

Bighorn Mountains Backpacking 2011

Atlantic Mountain Ranch – Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota

Dear Camper,

Welcome to a Lutherans Outdoors backpack trip. You will be part of a very small segment of the population to experience God's creation in such a full way. Your shoulders will carry everything you need, your feet will transport you wherever you go, and your lungs will strive to provide adequate oxygen for the tasks you take on. Backpacking is an adventure!

Adventures are not something to jump into without proper preparation... unless it is an unplanned adventure. Since you know that this one is coming, and you'll be a vital part of it, we have prepared this booklet to help you in your preparation. Take some time to read through the information that follows. We hope you have a wonderful adventure.

Mary Stutz
AMR Site Director



Dear Parents,

A great adventure awaits your child at camp this summer. We have recruited committed Christian staff, planned a great menu, prepared our summer Bible study theme, and planned our programs to be fun-filled and meaningful. Backpacking is a unique camping adventure that will challenge your son or daughter. It is our goal to help campers develop as leaders spiritually, relationally, and physically. The entire group of campers, advisors, and counselors will contribute to this growth. This booklet will help you and your child learn about our program and activities and how to prepare for the trip.

We backpack on trails in the Bighorn National Forest and the Cloud Peak Wilderness area west of Buffalo, Wyoming. At various times during the week, we could be as far as 15-20 miles from the trailhead. The group will hike through scenic alpine valleys and up and down mountains, both gradual and steep, through smooth and rocky terrain. The trail is rated as moderately difficult, crossing mountain streams, some of which have bridges and some crossings where the group will walk through the water. The group camps in tents, uses filtered water from a stream, and cooks their meals over a backpack stove.

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Participants should help prepare themselves for the backpacking by doing some aerobics exercise for at least several weeks before the trip. Exercise could include running, biking, swimming, walking, etc.

Two staff members, who have been trained in emergency procedures, lead each trip. At least one staff member on the trip is certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR, and a well-stocked first aid kit is carried.

You will receive a **health form** from your group advisor that you should sign and send with your child to camp. You do not need a doctor's examination, but we need to know if there are any health concerns.

Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota carries a minimal **insurance policy** for accidents and illness incurred at camp. Our policy assumes the campers insurance will be the primary coverage. If we must take someone to the doctor for treatment, the clinic will first file a claim with the camper's insurer. If there is no insurance, or if the camper's policy will not pay for this accident or illness, our insurance will cover the costs up to \$2,000 for an accident and \$200 for an illness. Personal property is not covered by camp insurance and any claims for loss, theft, etc., will need to be submitted to your personal homeowner's/renter's insurance company.

On the backpack trail, campers will not have access to a telephone or other means of communication. Counselors do carry a cell phone for emergency use only, although we do not always get cell service in the mountains. If you need to contact your child, which should only be **in case of emergency, contact Atlantic Mountain Ranch at 605-673-3017 or 673-3435** or call Outlaw Ranch at 605-673-4040. We will then contact the Forest Service to get in touch with the group. The group may be one or more day's travel from a road or trailhead where help is accessible.

When your child packs, be sure the enclosed clothing/equipment list is followed. Please do not send a cell phone on the backpack trip. This detracts from focusing on daily activities and building relationships with others in the group. Each week **we take an offering** at camp. This year the offerings will go toward the Lutherans Outdoors Campership Fund and Native American Ministries on Pine Ridge.

We're excited about the adventure your son or daughter will be experiencing. Please call or write for answers to specific questions, and pray for our ministry that the good news of Christ might be shared by all!

Sincerely,
Mary Stutz, Assistant Director
Outlaw Ranch & Atlantic Mountain Ranch
mary@losd.org

<p>Address of Camp: Atlantic Mountain Ranch 11760 Custer Limestone Rd. Custer, SD 57730 605-673-3017 or 605-673-3435</p>

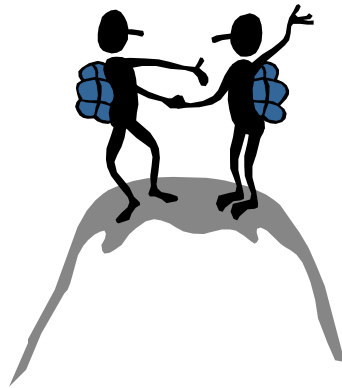
A Typical BIGHORNS BACKPACKING ITINERARY

Sunday 12:30 P.M. Arrive at Atlantic Mountain Ranch
 Receive gear and pack, set up tents, orientation
 Depart for the Bighorns, supper along the way
 Camp near the trailhead

Monday Morning Arrive at the trailhead, unload, start up the trail.

