



# BACKCOUNTRY TRAILS PROGRAM: PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

This is a comprehensive list of the gear you will need for a BC season. Items denoted with two asterisks\*\* are available to borrow from the program for those who cannot or do not wish to purchase their own gear. The cost to purchase gear can range from \$600 to \$1000. Issued items must be returned in working condition or you will be charged for them. Be aware that the most expensive gear doesn't mean it's the best and be wary of the cheapest gear. Quality of your gear is very important as it will need to last the season. It is VERY important you review this list closely.

**Wait to purchase any gear/equipment until after you have spoken with your BC Supervisor.**

Try on all gear before purchasing. Make sure things fit and are comfortable and durable. Ask your BC SUPERVISOR for assistance. They will have advice, suggestions, and most likely some additional requirements in terms of what to bring. Be aware that everything you bring will have to fit into your backpack and you will have to be able to hike at 3mph for up to 18 miles at a time. There is little to no storage space for extra gear. Weight, size, and durability are all important concerns!

## REQUIRED GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

- **Sleeping Bag\*\*** : Mummy style sleeping bags are essential for keeping warm in extreme conditions. Choose one specific to your height and temperature tolerance. For example, if you tend to get warm in your sleep you might choose a 20 degree bag, but if you get cold in your sleep you might choose a 0 degree bag. You can also bring a thermal sleeping bag liner if you are not sure. Bag insulation is either synthetic or down (feathers). Down bags are typically lighter and warmer, but are hard to clean and dry and are completely ineffective when wet. Synthetic bags are a heavier, but easy to clean and dry and can still keep you warm if they get wet.
- **Sleeping Pad\*\*** : Essential for warmth and comfort throughout the season. There are three different kinds: closed cell foam, inflatable, and a combination of the two. Foam pads are recommended - they are inexpensive, light, and the most durable option. Combination pads combine the padding of a closed cell foam pad but have an extra inflatable compartment for added comfort. They can be pricy and bulky/heavy and may puncture during the season. Inflatable pads can be ultralight weight but are not recommended as they often puncture in the duration and conditions experienced in a BC season. If you are a cold sleeper, pay attention to the R-value of the pad. Higher R-value = warmer pad.
- **Tent\*\*** : A 2-person tent is recommended. Do not bring a bivy. It should be big enough and durable enough to live in for 5 months, but small and light enough to carry easily. You do not need a 4-season tent.
- **Large Backpack\*\*** : A good fit is extremely important! You will use this to carry all the rest of your gear, and every day for work if you choose not to bring a separate daypack. Try on several different packs before deciding. Choose one with waist and shoulder straps that fits your height and girth and feels comfortable with at least 40 lbs of weight in it. There are two different kinds of packs: internal and external frame. Both work fine, but internal frame packs are generally more comfortable and versatile and are more widely available now than external frame. We recommend that your pack be between 70-80 liters. Anything more will encourage over packing and a heavy load, and anything less will not fit all of your required gear and clothing. Crews are increasingly required to carry bear proof canisters on weekends, which are bulky and require extra room. Check with your Supervisor as to specific needs.

- **Water bottles and hydration system:** You must have the capacity to carry at least a gallon of water at a time. Work sites can be miles from the nearest water source, and it is common to drink upwards of 2 gallons a day. We recommend a combination of both water bottles and a hydration system with a hose so it is easier to drink water while hiking. Canvas-covered hydration systems are more durable and less likely to puncture. Water bottles should be made from durable plastic or metal.
- **Water Filter\*\* :** BCTP provides all members with a water filter, but you may bring your own if you prefer.
- **Head Lamp\*\* :** Bring a headlamp with extra batteries or rechargeable battery packs. Flashlights are not practical for BCTP conditions. You should choose a headlamp based on the battery life and brightness.
- **Alarm Clock:** You will need a reliable alarm clock with extra batteries.
- **Wristwatch:** An essential safety item for life in the BCTP. Choose something durable and water resistant.
- **Rain Gear\*\* :** BCTP will provide everyone with uniform rain gear (jacket and pants). If you wish, you may also bring a backup rain jacket. There are several good coated-nylon varieties. Gore-Tex is protective but breaks down over time. Shells are lighter than multi-layer options, but the waterproof inner coating tends to break down and peel off more easily.
- **Sewing Kit:** Bring either a small personal sewing kit or a few strong needles and a spool of thread. These will be required for sewing on uniform patches and are useful for mending gear and uniforms.
- **Tupperware:** This will hold your lunch/weekend meals. Make sure it closes securely. Alternatively, many members choose to double up their weekend cook pot as a lunch container.
- **Back-up work boots:** Extremely important! The BCTP will provide your work boots, however you will need to bring an additional pair as a backup. Boots must be completely enclosed, with a 6-inch ankle and it is preferable that they have a Vibram sole. Your back up boots are not required to be safety toe boots, however, they must be approved prior to arrival as an acceptable backup. Again, this is an item that you should try various models/styles of before selecting. We also recommend that you wear the boots for at least 2 weeks to wear them in before the season begins.
- **Personal Protective Equipment\*\* :** Hard hat, gloves, safety glasses, and earplugs will be provided to all incoming members. If you are already in the CCC, you must bring your PPE from your center

