

WELCOME TO LUTHER HEIGHTS TRAILS & BACKPACK SESSIONS

Information for campers in trails & backpack programs and their parents

Is backpacking hard work? Yes, the trails camps at Luther Heights will challenge you physically. But they are not designed simply to “push you to your limits”. We want you and everyone else to taste the delights of living in community in the beautiful mountains of Idaho!

At the start, you’ll probably develop sore muscles and find it takes time to adapt to the higher altitudes. You can expect to do a fair amount of hiking (up to 4-8 hours some days); and you will be carrying between one-fourth and one-third of your body weight in your backpack. But the trails experience doesn’t need to exceed your abilities. Indeed, it can be wonderful! As you will discover in many ways, “roughing it” does not have to mean “without class”!

The only **people who should not** be in the Luther Heights Trails & Backpack programs are those who have physical disabilities that interfere with walking (for example, a “trick knee” that “goes out” from time to time), or who are unable to carry the extra weight of a pack (perhaps because of a “bad back”), or who are seriously overweight, or who are not interested in a more “primitive” camping experience away from modern conveniences.

Junior High Trails and **Sawtooth Wilderness Stewardship** participants hike with packs on usually only the first and last days. Even **Senior High Backpackers** normally have routes with a lay-over day, when packs don’t need to be carried.

When you arrive at Luther Heights, you will spend the first night at Camp, for **packing-out and orientation** to life in the wilderness. You’ll learn how to set up and take care of your tent (which you most likely will stay in that night). You’ll be briefed on safety and low-impact camping procedures (water treatment, group hiking, camping in bear country, latrine procedures, health care, etc.) Your group will leave the next morning after completing your packing-out.

Also after you arrive, you will go through a brief **health screening**, where our health personnel will go over your Health Form with you, and discuss any special needs you may have. You will need to turn in any **medications** you take with you to camp. Following the accreditation standards of the American Camping Association, Luther Heights must have all medications (including non-prescription ones) under the control of your counselor.

While you’re out in the wilderness, you’ll be learning to **know yourself** better, and to reflect on your abilities, your goals, and your calling. You’ll be **part of a community** where everyone matters. You’ll become involved more deeply in **caring for Creation**, by developing a sense of life with minimum impact, and perhaps by sharing in some trails work and rehabilitation projects.

We also hope that camp will help you grow in your **faith**. You don’t have to be a Lutheran to be at Luther Heights - you don’t even have to be a believer. But the faith shapes our life together. We **worship** together at the beginning and end of every day. We take time each day to study the **Bible** together. We usually have daily **Quiet Time**, so each of us can have a brief chance to be alone with the Word before God. And there are all kinds of unscheduled times where we find our faith deepened.

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HOW DO YOU PREPARE?

By praying. By planning to share yourself with others. By committing yourself not only to your own needs, but to the needs of others. And by physical activity that increases your stamina.

Brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, or other activities that increase your heart rate for a sustained period of time, are best. If you haven't been too active recently, start slowly, and increase the time you spend with these activities. Try to work up to doing them for at least thirty minutes a day, three or more times a week. Make sure you stretch out your muscles before and after your training periods. Start several weeks before you come to Luther Heights, or even several months. It will all help you be better prepared for hiking in the mountains.

OTHER INFORMATION

Emergencies. Messages may be carried to trails groups within a day when necessary. Emergency evacuation can be done in the same time span, or by a helicopter when there is a life-threatening injury.

Insurance is carried on all campers as secondary coverage. It will cover medical expenses resulting from accidental injury (up to a maximum of \$2,500). The \$50 deductible on each claim must be covered by a camper's family.

The **Canteen** has on sale T-shirts and sweatshirts (about \$10 - \$25), postcards, stamps, limited film, maps, fruit, candy, pop, etc.

Because the rivers, lakes and streams in the area of Luther Heights are very cold and swift moving, **swimming** is limited and a certified lifeguard must always be present.

SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP

Sawtooth Wilderness Stewardship participants will be spending a significant portion of most days doing trails work and/or site rehabilitation, as arranged and supervised by personnel of the U.S. Forest Service. Luther Heights and the Forest Service will providing you with cotton work gloves, hard hats (when required), and the necessary tools (and instruction in how to use them safely).

For some of the work you do (like working in brush or carrying debris) you'll want to have clothing that protects - long pants and long sleeves on a shirt. If you want to bring your own work gloves, you are welcome to do so.

It's hard to know in advance what the weather will be like. But it's possible you may be working some times under wet- and even muddy- conditions. It may be wise to have an extra change of work clothes along.

The actual work project will be determined by the Forest Service. It may entail work involving cleaning and rehabilitating "dispersed" camp sites. In this case, the transportation to and from the various work sites would be by vehicles. Every effort will be made to inform you of the type of work you will be doing prior to your arrival.

PACKING FOR LUTHER HEIGHTS TRAILS & BACKPACK CAMPS

Information for campers and their parents

PACK LIGHT, BE PREPARED

Take special care as you prepare. You don't want to carry any more than you need. You'll be carrying not only your gear, but food and equipment for the group.

On the other hand, once you're out in the wilderness, you can't run back home to get something you wish that you had taken. Because you face a wide range of weather conditions, you need to be prepared for both warm and cold, both wet and dry.

