

CAMPING 201  
A PRIMER OF SCOUTCRAFT TRAINING

by

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## DEDICATION

I wish to acknowledge and thank the Scouters who have given freely of their time, effort, and knowledge to help me with this project. I dedicate this paper to those Scouters who unselfishly devote their free time to raising our youth so they may be safe and enjoy the back country. Highest on my list are: Garry Briese, Dominick Caridi, Doug Cox, Mary Dohr, Joe Flaig, Craig Goheen, Doug Harrison, Constant Percosky, John Spencer, and Cooper Wright.

Additional thanks go to: Harry Bartosik, Mike Cavalero, George Kerr, Grant Lewis, Dirck Praeger, and Phil Sternberg.

I also wish to thank my mentor through this project, Linda Guidotti, Dr, CCS.

Finally I dedicate this to my wife and helpmate for allowing me the time and space to indulge my Scouting fancies. Her definition of roughing it is to be in a motel without cable TV or a good restaurant. She has spent many cycles editing my Scouting papers, without which editing I would have produced gibberish.

## INTRODUCTION

Scoutcraft skills are the foundation of the Boy Scouting program. They are the primary reason why boys join Boy Scouting in the first place. They are the "**OUTING**" in Scouting. These skills are what allow Scouts and Scouters to survive in the outdoor environment, and not only survive, but enjoy a comfortable existence there. These are the same skills we have been using to save lives since the inception of Scouting, and even before Scouting back into the dim eons of human existence.

## THESIS

I do not believe that the scoutcraft skills, as taught in the courses provided by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to the adults that support the BSA program, are sufficient for the Scouters of today.

## DISCUSSION

Scoutmastership Fundamentals and Scout Wood Badge are courses for all adults who will be involved in the program, at any level, from parent, to Chartered Organization Representative (COR), to merit badge counselor, to committee member, to committee chair, to Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM), to Scoutmaster (SM), to Unit Commissioner (UC) and the rest of the Commissioner corps, to district committee, and to the professional Scouters. The non-scoutcraft skills portions of the various training syllabi are usually straight forward and taught without much change. However, the outdoor equipment and scoutcraft skill sessions are normally tailored to the terrain, time, and the composition of the student population, and moderated by the experiences of the instructors. The same scoutcraft skills may be taught differently depending on the instructor's experience, time allotted, and the make-up of the student base.

First, we must evaluate who we are training, for what purpose, to what level. If all adult Scouters must be conversant with the entire Scouting program, **AND THEY SHOULD**, then to what level are we required to (and/or able to) train individuals across the spectrum of scoutcraft skills?

## THE WHO

Each Scoutmastership Fundamentals class will have a student body with different levels of scoutcraft and outdoor experience. The "never been with Scouting before folks" will listen to whatever we present. As an example of this group's lack of scoutcraft skills, during the Fall 1997 George Washington District's Scoutmastership Fundamentals course one adult leader actually

asked where to put the batteries in the compass to make it work. The Scouters that have "been around awhile" and are returning, (I've seen some that have even been to Philmont), are tolerant of the presentations and add constructive comments to the class. Then there is the middle group (the majority) that has about 30 minutes worth of knowledge about, and six months experience with almost everything. Some think they already know it all and choose not pay attention. This middle group is the hardest group to deal with. No matter at what level the course is taught, either they have had it already, or it is not enough to satisfy them.

The Wood Badge course participants also present a mixture of scoutcraft and outdoor experience. The units' administrative support Scouters and committee members may have little to no outdoor experience, other than what they have received during other courses they may have taken. Whereas the Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters for Venture may have decades of knowledge and experience.

There is no extended scoutcraft training for those Scouters who work directly with the Boy Scouts in their units. Therefore, I propose a series of scoutcraft lessons to be taught to those Scouters who will be practicing these skills on campouts and teaching scoutcraft and outdoor living to the Scouts with whom they are associated. These are the Scouters who actually camp with the Scouts or lead Scouts on other back country activities.

#### WHY

Why do we teach outdoorsmanship in both Scoutmastership Fundamentals and Scout Wood Badge? Are we primarily trying to get adult Scouters ready for the overnight associated with the course, or teach them about scoutcraft related equipment? Are we trying to teach them the why and how we use scoutcraft skills or actually teach them the skills as well as the why and how? Sadly, there is not enough time available to really teach scoutcraft skills in either of the courses. There is a lot of information and demonstration activity to cram into a weekend campout, and for the novice it is like trying to take a drink from a fire-hose.