See alternate starting time schedule at bottom of this page.

Monday - Thursday



The adventure is heightened through:

- Immersing yourself in the awesome beauty of creation.
- Struggling with challenging uphill on the trail.
- Discovering scriptures together.
- Feeling the freedom of hiking without your pack ("Day hiking" to a peak, lake, stream or canyon).
- Worshiping in alpine cathedrals.
- Sleeping in the cool (and sometimes cold) fresh air of the high country.
- Cooking and eating in the open air. "Trail food" is served when backpacking.
- Coming to know yourself, your friends, your counselors and God in a new environment.

Thursday

Return to trail head early afternoon
 Option of swimming in the pool in Buffalo, WY
 Drive back to Atlantic Mountain Ranch
 Supper at AMR
 Unpack, check in gear, showers/sauna
 Relaxing and sharing time
 Closing campfire/worship

Friday 7:00 AM Rise and pack
 8:00 AM Breakfast & Camp clean-up
 Morning worship
 10:00 AM Depart for home

****Alternate schedule****

Sunday 3:00 – 4:00 PM Arrive at Atlantic Mountain Ranch
 Receive gear and pack, set up tents, orientation
 Supper at AMR, finish packing and orientation
 Close the evening with worship/campfire

Monday 6:00 AM Wake-up and pack
 7:00 AM Breakfast
 8:00 AM Depart for Buffalo, WY and Bighorns trip
 12:00 noon Arrive in Buffalo, picnic lunch, purchase fishing licenses.
 2:00 PM Arrive at the trailhead, unload, start up the trail.

Lutherans Outdoors in SD is an equal opportunity provider and operates on the Bighorn National Forest under permit from the Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

THOUGHTS BEFORE BACKPACKING.....



As you are thinking about what to bring, a brief description of the weather conditions that may be encountered will be helpful. The key thing to keep in mind is the elevation and the weather extremes that will accompany it. Elevations will range from 8,000 to 13,000 feet above sea level. In July and August, one may encounter frost, rain, sleet and snow as well as 85-degree days.

While packing, keep in mind that you will have to carry everything that you pack, plus food and other community items. Many of the things that you may think of bringing are unnecessary and simply make your pack heavier.

In the wilderness, staying dry is extremely important. Rain gear is an absolute must! Ponchos are very good and versatile. Rain pants are very important to keep your legs dry. When one becomes wet and cold in the wilderness, there is a real danger of hypothermia. Hypothermia is "a decrease in core body temperature to a level at which normal muscular and cerebral functions are impaired." This dropping of body temperature occurs most rapidly in cold, wet, windy conditions. The air temperature may be as warm as 40 to 50 degrees, yet hypothermia is a very real danger if one is wet and cold. A well-prepared backpacker is prepared to deal with these conditions and to avoid hypothermia.

Backpackers must be prepared for any weather conditions that may develop. The best way to prepare to stay warm in adverse conditions is to pack clothes that can be layered. Good layer-able clothes include wool or fleece sweaters, long underwear, windbreakers, wind pants, wool or flannel shirts, shorts, t-shirts, and light weight, quick dry pants. While hiking, one may wear just shorts and a t-shirt. As it cools off, a sweater may be added, then wind pants, etc. When temperatures hit the lowest, all of the above mentioned clothes may be combined to provide a warm, comfortable outfit. When planning to layer, a big bulky jacket is not necessary or even advisable.

Some Thoughts on Fabrics/Materials for Clothing:

- Cotton:** Absorbs lots of water, dries slowly and loses most of its insulating value when wet.
- Wool:** Much less absorbent than cotton, dries quicker, too. One of the best retainers of its insulating value when wet.
- Polypropylene:** A lightweight synthetic fiber that is non-absorbent; can be shaken nearly dry. A very good fabric for innerwear. (often called "poly-pro")
- Nylon:** Lightweight, good wind protection. If waterproof, good rain protection. Dries quickly. Very good outer layer.
- Down:** Lightweight and packable, but nearly worthless if it gets wet and is very difficult to get dry.
- Fleece:** Lightweight, non-absorbent. An excellent insulating layer. Dries quickly.

