Welcome to the Ranch Camp Trip Family! We hope you are just as excited about your upcoming trip camp as we are! Here is a bit of an overview of what you an expect this summer.

**Where will we go?**

Out into the wild! Campers on all trips will be exploring different areas of the diverse and plentiful Colorado wilderness. All trips are permitted with the U.S Forest Service and will visit largely untouched areas where campers will experience life out-of-bounds. Each trip will visit a different wilderness area and, prior to your child’s experience, you will receive updated information with the specific area(s) they will be exploring.

How will we get there?

Campers on trip camps will travel together in vehicles driven by trained staff members. Usually this vehicle is a 15 passenger Davey Coach bus. All campers must wear seatbelts at all times while in the vehicle. The rest of the trip will be on foot, on horseback or via bike, depending on your flavor of trip adventure!

**Packing and Gear**

 **Additional Packing List for 8th Grade Ranch, TASC, and Teen Village; please also see main packing list in parent manual. (Pack n’Ride and Rock n’Ride – See Parent Manual for additional lists pertaining to your trip.)**

Note to Parents: Please read through the following list very carefully. It has been put together after many years of successful wilderness trips. Your child’s enjoyment and safety during the trip start with them bringing the appropriate gear and clothing.

* Backpack – The only requirement is that the backpack has a frame (either internal or external), a well-padded hip-belt (50-60% of the pack’s load should be carried on the hips), and a capacity of around 3000 cubic inches. The fit of the pack is the most essential factor and can make a backpacking trip either pleasant or painful. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of a well-fitted backpack! The camper will suffer if the backpack does not fit properly. Most outdoors stores (like REI) will help you pick the correct pack and/or customize a pack to properly fit.
* Sleeping Bag – NO DOWN! A good night of sleep is essential for performance in the outdoors. Warmth is the main factor, but performance under wet conditions is not the same for all bags. Down bags are very compact (and pricey) and warm, but are of no use at all when wet. Bags using synthetic fill are bulkier but retain warmth when wet and require less care than down. A temperature rating of 20 degrees Fahrenheit will be adequate for most people in the alpine area, which has highly varied and unpredictable temperatures in the summer. Avoid bulky sleeping bags as they can affect the fit of the backpack. Absolutely no cotton!
* Sleeping Pad – This is more for insulation than comfort. The body loses heat to the ground through conduction, and a backpacking air mattress (ThermaRest, Insulex) or closed-cell foam pad (Ensolite, Ridge Rest) slows the heat loss appreciably.
* Footgear – Shoes should be, above all else, comfortable and well broken in. Ankle support and traction are two other essential features. There are a wide variety of boots on the market, ranging from high tech to traditional, but there is no need for anything fancy. Shoes must come over the ankle for support when carrying a backpack. It is also advised to bring along a second pair of tennis shoes or sandals that fasten to the foot (Chacos or Teva, NO flip-flops) to be worn around camp. Socks (3-4 pairs) need to be wool or wool synthetic blend, for warmth and cushioning. Polypro liner socks can help prevent blisters.
* Clothing is just as important as gear. The unpredictable climate can place you alternately in weather that is ninety degrees and sunny, and an hour later in a gale force storm with temperatures in the 50’s and rainy. The following clothing items are essential for the areas in which your child will be visiting:
* Hat – Wool or pile camp that covers the ears. 70% of the body’s heat loss occurs through the head. The old adage, “If your feet are cold, put on a hat,” holds true to this day.
* Sweater – Again, wool or fleece are the preferred materials due to their ability to retain heat when wet. Sweatshirts are designed to exercise in, to keep the body cool, i.e. to lose heat. Their insulating value is low, (i.e. they lose heat so they cannot be used in place of a sweater). Two sweaters/fleeces are required for the trip, one as a backup layer for inclement weather.
* Long johns – These are the foundation of the layering system for almost any wilderness activity. They are warm when wet, dry quickly, are light and compact, and grant some relief from monster mosquitoes in the summer. Capilene and polypropolene are two materials on the market. At least two tops and one bottom for each camper.
* Raingear – Water washes away heat quickly, and the difference between health and hypothermia can be as easy as an adequate rain jacket. The rectangular ponchos seen at sporting events are poor when hiking or when wind is present. A rain jacket with a hood is a must to protect the body core from heat loss, it should be waterproof and breathable. Rain pants are a must as well.
* Pants – Quick drying, non-cotton is best. 1 pair
* Shorts – Quick drying, non-cotton are best. 2-3 pair (one less if they are long pants with zip off legs that convert to shorts).
* Other Essentials – Some of these items are mentioned on the regular packing list, others are not. We included items that we wanted to emphasize on both lists: 2 one liter water bottles (Nalgene or Sigg) • Sunglasses • Sunscreen • Ball cap (or hat with a visor) • Wool gloves or mittens • Mosquito repellent • LED flashlight (or Head lamp is preferred) with extra batteries • Light weight mess kit (including a cup, plate, bowl, and silverware) • Whistle on a cord (to be worn around the neck) • An extra pair of glasses or contacts • Extra inhaler or bee sting kit.