So as you pack, think carefully: **do you really need it? Will you be unprepared without it?** Keep in mind the Three Virtues of trails gear: **light weight** (the pounds add up quickly), **low bulk** (there's only so much space in your pack), and **multiple use** (whenever you can use something for more than one purpose, you've saved yourself some weight on the back).

Luther Heights provides you with backpack, tent, and gear needed for the group (food, cooking utensils, bear bag, rope, maps, stoves, etc.) You need to provide your own personal gear (see list on the other side).

FOOT GEAR

Take care of your feet. They're your only means of locomotion. For most hiking, sneakers or tennis shoes simply can't provide the support and protection your feet need when you're carrying an additional one-fourth to one-third of your body weight. You'll need **well-fitting shoes that are already broken in**. If you buy new hiking shoes, be sure to wear them several weeks before you come to camp. Otherwise you're going to have real problems with blisters.

But you don't need to buy big heavy hiking boots. Most of your hiking at Luther Heights will be on trails, so really heavy footwear is unnecessary. Good foot support is what's most important. If you're buying boots new, you might want to consider some of the superlight hiking shoes that are on the market.

You should have **several changes of socks** with you. It's usual to wear two sets at a time, a thicker pair over a thinner set. This will keep your foot from sliding around in your shoe. If the thick socks are wool, you'll be better prepared for cold weather, wetness, and hard use.

You may also want to have some old **sneakers** or similar footwear along, for crossing creeks and wearing at the end of the day when hiking is done.

SLEEPING BAG AND PAD

You want a sleeping bag that is **as warm** as possible and **as light** as possible. While down bags are wonderful, they are very expensive. There are many bags on the market with special synthetic fibers designed for trails bags. Many now have temperature ratings that help you compare between various bags (but you probably won't stay warm down to the low temperatures they list...) Most "car camping" bags are generally too heavy to carry for the amount of insulation you get.

You'll probably also want a sleeping pad. This can be either closed-cell (like Ensolite), or open cell foam. There are some fairly inexpensive ones available, as well as some more elaborate ones (like the

self-inflating Thermarest). Again, light weight and insulating capacity are most important.

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CLOTHING

Be prepared for extremes of weather. While we hope you have some warm sunny days, you might well have to face a snowstorm. The nights generally get quite cool in the high country, some times near freezing. It's best to have clothing that you can put on in layers. Items insulate better that way, and can be removed in stages as you warm up. Many people prefer several wool items, since wool insulates even when it is wet. A stocking cap and gloves or mittens are wise additions to your gear (though in a pinch, you can wrap a shirt around your head and put socks on your hands).

A rain poncho or lightweight rain jacket is essential. The camp has a limited number available; but we don't have enough for everyone. So have your own, if at all possible.

It's good to pack most of your items in small plastic bags, to help protect against wetness. You might also want a large garbage bag to use as a pack cover at night or in the rain. Plastic bags will also be available for sale in the canteen.

<p style="text-align: center;">WHAT TO TAKE TO LUTHER HEIGHTS Check list for campers in trails & backpack programs at Luther Heights</p>
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This checklist reflects the experience of many backpackers, and should be helpful as you prepare to come backpacking at Luther Heights. Of course, this list is not "the final word" on what to have while you're on the trails, since individual needs, budgets and preferences may vary. But please consider this list seriously.

Basic Equipment:

- Hiking shoes (with extra laces)
- Sneakers or tennis shoes
- Sleeping bag and stuff sack
- Sleeping pad
- Rain poncho or light rain jacket/pants

Clothing (be prepared for extremes of weather):

- Heavy socks
- Lighter socks
- Underwear
- Upper-body: (shirts/jackets/sweater/sweatshirt/down vest) T-shirts are fine for warm weather, and are typical hiking wear. But have something for cool nights and nasty weather. Many prefer to have a wool shirt along. Consider combinations: windbreaker/sweater/T-shirt, or rainjacket/sweatshirt, longsleeved underwear/T-shirt, or jacket/down/vest sweater, etc.
- Hiking shorts. Most people wear shorts much of the time.
- Long pants for cold weather and to protect against evening mosquitoes. Jeans are O.K., though don't provide much warmth when wet. Many prefer to have wool pants. Some prefer to have lightweight rain pants, and use them with long underwear. (Remember: multiple use.)
- Stocking cap, gloves & mittens

Sawtooth Wilderness Stewardship participants could be working in wet or muddy conditions. An extra change of work clothing would be handy. Include a long-sleeved shirt to protect your arms when carrying brush, etc.

Other Items:

- Mosquito repellent
- Sunscreen lotion. This is important! At higher elevations you are much more likely to get a serious sunburn.
- Small flashlight, extra batteries
- Toothbrush and toothpaste, biodegradable soap, comb, etc.
- Small towel and washcloth
- Kleenex, handkerchief, or bandanna

Also Consider:

- Camera and film
- Foot Powder
- Lip protection (chapstick, etc.)
- Sunglasses/sun visor
- Lightweight water bottle
- Long underwear
- Pen or pencil (for journaling)
- Fishing gear

PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

Pets, Walkman's, firearms/ammunition, hair dryers, Alcohol, Tobacco or other drugs, personal vehicles not be used during sessions, personal sport equipment unless approved by Director, firecrackers