

## ADDITIONAL NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR WILDERNESS CANOE TRIPS

Because we are canoeing and our boats will be carrying most of the weight, we can pack a few more items than we would if we were backpacking. However, your gear will need to fit in one half of a Duluth Pack, about the size of one pillowcase. A Duluth Pack is a canvas pack that comes in several sizes. We use the largest, a "Number 4" (26"h x 28"w x 7"d—5100cu. in.). You may not use all the clothes or gear you bring, yet we need to pack to be prepared for all possible weather and conditions. We recommend that you keep a small daypack or dry bag near your feet with your sunscreen, water bottle, rain gear, and snacks in it. This way you will have easy access to essential items during the day.

**SLEEPING BAGS:** Warmth, weight, and bulk are some of the factors to consider in sleeping bags. We suggest a synthetic filled bag for canoeing trips (bags filled with Hollofil, Quallofil, polarguard, etc.). Synthetic bags still keep you warm if they are wet. **They also are quicker to dry than down bags.** Bring a bag rated to at least 20 degrees F. Line your stuff sack with a heavy plastic bag (trash compactor bags work great) and stuff your sleeping bag into it. Again, pay attention to the size of your stuff sack, you may need a compression sack to make your bag small enough.

**CLOTHING:** 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. Put it on over your layers, can you still move your arms for paddling? Lastly, the rain pants. They should also be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). **Fabric Names:** 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 cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. 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. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store 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 **two-piece rain suit**. Vinyl, coated nylon, or a waterproof/breathable fabric (such as Gore-Tex, HellyTech, Ultrex, E-vent, etc.) will do fine for Boundary Waters or Canadian canoe trips. The advantage to having a waterproof/breathable rain suit 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 rain suit (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 and lets water run down your paddling arms. 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. Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your rain pants on over your boots.

**SHOES/BOOTS:** Bring shoes or boots that can get wet and muddy, can protect your toes and will stay on your feet, such as lightweight L.L. Bean Hunting boots, Solomon or Keen water shoes, or athletic shoes. Teva sandals are OK for wear around camp but we do not recommend any open-toed shoe for portaging or getting in and out of a canoe. Old shoes with worn soles are dangerous because they slip off the rocks. Aqua socks work well for getting in and out of the canoe, but do not work well for portaging because they do not provide enough support.

**BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A CANOE TRIP:** Camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps; Phoenix, Basic Designs and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags.

**FISHING:** A convenient fishing rod for a canoe trip is an inexpensive telescoping one with a spin-casting reel, which is accessible, easy to portage, and less likely to get stepped on. If you haven't fished before, our outfitter in Ely will be able to help get you set up with lures and other recommended items for fishing in the BWCA. Having your own fillet knife is a good idea as well. And don't forget you'll need a fishing license.

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](http://www.rei.com)

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

Campmor  
800-226-7667 for catalogue  
website: [www.campmor.com](http://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](http://www.SierraTradingPost.com). **We have links to REI and Sierra Trading Post on our website on the affiliates page of our Resources section.** You may also want to visit your local Army/Navy surplus store and thrift stores such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.