

Backpacking Weekend

Edmonton Area Camping Committee has organized a backpacking weekend for **2nd & 3rd year Pathfinders & Rangers**. Donna McKenzie and her team are excited to offer this opportunity to Area girls. To be eligible for the actual backpacking weekend, a girl must attend both the information session, and the day hike. Minimum equipment required is a backpack, sleeping bag and mattress. There is access to several lightweight tents to borrow, and various pots and stoves to lend as well.

Saturday April 4th – 9:30 am to 12 noon. Alberta Guide House (upstairs). Talks, demos and food tasting.

Talks on fitting a backpack, sleeping bags and mattresses, boots, tents, pots and pans and stoves. Dehydrated foods will be tasted, and meal planning discussed. Also, a discussion of garbage management. Packing lists and how to pack a backpack. Potable water and firewood are supplied at our camp.

Saturday May 2nd – 10 am to 4 pm. Elk Island Park, South Bison Loop. Day Hike. 16 km

We will meet at the parking lot of the South Bison Loop hiking trail. Each girl will have to carry her lunch, 2 litres of water, rain gear, extra socks, and a small first aid kit in her day pack. She should be wearing the boots she will backpack in, so they are broken in. We will hike the loop. It is 16 km in total distance, and there are no short cuts. This is to test the overall fitness of the group.

Saturday June 6 to Sunday June 7th - 12 noon Saturday to 2 pm Sunday. Cooking Lake Blackfoot PRA.

Meet at noon at the Waskehegan Staging Area. Check gear and weigh backpacks. Overall weight cannot exceed 25% of the girls' weight. Hike 5 km to Meadow Shelter. Eat lunch. Hike the remaining 5.5 km to the Lost Lake Shelter. Pitch tents, explore area. Cook supper. Cards? Or campfire? The shelters hold 30 people fairly easily and have a wood burning stove inside. Outhouses are pit type and there are 2 at each shelter, and a few scattered along the trails we will be walking. The Park people provide potable water and cut dry wood. Sunday morning, we eat breakfast, strike camp, and walk out, eating lunch at Meadow Shelter again. We should be back at Waskehegan by 2 pm. The area is also used as provincial grazing land, so besides deer we will most likely see cows. The Park people have quad access on all the trails, so if someone sprains an ankle, they can get to us and medevac someone. All 5 leaders have first aid and are experienced backpackers. The trails at Cooking Lake Blackfoot are well marked and mowed or cut to about 10 feet wide at all points. Donna cross country skis the trails all winter and is very familiar with most of the park.

Each girl will need 4 meals, 2 lunches, a breakfast and a supper. Girls will be put in pairs so they can share the food weight and the tent weight. It is possible to survive on granola bars and jerky, but we are looking for more creative meals than that!! Backpacking is the way into the beautiful backcountry, and a fine meal is a wonderful thing after a long day of hiking! Cell phones work in most of the park, but you might have to climb a hill to get reception.

The deadline to apply is Friday, February 28th at noon. A maximum of 30 girls will be accepted. There are no registrations fees.