Beyond both Scoutmastership Fundamentals and Scout Wood Badge there are no formal Boy Scout courses to teach the basic scoutcraft skills that the Scoutmasters (SM) and Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM) need to use and teach their Scouts in the back country. In a 15 minute, 30 minute, or 60 minute block, the scoutcraft skills are being introduced, not taught. Three hour blocks are the minimum to really teach some of the basic scoutcraft skills. Ideally, an entire day is needed to provide the practice time necessary to master others.

This report is an attempt to provide a format for this training, and a lesson plan for one of the scoutcraft skills.

#### TO WHAT LEVEL

With today's "tailgate camping" mentality, and the dis-allowing of fires in many professionally administered camping areas, many basic camping skills are no longer learned or taught on weekend camping trips. Many troops no longer camp in farmer's fields with woods and stream nearby. Thus the need for cutting and splitting deadwood for fires, building firelays and starting fires, and the purification of water, is severely decreased. With the advent of modern camping materials, such as closed cell and self-inflating mattresses the necessity of preparing a proper groundbed from natural materials is eliminated. With roomier frame backpacks, and the "drive to the campsite" mentality, even proper packing methods are often no longer taught.

The scoutcraft skill instructional base upon which future adult Scouters and even today's adults depends is thinning. Rarely today can one find a young adult who has often hunted, fished, and camped with his father; learning backwoods skills. In addition, the time constraints we are all under work to keep what little experience we have from being shared. At times, this experience base may be too thin to safely take youth into the back country. Without a good experience base, we are putting our Boy Scouts at risk, and in fact have already killed some Scouts in 1996.

The current courses provide reading material and "introductory" instruction on outdoorsmanship things. The introductory instruction may be just an explanation, or at best a brief demonstration of the skill, but little or no practice. The time constraints of the current syllabi do not permit an in-depth discussion of why we need a dining fly, the uses of a dining fly, what to look for in buying a dining fly, how to put one up, followed by actually putting up a dining fly.

The example lesson proposed in this paper provide the course participants the time and opportunity to understand the why as well as practice the what to a level of comfort necessary for them to teach the skills to their Scouts.

#### SUMMARY

Should we take the philosophy of an introductory level "Camping 101" and teach it from a "here's what you need to know to buy this stuff, why you need this stuff, and some of how to safely operate it" point of view? Or should we teach from a hands-on

"make bandages, build fires, do a compass course" point of view? Or is there some magical mid-point where we satisfy the level of knowledge required across the board?

To master the subject you need both philosophy as well as the hands-on experience. Like any learned skill, practice is the key. If we expose someone to it, and they do it 0-3 times a year, it may seem to be a waste of their time. However, since all Scouting associated adults may participate in a Board of Review, they all should at least be exposed to it. This is one of the purposes behind the scoutcraft skills as currently taught in both Scoutmastership Fundamentals and Scout Wood Badge. But for the SM and ASM who will camp with their Scouts 10-12 times a year (or more), go to summer camps or on high adventures with Scouts, or train Scouts in scoutcraft for advancement (and life); the need for in-depth training and mastery of scoutcraft skills is crucial.

#### PROPOSAL

This then is the role of "Camping 201". The series of lessons, exemplified by the lesson plan in the appendix to this paper, will provide the extensive hands-on training for those adults who will be camping with the Scouts and teaching them outdoor skills. Along with the hands-on training is an explanation of the why we do it this way and the safety aspects of each scoutcraft skill. A three hour block is the minimum time necessary to teach the following fundamentals: fuels, stoves, and lanterns; pitching a dining fly; firemanship; map interpretation, compass use, and terrain awareness; personal equipment (packs and packing); patrol, crew, or troop equipment (the QM's job); menu planning and buying food; what should go into a first aid kit; trip planning and safety in the outdoors; or the patrol method of camping. Six hour blocks are required to teach the fundamentals of food preparation and cooking; a woods tools course; or knots and lashings. First aid and CPR require a more in-depth training syllabus, and should be taught by professionals like the American Red Cross, SOLO, the National Outdoor Leadership School, etc.

The lesson on dining flies (Appendix) in Camping 201 is designed to be taught at district or council camporees, to the adults **NOT** participating in or helping lead the events. Normally, at least one adult stays in the campsite. Using these adults as students, each Troop may end up with an "expert" in one or more areas. And, the camporee will not suffer from a shortage of staff. Uniform for the lessons is the field uniform or camping clothes, suitable for the weather. Students need to bring pen, notebook with paper, and equipment appropriate for the lesson. Handouts will be provided as needed. The lessons may also be taught as an overnight experience teaching one short session Friday evening,

two short sessions or one long session Saturday, and a short session on Sunday.

I have left the development of additional lesson plans for future Doctoral Theses. I challenge other Scouters to develop lesson plans for the recommended courses provided below, or other courses as required.