## REQUIRED CLOTHING

- **Socks:** 5-7 pairs. Medium thickness wool, wool blend, or synthetic are best for padding feet and keeping warm while wet. Cotton socks are not recommended as they dry slowly and do not keep feet warm enough. Thin synthetic liner socks can provide extra protection if you are not accustomed to hiking in boots or tend to get sore feet.
- **Underwear:** 5-7 pairs. Quick dry is the best, but cotton works fine.
- **Thermals:** A set of long underwear (thermal pants and shirt) is highly recommended. Synthetic, silk, or wool are recommended as they are warmer and still work when wet.
- **Shirts:** 2-3 recommended with at least one long-sleeve shirt for sun/cold protection. (White undershirts are not required as part of the Backcountry uniform).
- **Warm Jacket\*\* :** BCTP will provide all members a uniform fleece and down puffy jacket, however it is HIGHLY recommended that you bring additional layers of your own. A medium to lightweight jacket is good for layering. Fleece, wool, and synthetic “puffy” jackets are preferred. Heavy winter coats are too bulky and heavy to be practical in the Backcountry.
- **Flannel/Wool Shirt/Sweater:** Bring at least one additional warm layer, more if you tend to get cold. Choose flannel, fleece, wool, or polypropylene. Cotton isn’t as warm and doesn’t work when wet.
- **Shorts:** Long work pants are provided by the BCTP. A pair of hiking shorts or a combination of zip off pant/shorts are highly recommended. Additional pairs of pants are not recommended for weight concerns.
- **Beanie\*\* :** Wool or fleece recommended. Maintaining warmth is crucial in cold weather!
- **Strap-on sandals:** Sandals are essential for keeping your feet healthy by allowing them to air out, avoiding trench foot and blisters. They must be strap on sandals - flip-flops are not safe and not allowed. Make sure they are safely secured to your feet and highly breathable.

- **Uniform shirts and pants\*\*** : 3 sets. These are provided by the BCTP for incoming members. If you are currently in the CCC bring three sets of your best long sleeve uniform shirts and three pairs of your best work pants.
- **Belt:** It is common for members' clothing sizes to change during the season. A belt ensures your pants stay up!