FOOTWEAR

Your feet are your "sole" means of transportation. For this reason, they require special attention. This does not mean that you should hurry to the shoe store and buy a new pair of boots. New boots, especially all-leather hiking boots, can be very hard on your feet. They often cause blisters, so frequently they are worthless for the first few days of use. If buying new boots, consider a pair of lightweight boots. They are easier to break in and usually easier on your feet than the older all-leather type.

Make sure your hiking boots provide ankle support. Running shoes provide no ankle support. If you plan to use new shoes or boots, be sure that you wear them for several weeks before the trip so that they are well broken-in. Be sure to bring a second pair of shoes so that you have a dry pair to slip on after a day of hiking. Your extra pair can be any type of comfortable sneaker or sturdy sandal (example is Tevas). You may be wearing these sandals or sneakers for several stream crossings in the mountains in order to keep your hiking boots dry.

Having good socks is as important as having good shoes. When chosen and worn properly, socks can help prevent blisters as well as keep your feet warm. Blisters are caused by friction; that is, your foot sliding against your sock or shoe. Wearing two pairs usually keeps the friction between the two layers rather than on your foot. Most backpackers recommend a thin pair of polypropylene socks underneath a pair of wool socks.

YOUR MOUNTAIN BED

Keep in mind that the mercury may dip below freezing at night, so a warm sleeping bag is important. Down bags are not recommended because they do not keep you warm when wet. Synthetic bags are a bit heavier but will keep warm if wet. Tapered bags that are a mummy shape are preferred by most backpackers. A foam sleeping pad (provided by the camp) will help keep you warm and dry as well as make the hard, rocky ground more comfortable. A waterproof stuff sack will keep your sleeping bag dry (a heavy duty garbage bag will work too.)

OUTFITTING

The backpack staff will meet you at Atlantic Mountain Ranch to provide you with the equipment, food, and staff necessary for your week in the mountains. AMR will provide the following: tent, backpack, sleeping pad, plastic bags, cooking gear, food, tarp, water purification equipment, shovel and TP, stoves and fuel, water bottles, matches, ropes, maps and compass, first aid kit, experience, organization and fun! You provide the items on the following page.

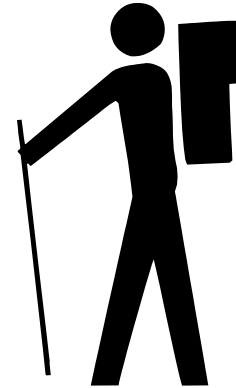
HYDRATION

As you come to higher elevations, you need to drink more water to help your body adjust to the elevation. Please share with your group members about the need for hydration before they even arrive in the Black Hills. Two or three days prior to coming to camp, drink lots of water. This will help prevent altitude sickness. It is better if you drink only water or lemonade on the trip out to camp. Do not drink pop or caffeine on the trip. You will feel much better on your hiking trip if you drink plenty of water.

CLOTHING / EQUIPMENT LIST - Bighorn Mountains Backpacking

These are items that you must have for your trip:

- ___ Sleeping bag rated at 20 degrees Fahrenheit (tapered mummy shape preferred)
- ___ Stuff sack for sleeping bag
- ___ Sleeping pad (optional) It's OK to bring one, but we have them here (don't buy one)
- ___ Rain gear (coat and pants) or a poncho and rain pants
- ___ Hiking boots for trail hiking (see Footwear section)
- ___ Tennis shoes or sandals (possibly for stream crossing)
- ___ 1 pair shorts
- ___ 1 pair of pants (warm - lightweight wool, nylon or twill - **no jeans**) – can be zip-off pants
- ___ 2 t-shirts (no tank tops)
- ___ Lightweight long-sleeve shirt
- ___ Bandanas (optional)
- ___ Sweatshirt or windbreaker with a hood (synthetic)
- ___ 3 pair wool socks
- ___ 3 pair cotton/polypro socks
- ___ Long underwear tops and bottoms (not cotton)
- ___ Underwear
- ___ Wool sweater or fleece jacket/shirt
- ___ Flashlight
- ___ Hat (a must) - baseball cap or other to shield face from sun
- ___ Sunglasses
- ___ Knit hat for warmth
- ___ Gloves or mittens for warmth
- ___ Small Bible
- ___ Day backpack (this is a school bookbag size) - a must
- ___ Swimming suit/towel
- ___ Also bring clothes for your van trip home and a towel for the shower
- ___ Health form completed



Toiletries:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ___ Toothpaste & toothbrush | ___ Washcloth or small towel |
| ___ Soap that is environmentally safe | ___ Brush/comb |
| ___ Sunscreen | ___ Deodorant |
| ___ Lip balm | ___ Feminine hygiene supplies |
| ___ Insect repellent | (altitude may alter cycle) |
| ___ Medicines (Please send prescriptions in the original bottle with the doctor's directions on the label.) | |

Optional: Hackysack, frisbee, fishing gear, deck of cards, book, binoculars, pencil & paper, camera, money for camp t-shirt or sweatshirt. (Just remember, you're carrying it!)

