



# The Scoutmaster's Challenge

September 2010

## How's Your Camping Etiquette?

*The following quiz was adapted from Backpacker Magazine's quiz in the October, 2010 issue*

<p>1. A big, muddy puddle swamps the trail. Your move?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk off-trail, around the mud to keep your feet dry.</li> <li><b>Slosh on through! That's what Gore-Tex is for.</b></li> </ol>	<p>Walking off-trail – particularly around mud puddles – tramples vegetation and starts creating a new trail. Leave No Trace and use the trail that's there, even if it's wet and muddy.</p>
<p>2. Trail hygiene is tough. When the trail snacks get passed around, you should ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dig in! The risk of spreading germs this way is wildly exaggerated.</li> <li><b>Pour it into your palm, because who knows whether Joe "Nose Blow" Schmoie used the Purell.</b></li> <li>Set a good example by not sharing your GORP at all. This prevents contamination.</li> </ol>	<p>Pouring the snacks out prevents your dirt and germs from contaminating the snacks. But you should always share with your crew!</p>
<p>3. It's time to clean dishes. What's the minimum you should do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lick your plates – and let the other Scouts lick theirs.</li> <li>Wipe 'em clean with paper towels and air-dry. The exposure will kill germs by morning.</li> <li><b>Rinse dishes in boiling water to sterilize and air dry.</b></li> <li>Boil water, add soap, wash dishes, then rinse them in a pot of purified water and air dry.</li> </ol>	<p>Remember the question asked for the minimum you should do.</p> <p>If you can't do a full wash, wipe off the excess food (a slice of bread can clean the food bits just as well as paper towel and leave's less waste) and rinse with boiling water. This will kill germs and bacteria and rinse off food residue, which attracts critters.</p> <p>Paper towel is never welcome in the backcountry! You're just creating waste and litter.</p>

<p>4. You doused the campfire, now what? At established back-country (backpacking) campsites, you should ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave the fire ring as is.</li> <li>Scatter all of the ash remains and disassemble the fire ring.</li> <li><b>Scatter the big ash pieces so the mess doesn't overwhelm the fire ring (but leave the ring so the next campers don't create a new one).</b></li> </ol>	<p>You should always use an existing fire ring whenever you can, but too much ash can be a problem.</p> <p>Take some of the bigger pieces and scatter them <u>widely</u> into the woods (make sure you don't create an ash pile somewhere else). The wood will break down and help the soil and the fire ring won't be overflowing with ash at the end of the season.</p>
<p>5. Swimming in a remote back-country lake is ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awesome!</li> <li>Illegal in 43 states.</li> <li>Cool if your fairly clean and other campers aren't nearby.</li> <li><b>Decidedly uncool.</b></li> </ol>	<p>Chances are pretty good that if you hiked in to get to the lake, you're not fairly clean anymore. Sunscreen and bug spray can pollute the lake. Many backcountry lakes – especially in the mountains – are very fragile eco-systems that should be left alone.</p>
<p>6. When you need to pee, you do it how far from the trail?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 inches</li> <li>100 yards</li> <li><b>Out of sight and 200 feet from any water source.</b></li> </ol>	<p>The key is 200 feet from any water source. The further away you are from water, the more Mother Nature's natural filtration system will filter any "yuck" from the runoff before it enters the stream.</p> <p>And no one really needs to see you pee, so out of sight is always a good idea!</p>
<p>7. It's fire time and you break out the last bottle of Gatorade. You should ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Slug it, pass it around, repeat.</b></li> <li>Hoard it – you carried it, after all!</li> <li>Trade sips for Snickers.</li> </ol>	<p>Part of being on the trail is sharing the experience with your crew and others. If you brought something good ... make sure you share it around. Hoarding is just bad manners!</p>
<p>8. It's OK to roll rocks down a slope if ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You look and yell to make sure no one is in the line of fire.</li> <li>Your friend rolls one first.</li> <li><b>It's never OK to roll rocks.</b></li> </ol>	<p>Rolling rocks down a slope can cause small landslides and risks injuring others who may be coming up the trail.</p>
<p>9. It's fine to throw apple cores and orange peels into the woods.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>True</li> <li><b>False</b></li> </ol>	<p>Even if it's "bio-degradable" doesn't mean it belongs! Food waste can attract critters, habituate them to humans and upset their natural behaviors. In the worst case, seeds from the fruit could take root and introduce a new invasive species to the area.</p>

10. When nature calls while you're hiking in the woods, what should you do with your TP afterward?

- a. Bury it 6" deep or burn it.
- b. Pack it out.**
- c. Put it in your partner's top pocket.
- d. What TP? I use leaves!

Pack it out!!

TP doesn't degrade as fast as you think and wet TP. really doesn't like to burn. Some animal is likely to dig up your leftovers and the next hiker has used TP stuck to his shoe! Yuck!!

Bring extra-strength Ziploc bags and double-bag it to keep the stink out of your stuff ... but bring it out with you and dispose of it properly.