#### OTHER RECOMMENDED LESSONS

Campsite selection (at least 3-4 hours). This lesson would include overall campsite arrangement, tent arrangement, low impact camping philosophy, the "bear-muda triangle", ax yard, cooking area/chuckbox for tailgaters, camp safety, and pointing out camp gadgets. Both Scoutmastership Fundamentals and Scout Wood Badge have a model campsite. What is the role and make-up of the model campsite? Should it be used as a teaching device, or is it the place where the staff sleeps, meets, and holds staff meetings? If it is only a living and meeting space, then less effort can go into it. However, if it to be used as a teaching device, for personal equipment, troop equipment, and campsite layout (and I think it should), then the model campsite is the location where these portions of the course should be taught. At the same time, some camp gadgets, previously built by staff, can also be pointed out. Students would build a training model campsite at the camporee. Building camp gadgets is left to the lesson on knots and lashings.

Fires (at least 3-4 hours). We should teach why we have fires (companionship, cooking, warmth), as well as the types of fires. We should teach the impact to nature of a fire (such as sterilizing the ground), and how to reduce that impact. We should teach the safety of and proper procedures for lighting and extinguishing fires as well as the requirements for tinder, kindling, fuel. The SMS and ASMs should actually build several types of fires and put them out correctly.

Stoves and Lanterns (at least 3-4 hours). We should teach safe handling, fueling, lighting, using, and storing of stoves, lanterns, and fuels. An array of different types of stoves and lanterns needs to be displayed. We should discuss how a "white gas" stove or lantern operates, and compare that with how a "propane" stove or lantern operates. We should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of stove or lantern, as well as the recommended uses, and conditions under which they would not work well (such as propane in very cold weather). We need to discuss what to look for when purchasing stoves and lanterns, and discriminate between purchasing it for an adult (especially backpacking) or for a typical Scout patrol. Finally, we need to discuss, demonstrate, and then let the students

practice taking the stoves and lanterns apart to repair and clean. Especially discuss and demonstrate field stripping and repair of stoves and lanterns if one fails during a campout. Describe a proper toolkit both for tailgate camping and backpacking.

We need to take the same tack with map and compass (at least 3-4 hours). Teach how a compass works, and the uses of a compass. Teach how a map is made, what the symbols mean, and map interpretation. Teach using a map and compass together, route planning, time control, and terrain awareness.

Patrol method (at least 3-4 hours). This course would be a train-the-Trainer for the adult students to be able to teach the junior leaders in a troop effective patrol and troop management. Discuss the role of Patrol leaders, and Patrol Leaders' Councils, duty rosters, advancement awareness and patrol administration, junior leader training, troop meeting participation, etc. Other discussion topics need to include campout planning for the patrol, patrol hygiene, patrol camp safety.

Campout planning (at least 3-4 hours). Where do you want to go and why (type of campout), such as scoutcraft training, skiing, water related, fishing, or just plain relaxing and having fun. Camp schedule, duty roster, in camp safety, emergency plans, tour permits, and the camping plan need to be covered. The shakedown, what it is, and why to do it (how often) needs to be discussed. Other topics would include patrol and troop equipment, transportation, equipment clean-up, and equipment maintenance.

How to stay comfortable (at least 3-4 hours). What is hypothermia, how does it happen, how do you plan to avoid it, and how do you treat MILD hypothermia in the field? What clothes do you bring and what are they made from? How do you layer and why? What is dehydration and heat stress? How do you treat mild heat stress and how do you avoid it? What clothes do you pack for warm weather, and what are they made from? How do you avoid bugs and poisonous plants? What should you do for bee sting, tick bite, poison ivy. Bathing in the outdoors, especially before bed, and buddy tick checks.

Tents (at least 3-4 hours). What are the common types of tents, what are they made from, how are they made. What to look for in buying a tent, fiberglass poles Vs aluminum, stitching and seams, zippers, ventilation, fly, stakes, floor. Demonstrate how to put up various types of tents, then have the students put them up, take them down, and get them ready for storage. Demonstrate and let the students use seam-sealer. Discuss what to look for in a tent site. Describe the impact of tents in the environment (color, beating down vegetation, etc.) and how to mitigate their



impact. Tent safety, hammocks, bivy sacks, tube tents, survival shelters from tarps, etc., all should be covered during this block of instruction.