DO NOT bring junk food, electronic devices (i.e. iPods, MP3 players), cell phones, pets, tons of toiletries, knives, fireworks, weapons, illegal substances (alcohol, drugs, cigarettes), or other unnecessary or dangerous items.

ALERT: Please include hydration with water before you come - two to three days prior to coming to camp. This will prevent altitude sickness.

ALERT: NO CAFFEINE AND NO POP on trip out to the camp. (However, if you are a long-time coffee drinker, you may still use caffeine to maintain your well-being. Typically, caffeine causes dehydration and may lead to poor physical performance.)

Remember: Hydrate with water – before you leave home.

“...AND GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH...”

Our Bighorns backpacking programs make use of public land in the Bighorn National Forest. The Bighorn Mountains experience allows us to use over 100,000 acres that have been set aside for special and careful use. They are almost completely free of roads, motorized vehicles, homes, or commercial development.

Preserving the fragile mountain ecosystem is a PRIME concern. The wilderness visitor must understand the vulnerability of the plants, soils, waters and creatures within this land. A true voyager walks softly and strives not to leave a trace behind.

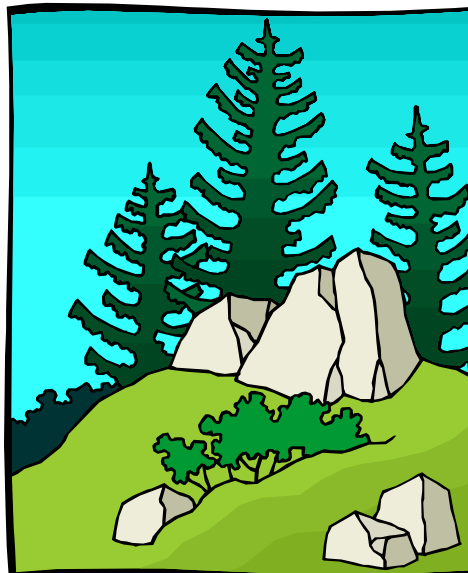
In years past we used to speak of wilderness survival as the ability of humans to survive the wilderness. Now we speak of wilderness survival as the land's ability to survive human impact. We all must help protect this valuable resource.

In order to meet this goal, we must all understand the fragility of the area we are to enjoy. The elevation of this area ranges between 5,000 and 13,000 feet above sea level. Because of this higher altitude, seasonal change is slow. The seasons, in fact, may overlap! Snowfall is not unusual in the Bighorns in June, July and August. Fragile spring flowers may be blooming all summer long. In such conditions, vegetation struggles to exist. An improperly placed foot, tent, or latrine may leave a scar on the land for the next five or ten years! We will attempt to avoid being a damaging intruder.

When using these areas, we will implement "low impact camping" techniques including:

- * leaving surface water (lakes, streams) uncontaminated by soap, toothpaste, food, and other waste. These are the only sources of water for drinking and cooking.
- * setting up camp in such a manner that we do not trample the delicate vegetation.
- * packing out everything we take in, plus other litter we encounter.
- * using stoves instead of scarring the land with fires.
- * leaving the setting as natural and undisturbed as possible.

THESE PLACES, THESE GREAT FORESTS, THIS GRANDEUR WILL BE THERE FOR OUR GRANDCHILDREN TO ENJOY IN ITS NATURAL STATE ONLY IF WE ARE CAREFUL IN OUR USE OF IT NOW.



FITNESS

The adventure you are about to embark on will be rewarding and fun, but it will also be physically challenging and should not be taken lightly. One must be as physically prepared as possible to enjoy the backpacking experience to its fullest!

The best kind of “fitness” is what we call endurance fitness: the ability to do prolonged work without fatigue. It has to do with the body’s overall health – the health of the heart, the lungs, the entire cardiovascular system and the other organs, as well as the muscles. The key to the whole thing is oxygen.

