



## Canada West Mountain School - [www.themountainschool.com](http://www.themountainschool.com)

### Overnight Backpacking course pre-planning

This document will help you finalize your preparations for the course. Please read over all the information completely, there are a few **"action items"** that we need to hear back from you as well. We also welcome and encourage any questions so that we can ensure you are best prepared for your course. Thanks!

#### COURSE LOCATION

You will spend the 2 days of the course in a local backcountry hiking destination in Southwest BC. Specific objectives and destinations will be decided close to the actual trip dates and are based on current weather and mountain conditions, as well as seasonal considerations – many great backpacking locations are still under 2-3 meters of snow until mid-July. The trailheads for all hikes are within a 2-3 hour drive of Vancouver. Common course destinations include:

- Cheakamus Lake near Whistler
- Paul Ridge/Elfin Lakes above Squamish
- Hanging Lake/Rainbow Lake above the Callaghan Valley
- Marriot Basin/Duffey Lake Road area, near Pemberton
- Golden Ears Provincial Park
- Manning Park, near Hope

#### WEATHER

We will conduct the course in most weather conditions. If the weather forecast is too poor for running the course in the chosen regions, we will discuss alternate locations and logistics. We encourage all participants to monitor the weather in advance. SpotWX is a great site to get a quick and detailed forecast for any location – [www.spotwx.com](http://www.spotwx.com).

#### INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Your course will be led by one of our regular Backpacking Course Instructors, you will be notified in advance of the course who the specific Instructor is for your program as well as their contact details.

#### PRE-TRIP PLANNING

The planning for this course will take place by email, online and during a virtual Zoom Pre-trip meeting on the scheduled evening prior to the actual 2-day field trip. Many topics will be covered during the evening theory session, as well as an opportunity to discuss and ask questions.

Our staff and instructors are also available for consultation and questions at any point in advance of the course, please feel free to contact us with questions.

You will be notified separately of the sign-in details and timing for the evening Virtual Zoom Pre-trip session.

#### LOGISTICS

On the morning of Day-1, your group will meet at the pre-arranged meeting location that will be determined at the pre-trip evening session. You will spend approx. 1 hour getting to know your team, reviewing gear, and finalizing logistics before embarking on the hike.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Every participant is responsible for transportation to/from the course meeting location. Please ensure you do not have anything in your vehicle as the parking lots for most trail-heads are not patrolled or secured. The trail-head's for the Backpacking courses are all accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles, though travel on gravel roads may be required. Public transportation options (bus, rail, etc.) are not available for any locations.

#### GEAR

A gear list should be attached to this pre-course package for your reference and can also be downloaded from our website at - <https://themountainschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GEAR-Backpacking-2021.pdf>. Please plan for weather which may include temperatures of close to freezing or slightly below at night, and possible precipitation of rain and/or wet snow each day. Please ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions as a worst-case option; but, consider that it may also be hot, dry, and sunny as well.



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### **FOOTWEAR**

Many of the trails are rough and involve slippery rocks, roots, and muddy sections. Also, you will spend some portion of the course off-trail as well and early-season courses may involve extended hiking on snow. Boots should be a proper backpacking boot that provides good support, are waterproof, fit well and are broken in. It is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm, dry, and protected to best enjoy your backpacking trip.

### **MAPS**

When the final location is decided your Instructor will give you details for the best mapping options – this may be a paper map, or an electronic map that can be used on one of a variety of GPS Map Apps such as GaiaGPS or Avenza Maps, (2 common map apps). If you are using any mapping application on your phone or GPS, make sure it is updated and the local maps are downloaded prior to your trip, for off-line viewing when you are in the mountains away from cell service.

### **FOOD AND COOKING**

Food planning should be done well in advance to carefully plan and prepare. Here are a few notes to help, you will also cover this topic thoroughly during the evening Pre-trip session:

- review your food carefully and measure out your portions to avoid bringing excess food.
- you will have a lot of time in the evening for preparing dinner but still try to keep to a simple, one-pot meal
- breakfast should be quick and easy (no gourmet pancake breakfasts, please)
- lunches should be planned to be easy to prep, and can be eaten during short breaks. Do not plan on a long "lunch break" involving cooked lunches - more likely you will be eating during small breaks in travel and teaching.
- bring snack foods that are easy to access
- bring a stuff sack to store your food in overnight. Food may be hung from trees, cliff faces or buried in snow.
- there are usually ample water sources at the campsites and on the approaches, however, to be on the safe side we suggest using purification drops such as Pristine, purification tablets, or a water filter.

### **ANIMAL PRECAUTIONS**

Bears and other wildlife share the regions we visit, our Instructors will teach and follow best practices on all courses to reduce the risk of interactions with any wildlife and how to minimize negative impacts. WildSafeBC provides many good resources including a section on camping in bear territory - <https://wildsafebc.com/camping/>

### **SAFETY PLANNING**

Our Guides will have a Satellite phone or Inreach device for the course, as well as all the emergency first aid kits and gear to take care of any situation. We have a daily check-in protocol by Sat device as well. Cell Phone reception is not 100% reliable in all areas.

For all of your wilderness trips, we encourage leaving a Trip Plan with a responsible person. We suggest using the Online planning tool at Adventure Smart - <https://plan.adventuresmart.ca/>. For the purposes of Trip Planning for this course, you should plan on being back in contact at 7 pm (*at the latest, this allows some extra time*) on the final date of your course. If anyone needs to contact you, they should contact Canada West Mountain School at 1-604-878-7007 (alternate #604-815-3451), or [info@themountainschool.com](mailto:info@themountainschool.com) and we can provide an update. Please be sure that you follow up with your check-in contact person when you finish your course on the last day, to avoid unnecessary alarms and SAR call-outs!

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1) Please confirm that you have received this Pre-Planning document, Gear List and Course outline
- 2) Indicate if you require CWMS to supply any of the needed gear on the equipment list
- 3) **Please ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

**The Canada West Mountain School team**