Menu planning, food selection, and buying (at least 3-4 hours). How to plan a menu around food likes/dislikes, food allergies, religious restrictions, personal preferences (e.g., a vegetarian). Discuss tailgate food selection, ice chests, food storage, patrol chuckboxes, and the differences about backpacking food selection and storage. Discuss when to buy for the troop versus by patrol, e.g., rolls of tin foil, jar of peanut butter, bottles of ketchup or maple syrup, cooking oil, etc. Have the students build menus for breakfasts, lunches, and suppers; for cold meals and hot. Menus for non-cooked meals, versus meals which take time to cook, e.g., roasts. Then have the students build the food lists necessary to support the menus. Discuss menus for meals suitable for camporees versus meals for troop campouts without a stringent timetable; and complex menus of more than one or two courses, versus one pot meals. Discuss when do, what do, and why do adults cook and the planning for and the appropriateness of individual meals, patrol meals, Vs troop meals.

Knots (at least 6-8 hours). Start with the types of rope and twine, and the uses and disadvantages of each. Then go into the knots used throughout the Scouting program. Describe how the knot weakens the rope, and the reliability and strength of each knot as well as the intended purpose. Each Scouter must master the knot in a variety of scenarios, perhaps blindfolded, behind the back, one handed, etc. Finish up with lashings. Make several camp gadgets, such as, a free standing table, dish drying rack on a tree, tripod, perhaps even a tower, etc.

Packs and packing, the personal equipment guide (at least 6-8 hours). What are the common types of packs, what are they made from, how are they made. What to look for in buying a pack, external frame Vs internal, stitching, zippers, ventilation, pockets, day pack Vs camping pack, fanny pack, etc. How to properly fit and wear the pack. How to pack the pack and lash stuff to it. What goes into the pack. Checklists and shakedown.

Sleeping gear. What are the common types of sleeping bags, what are they made from, how are they made? What to look for in buying a bag, mummy Vs rectangular, stitching, zippers, ventilation, pockets, cold weather Vs warm weather bags, etc. How to properly fit and use the bag. Wash before entering, and change into dry sleeping clothes. How to pack the bag and care for it at home.

Personal hygiene equipment, discuss different kinds, sharing, e.g., bar of soap and toothpaste for the patrol.

Eating equipment. What are the common types, what are they made from, how are they made. What to look for in buying.

Clothes and extra clothes. Why bring extra clothing? What to bring, what is it made from, how is it packed in the pack?

Safety and repair equipment.

What other equipment should be brought, why, how should it be packed, what is it used for?

Woods tools (at least 6-8 hours). Teach a full "tote-n-chip" course, and let the Scouters earn the Paul Bunyan award as their practice time. Proper use, handling, passing, sharpening, cleaning, maintenance, and storage of the four categories of woods tools: knives, axes, saws and shovels would be taught. Safety must be emphasized throughout this course. Fixed bladed knives do have a role in Scouting. Filleting fish, wilderness survival, and food preparation are three valid scenarios that fixed bladed knives play a role. Types, sizes, advantages, disadvantages, and uses of knives and multi-purpose tools, e.g., Leatherman Tool, Gerber Multi-Tool, etc. Axes, sizes and uses. Saws, types, handling, and uses, etc. Shovels, sizes and uses, care and storage.

What goes into a first aid kit (at least 6-8 hours). Bandages, dressings, splints, ointments, pre-packaged emergency blankets, tweezers, pen, flashlight, medications, etc. Discuss the safety aspects of medicines, bee-sting kits, snake bite kits. Discuss the permission slip, first aid log, medical forms, allergies to food, medicine, critters, etc. Teach minor first aid such as removing a splinter and tick, treating minor cuts and burns, treating blisters, basic heat and cold related stresses. However, as stated previously, teaching in-depth first aid is beyond the scope of these lessons, and better left for courses with more time.

Cooking, clean-up, and personal hygiene (at least 6-8 hours). Aluminum cook kit cooking versus dutch oven cooking; breakfasts, lunches, and dinners; hot meals Vs cold meal preparation; desserts; crackerbarrels; aluminum foil cooking. How to properly clean up and sanitize after a tailgate style camping meal, backpacking meal, cold meal on the trail. Personal hygiene and sanitation practices before, during, and after the meal. Why you do not slice chicken, then veggies with same knife on same board? Cleaning and care for aluminum, steel, Teflon, black iron. What are the differences among fire cooking, charcoal cooking, and stove cooking?

## BACKGROUND AND RELATED INFORMATION

### COMMENTS FROM OTHER SCOUTERS

The need for this type of training has been established based on the comments received from the last three Scoutmastership Fundamentals courses taught in the George Washington District of the National Capitol Area Council, and through extensive person-to-person discussions by the author at the last George Washington District camporee.

In all, twenty-one Scouters were surveyed at the camporee, and over 120 Scouters' comments were received from the Scoutmastership Fundamentals courses.

Person-to-person interviews with many of the instructors from those three courses also endorsed the need for this level of training.

### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

#### Adult Scouting Pre-1986:

- Three years' College Scouter Reserve and Alpha Phi Omega
- One summer's experience (1967) as a Ranger at Philmont
- One year's experience as an Explorer Advisor
- Four years' experience as an Assistant Scoutmaster
- One year's (1985-1986) experience as an Assistant WEBELOS Den Leader

#### Mid-America Council, 1986-1991

- Two years' experience as an Assistant Scoutmaster
- Three years' (1987-1990) experience as a Scoutmaster
- Completed Wood Badge (1986)
- Two expeditions (1989, 1991) as Expedition Advisor for Philmont crews.
- Have taught WEBELOS Den Leader Outdoors Courses, and Scoutmastership Fundamentals Courses in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council.
- Have taught two courses (1989-1990) of the week long Junior Leader Training Course for the Mid-America Council.
- Was Course Director one year of the week long Junior Leader Training Course for the Mid-America Council.
- One year's experience (1989) (two courses) as the Course Director for Scoutmastership Fundamentals in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- One year's (1990) experience as the District Boy Scout Training Chair in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- One year's (1991) experience as the District Training Chair in

the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council

George Washington District: (1991 - present)

- Have taught portions of three (1993-1995) District level Junior Leader Training Course developed by the George Washington District.
- Served (1994) as the Course Director for one District level Junior Leader Training Course developed by the George Washington District
- Have taught portions of three Scoutmastership Fundamentals Courses (1995-1996) in the George Washington District
- Have served as the Course Director for one Scoutmastership Fundamentals Course (1996) in the George Washington District
- Have been the Camporee Director for one camporee (Spring 1993)
- Have taught portions of scoutcraft at two other camporees in the George Washington District
- Have taught portions of two "Camping 101" Courses (1994-1995) developed by Mary Dohr and Craig Goheen.
- Have taught portions of four "Venture Leader Training" Courses (1992-1996), developed primarily by Cooper Wright and John Spencer.
- Have been (1995) the Course Director for one "Venture Leader Training" Course

My other teaching experience (NCAC and GW) is summarized below.

- Taught the Roundtable Commissioner and Staff training course for two years (1994 and 1996) in the National Capital Area Council
- Taught the Boy Scout Roundtable Courses of the Bachelor of Roundtable Science of the College of Commissioner Science for three years (1994-1996) in the National Capital Area Council
- Served two years (1995-1996) as Dean of the Bachelor of Roundtable Science of the College of Commissioner Science for the National Capital Area Council
- Taught the Venture Elective Course one time (1996) as part of the University of Scouting for the National Capital Area Council)

Based on my own experiences and observations this training is definitely needed.

The following list describes my experience in teaching scoutcraft skills or receiving training in scoutcraft skills.

- Received basic adult leader training three times
- Completed Wood Badge (1986)
- One summer's experience (1967) as a Ranger at Philmont
- One year's (1985-1986) experience as an Assistant WEBELOS Den Leader

- Five years' experience as an Assistant Scoutmaster
- Two expeditions (1989, 1991) as Expedition Advisor for Philmont crews, including leading all of the preparation
- Three years' (1987-1990) experience as a Scoutmaster
- Have taught portions (1989) of two WEBELOS Den Leader Outdoors Courses
- Have taught portions (1987-1990) of six Scoutmastership Fundamentals Courses in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- Have taught portions of two courses (1989-1990) of the week long Junior Leader Training Course for the Mid-America Council
- One year's experience (1989) (two courses) as the Course Director for Scoutmastership Fundamentals in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- One year's (1990) experience as the District Boy Scout Training Chair in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- One year's (1991) experience as the District Training Chair in the Wagonwheel District of Mid-America Council
- Have taught portions of four (1993-1995) District level Junior Leader Training Course developed by the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council
- Served (1994) as the Course Director for one District level Junior Leader Training Course developed by the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council
- Have taught portions of three Scoutmastership Fundamentals Courses (1995-1996) in the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council
- Have served as the Course Director for one Scoutmastership Fundamentals Course (1996) in the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council
- Have been the Camporee Director for one camporee (Spring 1993) in the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council. The program was scoutcraft at all three levels, new Scout, older Scout, and Venture
- Have taught portions of scoutcraft at two other camporees in the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council
- Have taught portions of two "Camping 101" Courses (1994-1995). Course developed by Mary Dohr and Craig Goheen from the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council. This is a course designed to introduce adults, transitioning from the WEBELOS program into the Scouting program, to outdoorsmanship. It is a one day course that covers the outdoor equipment and some of the scoutcraft portions of Scoutmastership Fundamentals.
- Have taught portions of four "Venture Leader Training" Courses (1992-1996). This is a course developed primarily by Cooper Wright and John Spencer from the George Washington District of National Capitol Area Council and designed to train adults working with the Venture program in those principles and scoutcraft skills necessary for the safe implementation of Venture activities. It is structured like the Scoutmastership

Fundamentals Course but devoted to the Venture Program. It consists of two evenings plus a weekend campout and covers the philosophy, planning, safety, outdoor equipment, and scoutcraft skills of Venture.