In simple terms, any activity – breathing, digesting, even the beating of the heart – requires energy. The body produces this energy by burning foodstuffs, and the burning agent is oxygen. The body can store food at each meal, using what it wants and saving some of the rest for later, but it can’t store oxygen. The key, then, is to get enough oxygen and to carry it in the blood to all areas of the body. The oxygen and food can then combine and produce energy as needed.

Most of us can produce enough energy to perform ordinary daily activities. As the activities become more vigorous, (i.e. hiking mountains, running) however, some of us can’t keep up. This is because, in some bodies, the means for the delivery of oxygen is limited. And remember, this week you will be at a higher altitude where there is less oxygen in the air.

Therefore, what you need to do to prepare your body for backpacking is to engage in the kind of exercise that demands oxygen and forces your body to process and deliver it. These types of exercises are called “aerobic” (with oxygen) exercises. Aerobic exercises include running, walking, swimming, cycling, aerobics, etc. Notice that isometrics, weight lifting and most calisthenics don’t make the list.

We want your adventure experience to be as enjoyable as possible! Besides, once you’ve made the commitment to a regular aerobic exercise program, you’ll know that you’re doing one of the nicest things possible for yourself – you’re strengthening your heart, keeping your body in shape, and improving your quality of life. You’ll have more stamina, a brighter outlook, and a sense of commitment and control over life that will enable you to handle life’s daily challenges -- like LARGE mountains!

DIRECTIONS TO ATLANTIC MOUNTAIN RANCH

From Rapid City: Follow highways 16 & 385 through Hill City south to the Crazy Horse Monument. Just past Crazy Horse Monument at “Heritage Village” watch for sign “Atlantic Mountain Ranch” on the right. Turn right (west) onto Medicine Mountain Rd. and veer left at fork (about 3/4 mile off highway) onto Custer Limestone Rd. Continue on gravel road (about 3 miles past the fork) watching for our sign on the right. Turn right into Atlantic Mountain Ranch.

From Custer: Follow Highway 16/385 north for three miles. Turn left at “Heritage Village” onto Medicine Mountain Rd. (at “Atlantic Mountain Ranch” sign) and continue as directed above.



How to prepare you and your child for camp

Giving your child to the care of other people is perhaps the greatest act of trust you as a parent can give. We aim to do everything we can to earn and keep that trust; and, we know we cannot do this without your help. We want to partner with you to ensure your child/children will have the safest, most fun and faith-filled experience possible while at camp. Following are a few suggestions as you prepare your child for their week at camp:

- Talk about camp before you go. Ask questions together and discuss what camp might be like and what they might expect. Let them know what you will be doing when they are away. Help your child focus on making new friends and on being involved in camp activities.
- If your child has any special health, food allergies, or sleep related concerns, please share those with the camp staff so they can prepare for your child's arrival.
- Send a letter to your child before camp begins so a message from home will be awaiting his/her arrival. Ask specific questions about what they are doing and encourage them to write back. Send self-addressed stamped envelopes or postcards with your child so they can write home. While campers do not have the ability to use email while at camp, if you send an email to camp we will make sure and give it to your child when we hand out mail.
- For safety sake, we have a **“no cell phone” policy at camp**. Cell phones can be lost, stolen or used inappropriately with photos or calls to outsiders who could potentially put campers at risk. Regular use of cell phones/texting also tends to slow the formation of community and takes away from the learning and growth of being in an outdoor setting. For these reasons we ask you to **please leave cell phones at home**.
- Be prepared to talk about camp with your child upon their return home. This is important. The act of “processing” your child's experience helps them not only share with you what they did; it also serves to involve parents in the experience and helps the child reflect on how they have grown.
- If this is your child's first time away from family for an extended period of time and you feel they may become homesick, speak openly on the topic before your child leaves camp.
- Try brainstorming some positive coping strategies like talking to their camp counselor, writing letters, or drawing pictures of what they did that day. It is not always helpful to simply tell your child that you will come and get them (even phone calls prevent this opportunity for success). Overcoming homesickness can be a great achievement for your child. Rest assured, should your child get homesick while at camp—and we feel it would be helpful—we will contact you by phone. If this happens, please use this as an opportunity to build up your child and help them face this new experience.

Going away to camp is a wonderful growth experience for both campers and parents. Please let us know how we at camp can help YOUR child have the best week possible. **And here is the best tip yet...** pray for YOUR child while they are away at camp... and everyday for the rest of their lives!