

Ridges Wilderness Ministry

Backpacking Pre-trip Information

Greetings from Camp Perkins!

This information is provided to help you prepare for your backpacking experience with Camp Perkins' Ridges Wilderness Ministry. Most of this information is about the correct equipment and clothing to bring for your trip, and there is a lot! **If you do not have something, it should not keep you from going on a trip with Ridges!** We encourage you to avoid buying expensive new gear, unless you know this is going to be a lifelong passion! If you need some gear, we will work with you to find the correct equipment so that you are able to experience God's Creation in a comfortable and safe manner! We have equipment that you may borrow, or we may be able to talk you through some appropriate solutions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact camp about your concerns.

Ridges provides all necessary group gear such as food, tents, cooking equipment, first aid kits, and water treatment. We strive to use high quality equipment and are constantly updating our gear to keep it in safe working order, while minimizing excess weight. Our staff are trained specifically for the wilderness setting, including First Aid and CPR and will take care of all medical treatment. They also carry equipment with them to contact emergency services and Camp Perkins in the event of an emergency.

As a general principle, remember that weather conditions on the trail can be wonderful and they can be nasty! We prepare for both. Spring and Summer can approach slowly and snow can still be present in July and August. In order for your experience to be fun and protected from rain, wind, or cold, you must bring all required gear and clothing. You will use these items to layer efficiently. Insulating layers (such as fleece or wool) trap your body heat close against your skin, while an outer layer (raingear) will keep the wet and the wind from carrying away your heat.

Wool and synthetic fabrics which have a variety of names, such as fleece, polar-fleece, Synchronia, Capilene, or Bergalene will help to keep you warm even when they are wet, so they are critical. Check the tag on these fabrics; some fleece-like items can be cotton blends. When cotton gets wet, it loses its ability to trap heat, and thus becomes useless as an insulating layer. Cotton is only acceptable in your t-shirt(s), though many prefer synthetic ("wicking") t-shirts. Fabrics like fleece, rayon, acrylic, polyester, polypropylene, and wool retain their insulating ability when wet. There is no need to buy expensive fleece sweaters/jackets. Cheaper and acceptable fleece or wool options can be found at stores such as Target, Old Navy, clearance racks at outdoors stores, or second-hand/thrift stores. Just be sure that whatever you bring is 100% synthetic. A visit to your local Goodwill can be productive and inexpensive!

Your feet are your wheels. If they aren't comfortable and well protected, you won't be either. You need boots that are comfortable and lovable, but also very tough! Your boots must cover your ankles in order to provide adequate ankle support. Hiking shoes such as the low or mid-top shoes made by Nike, Adidas, etc. are not recommended because of the terrain we will cover. Some good boots are made by Vasque, REI, Merrell, Scarpa, and Asolo.

Make sure that you try on your boots with the socks you will wear on the trip, and that you still have adequate toe room. Whatever boots you choose, you must break them in! Otherwise, your feet will hurt.

Make sure to also waterproof the outside of them well, even if they have Gore-Tex. Nikwax, Biwell, and Sno-Seal are examples of good waterproofing treatments. Socks are just like any other insulating layer. They must be made out of 100% wool or synthetics. Cotton blends will leave you cold and unhappy. If you don't know exactly what your socks are made of, please buy wool socks. (Darn Tuff, though not an inexpensive brand, have a lifetime warranty – so any holes any time, they replace them!)

Other equipment is just as important, and one of the main considerations should be the weight of an item. A common saying with backpacking is that, "A pound on your back is a pound on your back." The Ridges staff will work with you to select the correct personal gear to take, and it does not hurt to ask if something is appropriate for the backcountry. A travel size tube of toothpaste is more than enough for a trip, and is recommended over a whole tube! And deodorant tends to attract bugs, so why take it? Our staff will work with you the day before you go into the field to help you select the items that you should take, and some that you should leave behind.