- Have been (1995) the Course Director for one "Venture Leader Training" Course

My other teaching experience is summarized below.

- Taught the Roundtable Commissioner and Staff training course for three years (1994, 1996, and 1997) in the National Capitol Area Council

- Taught the Boy Scout Roundtable Courses of the Bachelor of Roundtable Science of the College of Commissioner Science for three years (1994-1996) in the National Capitol Area Council

- Served two years (1995-1996) as Dean of the Bachelor of Roundtable Science of the College of Commissioner Science for the National Capitol Area Council

- Taught the Venture Elective Course one time (1996) as part of the University of Scouting for the National Capitol Area Council

- Certified for six years (1966-1972) as a Red Cross First Aid Instructor and Water Safety Instructor

- Air Force B-52 instructor pilot for 8 years

- Taught one year (1969) as a lab instructor for Earth Science at Ball State University

## REFERENCES

1. Scoutmastership Fundamentals Syllabus and Supplementary Materials
2. Wood Badge Course Notes
3. Camping 101 Course Syllabus And Handouts
4. Venture Leader Training Syllabus And Handouts
5. Boy Scout Handbook
6. Boy Scout Fieldbook
7. Woods Wisdom

## APPENDIX

### DINING FLYS

**OBJECTIVES:** To discuss with Scouters so they understand how to buy a dining fly, how they are constructed, what they are used for; and train Scouters in how to properly set them up. Three hour session.

**FOR WHOM:** Train those Scouters who normally camp with or teach scoutcraft skills to Boy Scouts in their units. These Scouters would normally remain in their campsite during a camporee, therefore there should be no impact on the camporee staff or activities.

**METHOD:** To provide Scouters information concerning dining flies through lecture, discussion, demonstration, supervised student activity, and handout material. Topics to be covered include what are the common configurations of dining flies, what are they made from, how are they made, what to look for in buying a dining fly, how should they be used, what are emergency uses for dining flies, what are emergency substitutions for dining flies, and how to set one up. After the discussion, the instructors will demonstrate several ways to set up dining flies. Following the demonstration, the students will demonstrate proficiency by putting up several dining flies.

#### DISCUSSION OUTLINE:

What is a dining fly?

What are the common configurations of dining flies?

From what are they made?

How are they made?

What to look for in buying a dining fly?

How should they be maintained?

How should they be used?

What are emergency uses for dining flies?

What are emergency substitutions for dining flies?

#### DISCUSSION INFORMATION:

##### **What is a dining fly?**

A dining fly is a tarp or cover that is set up to provide protection from the sun and precipitation. They are typically set up to cover areas used for storing equipment, cooking, teaching, sleeping, and, as the name implies, eating.

##### **What are the common configurations of dining flies?**



There are many ways to set up the dining fly. They can be purchased with a frame of aluminum or wooden poles that fit together into a rigid frame that is self-supporting. The poles at the corners are then guyed down to provide stability when the wind is blowing. Essentially, this is a cabin-style tent without walls or floor. However, some do have mosquito screening for walls, and some have a floor as well. Those with walls or walls and a floor are normally staked down rather than having the poles guyed down. When guying the poles, two ropes from the tops of the corner poles (perpendicular to each other, and extensions of the edges of the tarp) is the most stable method. A less stable method has single guys from the corners, staked out in line as an extension of a line drawn from the center to the corner. This arrangement provides the maximum amount of protection from sun or non-wind-blown rain. It provides much less protection from wind-driven rain. This is one of the heaviest and most expensive arrangements for a dining fly.

Less expensive, and weighing less, are configurations typically, made from a tarp that is supported either by four poles at the corners or a combination of a middle and corner poles. The most effective of this arrangement is the 5 pole configuration. Usually, the center pole is taller than the corner poles, which allows for water to run off, and not pool in the center, as may happen with just 4 poles. However, the main drawback to the 5 pole setup is that the wind may lift the tarp off of the center pole, and drop it back down again, causing the pole to puncture or tear the tarp. This arrangement provides as much protection as the first arrangement, as the tarp is normally above head height. And like the first arrangement, it provides much less protection from wind-driven rain. This configuration is also the most susceptible to being blown down or damaged by the wind. The guying configurations are the same as for the first arrangement.