11. When 2 parties meet on a narrow trail, who yields?  
Choose all that apply.

- a. People moving uphill.
- b. People moving downhill.**
- c. The smaller party.
- d. The larger party**
- e. The party with the worst BO

Hikers going uphill are working hard and should be given the right of way over hikers coming downhill. On steep terrain it's also a lot harder for an uphill hiker to continually crane their necks to check for hikers coming down the trail. Sometimes uphill hikers will prefer to stop and let you pass coming down so they can get a short break, but it's their call.

When hiking in a group, the larger group should yield. Smaller parties or single hikers are usually faster and more nimble, but a large group can clog the trail making for a traffic jam in the woods. Let the smaller group get on their way quickly so everyone can enjoy the hike at their own pace. (This is particularly important if the smaller group comes up from behind the larger group)

12. On a weekend trek, you share a camp with 2 hungry-looking long-distance hikers. You should ...

- a. Keep a close eye on the food bag.
- b. Make a big dinner and offer them some.**
- c. Give them your remaining food when you hike out.**

Long-distance hiking involves very careful management of the amount of food you carry. Many hikers consider a protein bar a good lunch. After a week of protein bars and ramen noodles, the offer of a good meal will earn you eternal gratitude and probably a few good stories around the campfire.

If you're hiking out the next day, consider donating your extra food rather than carrying it home just to get thrown out in the trash.

<p>13. The best way to use a cell phone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Bluetooth in your ear.</li> <li><b>b. Secretly and away from others.</b></li> <li>c. Never. This is the wilderness, dude!</li> </ul>	<p>If you have to use a phone, do it away from others. (c) is the way to go – if you can – but sometimes you just need to make a call. Hike away from others to prevent your call from ruining the solitude for the rest of the crew and rejoin them when you're done.</p>
<p>14. You see a fisherman casting at a secluded lake. You ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Grab your rod and join him!</li> <li>b. Take a dip, then skip rocks</li> <li><b>c. Keep your distance.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Fishing gives the fisherman a sense of communion with nature. Don't ruin his solitude – or his chance to snag dinner – by interrupting him or scaring off the fish.!</p>
<p>15. A brand new water purifier is just lying on the trail. Your move?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hike on. Who needs extra ballast?</li> <li>b. Grab it in hopes of finding its owner.</li> <li>c. Pick it up and leave your iodine tablets behind. Hello upgrade</li> </ul>	<p>Someone was depending on that filter for clean water! If you are hiking outbound, the chances are pretty good that the owner is ahead of you. Let other hikers heading in the opposite direction know you found the filter just in case the owner is heading the opposite way (or if it IS the owner looking for his filter!)</p>
<p>16. In a campground, you should keep noise down until what time in the AM?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 8 a.m.</li> <li>b. 9 a.m.</li> <li><b>c. All day. People go camping for the peace and quiet.</b></li> <li>d. Never. Loud noise (especially heavy metal) keeps the bears away.</li> </ul>	<p>Scouts should always be courteous – no matter what time of day!</p> <p>Not everyone in camp is on your timetable nor is everyone willing to listen to a Boy Scout Troop whooping it up in the woods.</p> <p>Be aware of who else is sharing the campsite and adjust your activities to allow everyone to enjoy the experiences of being out in the woods.</p>
<p>17. Bathing with soap in a river or lake is ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. OK</li> <li><b>b. Not OK. Collect water and bathe 200 feet away.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Soap – even the bio-degradable kind – adds phosphates to the water. Phosphates promote growth of weeds and algae in the lake or stream, which can eventually choke the water source.</p> <p>See the answer for #6 – get away from the river or lake to do your washing and keep the water clean!</p>
<p>18. You're brushing your teeth. Where to spit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Away from camp.</b></li> <li>b. In the nearest stream.</li> <li>c. On the fire.</li> </ul>	<p>Toothpaste will attract critters and no one wants to tramp through toothpaste yuck in the middle of the camp. Get away from the camp in an area that people won't walk through to brush your teeth.</p>

19. Dinner is done and only the wash water remains. What to do with it?

- a. Bottoms up! You're an LNT master!
- b. Dig a hole and pour it down.
- c. Strain out the big bits; disperse the gray water 200 feet from any lake or stream.**

Scatter, don't pour, your gray water away from camp and away from water sources. Get the big bits out with a strainer or by hand and pack them out with your trash.

Never, EVER wash dishes in a stream or spring!

20. It's dark, rainy and the lean-to is full. A soggy hiker approaches. You should ...

- a. Pretend you're sleeping.
- b. Move over. There's no such thing as a full shelter in the rain.**
- c. Send him away with your regrets. First come, first served.
- d. Tell him about another less crowded shelter up the trail.

A Scout is helpful!

Hikers should always be willing to help out a fellow hiker. You never know when it may be you that needs the help of someone else!

Hiking in the dark and the rain is a recipe for injury. The poor guy may be lost or just late, but he probably really needs a warm, dry place to bed down right then. Move over, make room and let him in. You'll both feel better about it in the morning!