

**THE CAMPER'S GUIDE TO OUTDOOR
PURSUITS:**

**FINDING SAFE, NATURE-FRIENDLY,
AND COMFORTABLE PASSAGE
THROUGH WILD PLACES**

Second Edition

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Illustrations by John A. Drury



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*In memory of my parents, Kitty and Maynard,
for introducing me to the outdoors and instilling a love for it.*

*In memory of Paul K. Petzoldt for teaching me how to use and care for the outdoors
and share ways to teach others.*

JKD

To all the people who have inspired me to spend so many days and nights in untamed landscapes:

- *My parents, Elaine and Richard, who opened the door to the National Parks,*
- *My students at Paul Smith's College and the Wilderness Education Association, who provided energy and enthusiasm in remote wilderness areas,*
- *My wife Kim and children, Dana, John, and Will, who are my dear companions now and on future adventures into nature.*

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	vi
Introduction	vii
Chapter 1: Before You Take the First Step	1
Chapter 2: High-Country Fashion	7
Chapter 3: Outdoor Tools and Toys	29
Chapter 4: Food Preparation and Planning	65
Chapter 5: From Soup to Tent Pegs: Basic Camping Skills	91
Chapter 6: Wilderness Travel: Finding Your Way	117
Chapter 7: Safety and Emergency Procedures for the Backcountry	151
Chapter 8: Wilderness Leadership	167
Chapter 9: Begin with a Happy Ending: Trip Planning	185
Epilogue: The Stumps Meet the Muskrat Pack	193
Appendix	199
Index	201
About the Authors	207

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INTRODUCTION

WHO SHOULD READ *THE CAMPER'S GUIDE*?

The Camper's Guide contains technical guidance, trip planning, and leadership information appropriate for all outdoor skill levels. If you are a three-trip-a-year camper who has learned about the outdoors from your Uncle Buck, your fishing friends, or the friendly neighbor down the street who always tells you about the great trips her family takes to the national parks, this book is for you. If you have been camping for years but just want to be sure that you've got all the facts straight, this book is for you.

This book is also for you if you've been going on adventures for many years to exotic and rugged wilderness areas where the challenges are as big as the mountains. For some of you, trips often end in frustration as you find you forgot some important piece of information, one critical piece of gear suddenly fails, or your knowledge of map and compass begins to show as many holes as your socks. You manage to limp home overtired and overextended and then sit on the couch afterward and wonder why the trip was so much work when it was supposed to be a fantastic renewal of body and spirit.

Finally, this book is for you if you are contemplating joining the millions of tanned, healthy, and well-adjusted outdoor people who are camping, hiking, canoeing, and biking in undeveloped and beautiful natural areas. You may hesitate because of the intimidating expense of high-performance outdoor gear on the market and the seemingly immense amount of information and skills that successful outdoor hikers, campers, and recreational explorers must possess. Don't worry; most of those hikers on the magazine covers are really sunburned and bug-bitten, and they aren't all that well-adjusted!

WHAT MAKES *THE CAMPER'S GUIDE* SPECIAL? (OR, NOT ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT CAMPING!)

In *The Camper's Guide* we try to cover the entire array of outdoor living skills and topics in more depth and with more fun than any book we've seen. *The Camper's Guide* covers all the minimal-impact camping skills that are becoming required in many public and private backcountry settings, along with information about current clothing and equipment ranging from underwear to backpacks. We attempt to cover a more complete and detailed list of outdoor clothing than we could find anywhere.

Beyond the basics, we address the sometimes challenging and confusing topics of map and compass and their places in backcountry navigation. We look at hiking and methods to conserve energy while on the trail. We cover food selection, nutrition, and food planning for long and short expeditions. We address risk management and safety practices that apply to both recreational campers and outdoor professionals.

Perhaps most unique to *The Camper's Guide* is the chapter on outdoor leadership and group dynamics. Most current books don't even address these topics. *The Camper's Guide* offers a detailed and perceptive treatment of leadership issues in the outdoors. You will find that each person on an outdoor venture can be a leader and that casual trips as well as guided trips require some form of leadership. After reading this book, you will have greater awareness, appreciation, and skill in facilitating groups and leading yourself and others in the outdoors.

We think *The Camper's Guide* is the most user-friendly and fun outdoor skills book available. You'll enjoy reading it! Don't expect a dry, academic book that sounds like it was written from an armchair in the Explorer's Club. We strongly believe that outdoor activities should be fun, challenging, and invigorating. We have made every effort to create a book that makes this philosophy come to life. Our off-the-wall characters and bad jokes will make reading *The Camper's Guide* a lighthearted, sometimes wacky experience that will hone your outdoor skills and inspire you to reach new heights of outdoor fun!

HELPING YOU “LEAVE NO TRACE”

The Camper's Guide also contains information and guidelines that are consistent with Leave No Trace Outdoor Skills and Ethics. Leave No Trace is an organization created in 1991 to promote responsible and ecologically sound camping practices. Leave No Trace, a partnership of the National Outdoor Leadership School, the National Park Service, the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the outdoor industry, provides camping guidelines upheld by these federal land management agencies.¹ Millions of federal land users need to know and abide by these important guidelines if we are to safeguard the quality of water, soils, and wildlife habitat, as well as the human experience in wild lands. *The Camper's Guide* helps in this important educational mission.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This introduction is also designed to get you ready to use the book. We want to acquaint you with the features and devices we use to tell the story of wilderness camping and the other skills you need to travel in the backcountry.