The next method involves two uprights and a ridgepole. The two uprights are guyed out, with the guys acting as extensions of the ridgepole. The tarp is draped over the ridgepole, and the four corners of the tarp are guyed out, with the guys acting as extensions of the line from the center of the tarp to the corners. Normally the centerline of the tarp rests on the ridgepole, providing equal amounts of protection to each side. However, this can be altered from offset slightly to having one edge rest on the ridgepole, and having the two non-ridgeline corners staked to the ground. This forms a lean-to.

The final arrangement uses two poles and a rope as the ridgeline, replacing the ridgepole. The tarp is draped over the rope. The corners are either staked or guyed as in configuration three. In place of the two upright poles and the ridgeline, the tarp may be draped over a rope tied between two trees or two poles. High

adventure crews use a form of this method. However, instead of staking or guying just the corners, the guy rope is fed through several of the side grommets, and intermediate stakes are used with the guy rope. The high adventure configuration is also usually no taller than chest high. The low configuration, and the use of full side ropes makes this arrangement the most resistant to wind, and it affords the best protection from wind-driven rain. Its disadvantage is that one cannot stand under it. Normally though, this configuration is used only for storing equipment, though it may be used for eating under in a rainstorm.

### **From what are they made?**

They are either made from heavy cotton duck cloth (canvas) that has been treated to be water-resistant, or a synthetic material like rayon, nylon, nylon taffeta, or polyurethane. The synthetic materials may be constructed with heavier threads throughout the fabric in a rectangular pattern to provide for a "rip-stop" capability. The tear will normally stop at the next heavy thread it meets. The canvas tarp is better suited for camporee or tailgate style camping by younger, less experienced youth. It can take more abuse than the synthetic materials, and may be less expensive to replace. Its disadvantages are that it is heavier than the synthetic tarps, and subject to rot or mildew if put away damp. It is less susceptible to damage from flying sparks. The synthetic materials are lighter weight and dry faster than their canvas counterparts, and more easily damaged by fire or sparks.

### **How are they made?**

Typically they are square or rectangular in shape. They are usually made by sewing together several pieces of material. This creates seams which will have to be seam-sealed. They may have grommets at the corners, at the corners and in the middle, or at the corners, in the middle, and along the sides. In place of grommets they may have ties. If they have ties, usually there are additional ties placed throughout the tarp. The edge seams may have a piece of cord sewn into the seam as a stiffener or strengthener.

### **What to look for in buying a dining fly?**

Before buying a dining fly you need to answer three questions. First: "Do I even need a dining fly?" If the answer to that question is no, stop here. I do not understand why you would not want a dining fly, but your answer may be no.

If the answer to the first question is yes, then you need to answer the next two questions which are: "Who will use it, and

for what?". The answers to these two questions will drive the type and size of dining fly you want. Now you are ready to start looking for a dining fly. The troop that uses it for a patrol site dining fly may want a different size fly than the troop who sets up troop campsites with only one or two large flies. The family who car camps may want a full size frame supported fly, unlike the backpackers who will certainly want the smaller, synthetic one, vice the large, heavy canvas one. If you are going to use it as a cover, like on top of a trailer, you would probably want one with grommets, to snug it down. On the other hand, if you use it as a tent one trip, as a fly the next, you may want ties for the flexibility they provide.

No matter what the intended use, however, there are some common features to look for. The seams should be rolled, not butt joined. They should be double sewn, not single stitched. If you are purchasing canvas, the thread count should be high (produces a tighter weave). Grommets and ties should be attached at a reinforced (doubled material) point, not at a single material point. The grommets should be to the inside of the cordage stiffener. There should be no unfinished edges exposed, they may unravel. If your tarp does not come with a protective bag, either make one or buy one at a local camping equipment store. Brand name dining flies usually come with a better warranty than off-brand.

The poles may be fiberglass, graphite, aluminum, or wood. Aluminum poles are either small diameter (and normally shock-corded) or large diameter (and nest inside each other). If they are not wood, look for shock-corded poles (poles with an elastic cord running up the middle). Shock-corded poles are normally sectioned like non-shock-corded poles, but this makes for easy assembly, because the poles sections are kept together. Double shock-cord is even better. Double shock-cording can be a single cord, heavier than the standard single shock-cord, or two separate cords running up the middle. Fiberglass poles can break easier than graphite or aluminum, especially in cold weather. But, with abuse, the aluminum poles can bend, crimp, and break as well. The companies that make brand-name flies, usually also make replacement poles or pole sections. It may be a good idea to buy a replacement pole and pole repair kit when you buy the fly.