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED GEAR AND PERSONAL ITEMS

- **Pocket Knife/Multi-Tool with Can Opener:** Highly recommended for weekends. No blades longer than 4 inches. If you choose not to carry a multi-tool, P-38 or P-51 military issue can openers are a good lightweight option.
- **Backpacking Stove\*\*** : You will be required to cook your own meals on the weekends. Some crews are allowed to have fires to cook with, others are not (above 10,000 ft, in designated wilderness areas, or in times of burn bans). BCTP provides all crews with backpacking stoves that can be shared between members, but if you don't want to wait your turn it can be nice to have your own. White gas is provided throughout the season. If you bring a canister stove, you must provide your own fuel. Check with your Supervisor if you have any questions about whether to bring one and which one to get.
- **Cooking Pot\*\*** : A sturdy cooking pot is essential and it is nice to have your own. Many members use cook pots with locking lids that double as a lunch container.
- **Utensils:** A backpacking spork or utensil set. A regular spoon and fork work fine too!
- **Sleeping Bag Compression Sack:** This compresses your sleeping bag and other bulky gear into a small space. Extremely useful for fitting everything into your backpack! A waterproof or water resistant sack is recommended for your sleeping bag to keep your bag dry in any conditions.
- **Sleeping Bag Liner:** Silk or fleece liners can boost the warmth of your sleeping bag and help keep your sleeping bag cleaner as they are easier to clean and dry. The liners BCTP provides are mostly to help keep sleeping bags cleaner and do not provide much added warmth. If you tend to sleep cold, a warmer liner is recommended.
- **Gloves/Mittens:** These are extremely useful for high alpine camps, as temperatures can get below freezing.
- **Small First Aid Kit\*\*** : A camp first aid kit will be available in camp and at work, but on weekends, each person is responsible for carrying the supplies they need to respond to personal emergencies. BCTP will provide all members with a very basic personal first aid kit containing band-aids, moleskin, tape, etc. IMPORTANT: BCTP does not provide any medications, including over-the-counter medications.
- **Lighter/Matches:** For lighting stoves.
- **Insoles:** These are nice to have, especially with new boots.
- **Writing Supplies (Pen, Paper, Stamps, Envelopes):** Mail is your only means of personal communication during the season! It is helpful to bring an address book with a list of your contacts, or to make your own mailing labels before leaving home.
- **Garbage Bags and Ziplocs:** Can be helpful when organizing supplies/equipment, and for keeping things dry in your tent in case of heavy rain/flooding.
- **Towel:** A lightweight or backpacking towel is best. A thin rayon sarong is another good option because it is multipurpose.

- **Personal Hygiene Items**

- Prescription Medication
- Over-the-counter medications (e.g. ibuprofen, Benadryl, acetaminophen)
- Glasses/Contacts
- Toothbrush
- Bio-degradable Toothpaste
- Dental Floss
- Moisturizing lotion
- Menstrual cup - Diva Cup is the most well-known brand, but there are many others.
- Nail Clippers
- Chapstick
- Environmentally-Safe Sunscreen
- Natural Bug Spray
- Bath Scrubby/Washcloth
- Soap

## THE FUN STUFF

- Fishing Gear with Fishing License
- Personal Book(s)
- Camera (no phone cameras permitted)
- Art supplies
- Musical instruments
- Check with your supervisor about music players and other electronics

## EXTRAS THAT COULD BE USEFUL

- **Daypack\*\*:** You will need to have a backpack that is at least 30-40 liters to carry the tools and gear you need to work every day. It can be nice to have a separate daypack for this that is smaller and to avoid putting unnecessary wear and tear on your main backpack. Keep in mind that if you choose to bring a separate daypack, you will be hiking this in, in addition to your backpack. One with drawstring closures is better as zippers tend to break during the season with extended use.
- **Backpack rain cover:** The packs that BCTP provides come with rain covers. If you bring your own backpack(s), make sure they have a rain cover. Some members prefer to line the inside of their backpack with a trash bag for added protection.
- **Compass\*\*:** BCTP provides all members with a basic compass.
- **Trekking Poles:** Good for taking some of the strain off your leg joints while hiking on weekends.
- **Solar Charger:** If you have rechargeable camera or headlamp batteries.
- **Patching/Repair Kit:** Might include Seam Seal, Shoe Goo, Safety Pins/Clothespins, P-Cord, Extra Boot Laces, Tenacious Tape, etc.
- **Swimsuit**
- **Bandanas:** Multi-use and highly recommended!
- **Sunglasses:** UVA and UVB protection. A neck strap can be useful to avoid losing them.
- **Small Tarp\*\* :** Many members prefer to go without a tent on the weekends and bring a small tarp and p-cord for ground protection/in case of rain. BCTP will provide some small tarps, but not enough for all members.
- **Bear Can\*\*:** BCTP or the work sponsor will provide bear cans if they are required, but you may prefer to bring your own. Bear cans are heavier and bulkier but work better and are more versatile than bear hangs.
- **Mosquito Head Net:** Highly recommended! Ones without rings are easier to pack.

## **YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO BRING:**

- **Your personal vehicle**
- **Weapons of ANY KIND (including bear spray)**
- **Environmentally harmful personal hygiene products**
- **Drugs and alcohol**
- **Personal communication devices (cell phones, satellite devices, etc.)**

## **FINAL NOTES**

If you are selected, you will receive correspondence from Backcountry Staff with additional information and suggestions.

It is extremely helpful to have a contact person outside of the Backcountry who is willing to send in extra gear and supplies as needed throughout the season.