**Tips for shopping:** While stores like REI have the advantage of trying things on and the help of a sales person, parents can also check out the following websites for less expensive alternatives:

www.sierratradingpost.com

www.libertymountain.com

[www.craigslist.org/about/sites](http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites)

**Level of Physical Activity and Preparation**

Campers should expect to be hiking several hours per day on their trip experience, traveling between 2-6 miles per day (age and trip dependent). It is highly recommended that trip campers spend some time working on endurance training prior to leaving for their trip camp experience. Good methods of preparation include:

* Jogging or running
* Walking
* Hill training at a walk or run
* Sports (especially those that involve sustained movement such as soccer, football, track, etc)
* Gym ( Using running or biking equipment or strength training)
* Biking
* Yoga/Pilates

It is also a good idea to practice using your gear prior to the summer by taking your hiking backpack and boots out on a few trial runs. Fill your pack up with 15-20 lbs of weight (water bottles, some clothes, etc), strap on your shoes and head out for hike in the mountains or even around a nearby park. By doing this you will be able to break in your gear and identify any potential problems BEFORE your camper is on the trip.

**What happens if something happens?!?**

**Illness and Emergencies**

While your camper is on their backpacking trip they will be away from conventional medical services but well within reach of assistance to get them any help they need. All staff on the trip have a minimum CPR/FA certification. Each trip will have at least one staff member with a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) or EMR certification or higher. Staff members are trained extensively on how to handle wide variety of medical and environmental emergencies.

For medical emergencies or illness on while in the wilderness staff will take the following steps as necessary:

1. Identify that there is a problem and take any immediate medical action needed.
2. Use a satellite phone to contact local authorities. These authorities are notified in advance through forest service permitting that we will be in the area and are ready to respond. Staff on each trip know in advance who to contact in case of an emergency.
3. Use a satellite phone to contact the Ranch Camp. Staff members will give us an update on any major or minor medical concerns so that we can notify parents. Staff members are also able to consult with our medical staff for minor illness and injuries.
4. If the illness or injury prevents the camper from continuing on their trip, the following steps will be taken as deemed appropriate.
	1. Camper will be removed from the trail and picked up by Ranch Camp staff members to be taken to a nearby clinic or hospital for treatment.
	2. Camper will be removed from trail by emergency services as organized by the local area authorities. This step will be taken immediately in the case of any medical emergency that requires immediate attention/

For environmental emergencies while in the wilderness the following steps will be taken as necessary.

1. Through Forest Service permitting, we will be notified immediately if there is any threatening environmental emergencies before and during our groups time on the trail. Staff members at camp also monitor wilderness conditions while campers are on the trail.
2. If there is an emergency, local authorities will assist us in immediate evacuation of the group.
3. Staff members on each trip are equipped with satellite phones which can be used to contact emergency services at any time. Staff members are also trained on exit routes on each trail so that they can exit the trail early. They are also trained in map reading and orienteering and are sent with detailed, high quality maps of the areas they will be guiding in.

**Leave No Trace**

Campers on all of our wilderness trips will be trained and live the concept of Leave No Trace.

1. **Leave No Trace** refers to a set of outdoor ethics and also to a nonprofit organization that teaches those principles. **Leave No Trace** principles are designed to promote conservation in the outdoors.

**Beyond Backpacking**

In addition to backpacking, your camper will also participate in other activities such as volunteering and community service, white water rafting, horseback riding, mountain biking and repelling. Each of these activities, including backpacking, carries inherent risk. For many of these additional activities that are guided by outside companies you will be asked to sign and review their guidelines and liability forms to be returned prior to your camper participating in that activity.

**Others Important Topics your Camper Will Learn**

Outdoor cooking – How to Pack and Prepare for a Wilderness Trip – Basic Survival Skills – Potty in the Woods Rules and Tips – Experience Judaism Outdoors – Backpacking and Camping Skills – Team Building