### **How should they be maintained?**

Before you go out, set it up on a nice day. Make sure you have all of the necessary pieces including ropes, stakes, and poles. If the pole sections are not shock-corded, perhaps you may consider color-coding (with paint or colored tape) the pole sections, to make it easier to match pole sections for set-up. This is especially important when speed is important, such as in

the rain, or at night

The seams should be sealed with a seam sealer from the inside (downside, when set up). The material is normally water repellent, not water-proof. Before the first outing, you may want to treat the entire fly with "Thompson's Water Seal" as well. Drape it over a rope and spray or brush the water sealant on the entire fly. Loosely guy it out and let it dry. Retreat with seam sealer and water sealant every two to three years, depending on the amount of use.

Flys should be thoroughly dry before they are put away. Ensure there is no camping debris on the fly prior to folding. Leaves and insects could cause mildew or rot spots, and twigs could punch holes in the fabric. Dirt should be washed off, and the spot allowed to thoroughly dry before the tarp is put away. If you have used a lantern under the tarp, check the area above the lantern for possible soot deposits. These will need to be washed off as well. If you have room, store the fly by hanging it up. This keeps wrinkles from becoming wear lines, which eventually may tear or leak. Keep the poles, stakes, and ropes in a separate pole bag. If you have more than one fly, You should label the tarp and pole bags for each set, so you know which set of poles goes with which fly. If you cannot hang it for storage, there are two schools of thought on how it should be bundled for storage.

The first school is the "stuff" school. After completely drying the tarp, and removing debris, stuff the fly into its storage bag. The wrinkles will be random, causing less wear on the fabric.

The "fold" school either folds it completely into a package about two feet square (one foot square depending on size). The variant on this school is to fold it into a long, narrow rectangle, then roll it.

### **How should they be used?**

They should be the first things set up in the campsite, after the campsite configuration has been determined. This is the central storage area for group equipment. Once the fly is up, then the tents may be set up so the group equipment can be brought to the fly area. This is normally outside of the "bear-muda triangle", unless eating and cooking activities are going to be done there. Then it becomes one point of the "bear-muda triangle".

DO NOT COOK UNDER THE FLY. If you are going to protect the cooks, set the fly up **NEXT TO** the fire or stoves, not over them. The cooks can then reach out from under the tarp or briefly step

out from under the tarp to do the actual cooking. Remember, they are easily set on fire. This will not only ruin the fly, but could cause injury.

If you must set up lanterns under the fly, keep the top of the lantern at least three feet below the tarp. Periodically check the temperature of the tarp above the lantern.

When you set it up, look for puddle and water flow marks on the ground. If it rains, your upper body may be dry, but you could be standing in a deep puddle of water or a small "river".

If you are in an area with insects, do not spray insect killer or repellent on the fly. This will damage the fly.

### **What are emergency uses for dining flys?**

In an emergency, dining flys can be used for a variety of things, such as rain flys for tents, ground cloths, stretchers, and tents (especially lean-to tents). If they are put up vertically rather than horizontally, they may be used as wind blocks (especially if teaching a class on a sunny but windy day; or wrapped around a set of poles to make a make-shift shower enclosure, or privacy enclosure for first-aid activity. For treatment of hypothermia, the victim can be swaddled in insulating materials like sleeping bags, then rolled up in the tarp to retain the heat.

### **What are emergency substitutions for dining flys?**

Ponchos, ground cloths, and tent rain flys may be substituted for dining flys. The disadvantage will be in the smaller ground footprint and amount of coverage or protection. The tent (if a tent rain fly is used) or person (if a poncho or ground cloth is used) may go unprotected, however.

If the emergency dining fly has no grommets or ties, or if a grommet pulls out of a tarp, an emergency grommet may be made by placing a small stone, marble, button, fishing weight, etc into the area near the missing grommet (or where a grommet would be) and tying it off in a pocket of material.

### **DEMONSTRATION AND PRACTICE:**

After the discussion period (about 45-60 minutes of the three hour block) the instructor, helped by the students should set up at least one of each type of dining fly. The tent type (with the rigid frame) should be set up first. This is followed by a five pole and a four pole configured tarp. Explain the methods of guying or staking each type. Show different types of poles, and color coding.

Next, the two pole (with rope) configuration should be set up. Several different arrangements of this configuration should be set up, including the lower high-adventure configuration.

Finally other configurations may be set up if time and conditions allow. For instance, secure each corner of a tarp to a different tree in a rectangular configuration. You may also demonstrate uneven draping of the tarp over the ridgeline, to include making a lean-to.

As a last demo, demonstrate a quick, but temporary cover. Have four students squat facing outward and hold the four corners over their heads, protecting as much of themselves as they can. Have the rest of the students get under the middle. This works well for protection from a passing shower or hail storm on the trail.