The trips will typically go into the field Monday morning and return on sometime between Thursday afternoon or Friday morning. You will have a chance to shower after you return to camp and have cleaned all of the gear, so please bring shower supplies and a clean set of clothes that you can leave at camp. Tennis shoes are also a nice option to have for your time at camp. Everyone in the car on the way home will thank you!!

Routes are typically selected the week prior to the trip to take into account for recent weather, forest service recommendations, group size and ability, and any other thing that may impact the ability of the group to go into a specific area. You will get a full description of where you will be going the first night before you go into the field.

If you are participating in Intro to Ridges, the demands on your overnight gear will be less, but you still will need to have solid day gear such as boots, clothing, and personal items. Even though you will be returning to a base camp at night, you will not be returning to Camp Perkins at night to dry your clothes. You will need to have clothing and socks not made out of cotton and a solid pair of hiking boots.

Thank you again for choosing to go on a trip with Camp Perkins' Ridges Wilderness Ministry! We pray that this will be an amazing opportunity for you to experience creation in a much closer way. If you have any questions or concern, please contact the camp office!

Grace and Peace,

Program Team

Ridges Wilderness Ministry Backpacking Checklist

Footwear

Required:

- 2-3 pairs of wool hiking socks (*No Cotton!*)
- 1 pair of sturdy leather or part leather hiking boots—waterproofed (*see boot section above*)
- 1 pair securely fastened sandals for river crossings or evening hang out at the camp site. (*No Flip-flops!*)

Optional:

- 1-2 pair thin synthetic liner socks

Upper Body

Required:

You must have a **minimum** of 4 layers that can all be worn at the same time!

- 1-2 t-shirts-- cotton is OK, but some people prefer cool-max or other synthetic (*Next-to-Skin layer*)
- 1 synthetic long underwear top (**NO COTTON BLENDS PLEASE!**) (*Mid-Layer*)
- 2 wool or fleece sweaters or shirts
- 1 heavy wool or fleece jacket (*Outer-Layer*)
- 1 WATERPROOF raincoat or poncho. Must be large enough to fit over all of your other layers.
- 1 wool or fleece hats that must cover your ears (*i.e. not a baseball hat*)
- 1 pair of wool or synthetic mittens or gloves (*thick ski gloves are okay but not ideal*)

Optional:

- 1 pair of thin polypropylene or silk liner gloves
- 1 neck gaiter (wool or fleece neck warmer; scarves are OK too)
- 1 wool or fleece vest (this is in addition to the above required items)

Equipment

Required (you can borrow packs/pads from Camp Perkins):

- Backpack** (*Internal frames should be at least 4800 cu. in., external frame packs are discouraged unless the participant regularly uses that pack*)
- Daypack: Required for Ridges Intro! (*This should be a comfortable pack to carry water, food, and extra layers in it.*)
- Sleeping bag – 10-20° rating** (*Not Cotton*)
- Sleeping Pad**
- Mug, bowl with lid, and spoon (*Tupperware is a great option*)
- 3 one-liter sturdy water bottles or 1 water bottle and a water bladder (*i.e. Camelback*)
- Headlamp or flashlight with spare new batteries. If at all possible, please borrow/buy a headlamp.
- 1-2 Bandanas
- Bug repellent (*DEET is best. Citronella is OK*)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Sunscreen
- Pocket-sized bottle of hand sanitizer

Optional:

- Pocket knife
- Camera
- Stuff sacks**
- Crazy Creek or similar chair (*if you have one*)
- Trekking poles (*if you have them/need them*)
- Sunglasses and/or hat with a brim
- Small journal/notepad
- Compass

- **These items may be borrowed from Camp Perkins**
- We also have a very limited selection of clothing articles available for use.

Lower Body

Required:

- 1 pair of fleece or synthetic long pants
- 1 pair of comfortable, quick-drying shorts, preferably with pockets
- 1 pair of mid-weight polypropylene long underwear bottoms (**NO COTTON PLEASE!**)
- 1-2 pairs of underwear

Optional but highly recommended:

- 1 pair of rain pants.