The Camper's Guide is designed to be as easy to use as possible. We have tried to create a format that is an enjoyable alternative to the sometimes tedious textbooks that have been written about the outdoors. *The Camper's Guide* uses icons, tips, characters, and real-life anecdotes to illustrate outdoor travel and camping principles.

Icons and Tips

The Camper's Guide is chock-full of information, and we want to be sure that you take the most important points with you. In order to help you through the information, we have highlighted sections of the book and set them aside for your special attention. We call these sections our “Tips,” and each tip is indicated by a graphic or icon. Some of the seven different kinds of tips are essential, and others are meant to be read by those of you with particular interests. It may sound complex, but you'll get the hang of it soon! The following list describes each type of tip.



BOTTOM-LINE TIP

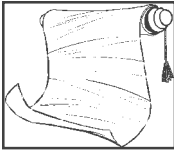
The Bottom-Line Tip is probably our most important tip. It repeats, condenses, and highlights the essential information from a passage of text. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who rambled on and on and you just wanted to say, “Stop talking for a second! Could you just tell me the bottom line?” We know how you feel.



ENVIRONMENTAL TIP

The Environmental Tip also condenses and highlights essential information from the book. These tips underscore certain ethical points that help protect natural ecosystems.





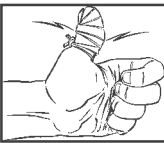
PHILOSOPHY TIP

The Philosophy Tip is for the thinker in you. Most people go to wild places for deeply personal, intellectual, or spiritual reasons. The Philosophy Tip investigates the “why” in everything we do. Don’t worry—the Philosophy Tip isn’t as “deep” as it sounds!



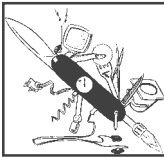
QUALITY CAMPER TIP

The Quality Camper Tip is for the camper who wants to “go the extra mile” in practicing camping and travel techniques. Generally, the Quality Camper Tip gives techniques that appeal to the perfectionist in us, or simply that part of us that wants to look extra sharp in the backcountry. We urge you to go for it!



SAFETY TIP

The Safety Tip underscores and condenses essential safety information that will help you avoid injury and accidents while traveling and camping.



TECHWEENIE TIP

The Techweenie Tip is for the “gear head” in all of us. When they have the time and inclination, most campers have an interest in the science behind many of the high-technology products that are available for backcountry users today. How many times have you wondered, “Now, just how does that work?” We’ve chosen to answer some of those questions in the Techweenie Tip. And by the way, “Techweenie” is a term of endearment!



TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Tricks of the Trade are the little secrets that experienced campers all seem to know. On the other hand, you’ll always find that somebody has a simpler or more creative way to do simple camping tasks. We learn new Tricks of the Trade all the time from both new and veteran campers. We’ve chosen a few that we use and passed them on to you!



Characters and Scenarios

The Stumps

We have created two distinct scenarios that appear throughout the book in order to bring important concepts to life. The first scenario involves an American family, the Stumps, who are typical in that they are not a “model” family. Things go wrong with the Stumps. Sometimes they don’t treat each other as well as they should. Sometimes they don’t plan their camping trips very well. We hope you learn from their successes and challenges and enjoy reading about their adventures.

Forrest Stump, the father, also has a distinguished extended family. He frequently recalls famous relatives from different eras in history to illustrate points about camping. You'll come to understand that nothing is too far out for Forrest and his seemingly endless supply of nutty ancestors!

The Muskrat Pack

Our second scenario involves a small group of adult canoeists who call themselves the Muskrat Pack. These longtime friends occasionally take time from their careers to plan daylong canoe trips together. We'll join them as they plan their first multiday canoe trip in a large wilderness canoe area. They have many dynamics and concerns that are different from a family group.

Authors' Anecdotes

In addition to our fictional scenarios, we'll draw on our own experiences as outdoor educators and recreators. Because there are two of us writing the book, we have chosen to refer to ourselves in the "third person" when we want to share a story that we feel is particularly relevant. In other words, you will read that "Jack remembers when . . ." or "Eric once had a student who . . ." and so forth. Please realize that Jack and Eric are real people and not fictional relatives of Forrest Stump or members of the Muskrat Pack!

A FINAL THOUGHT: WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Both literally and figuratively, this book can help you get where you want to go. By providing the information to hone your backcountry living and traveling skills, this book can help you reach the beautiful wild places you've dreamed about visiting. By sharing lessons from our years of experience, this book can also help you become the resourceful, thoughtful, and successful backcountry outdoor person that you want to be.

Combined with hours, days, and years of field experience, the information in this book will help you choose equipment for quality and value, plan and prepare healthy and delicious backcountry meals, use state-of-the-art minimal impact camping techniques, be able to interpret topographic maps and use navigational compasses, and plan and lead safe, enjoyable trips.

If this is where you want to go, you're reading the right book to help you begin your journey into the backcountry and onward to greater success as a wilderness trip leader!

Notes

¹National Outdoor Leadership School. (1994). *Leave No Trace: Outdoor Skills and Ethics: Rocky Mountains*. [Manual]. Lander, WY: National Outdoor Leadership School.

