool or neoprene socks.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters. Here are three companies that offer mail order service and have internet "stores" (often with special deals):

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840 for catalogue
website: www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231 for catalogue
website: www.emsonline.com

Campmor
800-226-7667 for catalogue
website: www.campmor.com

Another company that often has discounts on seconds and discontinued items and also has an excellent return policy is Sierra Trading Post. Their number is 1-800-713-4534 and their web site is www.SierraTradingPost.com. We have links to REI and Sierra Trading Post on our website on the affiliates page of our Resources section (www.adventuresingoodcompany/affiliates.html). You may also want to visit your local Army/Navy surplus store and thrift stores such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.