



WILDERNESS ORIENTATION PRIMER

NOTE: Throughout this primer, there will be several essential forms that all parents and students must review. Please click on all linked PDFs: CRMS expects all incoming students and parents to be thoroughly familiar with their contents.

What do I need to do in advance?

To ensure a smooth Wilderness Orientation for all concerned, it is vitally important that you begin working on these five items:

1. Thoughtfully complete and submit the [CRMS Wilderness Orientation Questionnaire](#).
2. Buy and/or collect the equipment outlined on the [Equipment List](#).
3. Make sure you have had a physical examination and that the medical requirements have been met. If you have asthma, be sure you talk to your doctor about how to best manage your condition and please review the [“Coping with Asthma on CRMS Trips” PDF](#).
4. GET IN SHAPE—your experience will be much more enjoyable if you are in good shape! If you’re not already physically active, begin a program of walking, biking, running, or swimming that will prepare you for the physical challenge of the program.
5. Read each of the following PDFs:
 - [Wilderness Orientation Fitness Expectations](#)
 - [Coping with a High Altitude Environment](#)

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO BE PREPARED FOR OUTDOOR PROGRAM TRIPS?

Most of the items you’ll need are available through the CRMS Bookstore (excluding packs and sleeping bags) or a good mountaineering shop. Roaring Fork Valley residents are encouraged to visit Summit Canyon Mountaineering in Glenwood Springs (970-945-6994), Bristlecone Mountain Sports in Basalt (970-927-1492) or REI in Glenwood Springs; they are knowledgeable about the gear and equipment necessary for CRMS trips. Out-of-town folks are encouraged to visit their local mountaineering shops; in the absence of such a shop, we recommend Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI) (www.rei.com). For information for items from the CRMS Bookstore, please see the [“Outdoor Supply Purchases from CRMS”](#) form. If intending to order from the CRMS Bookstore please call early to ensure availability.

NOTE: Please make an effort to label all of your student’s gear to facilitate keeping track of your investment. Each year lots of unlabeled gear ends up in our Lost & Found, unlabeled gear is much more difficult to return to its owners.

Extended outdoor trips can require hard work, but they don’t have to be unduly uncomfortable. We have created the Equipment List for CRMS Outdoor Program Trips to identify the essential gear and equipment students will need for all trips, with associated Addenda for the various discipline-specific trips we offer each fall and spring. If you have additional personal items that you wish to bring that are not on the equipment list, please discuss them with your leader. Often these “extra” items add up to significant additional weight and bulk and are ultimately unnecessary.

The following three items (boots, pack, sleeping bag) are super important:

BOOTS: A good pair of hiking boots adds comfort and safety and with proper care will last for many years. A quality boot will have a supportive upper section and a sturdy sole and be designed for both on-and off-trail hiking while carrying packs up to 35-45 pounds. Low-top or trail running-style hikers are not appropriate. There are many brands and styles to choose from; expect to spend at least \$75-150+ for a quality pair of boots. Strive to break in any new boots by wearing them on short hikes in advance of your arrival to CRMS!

PACKS: You will need an Internal-frame backpack with a capacity of 4,000 to 5,000 cubic inches (65- 80 liters) that is designed for on-and off-trail backpacking. It is important to get the right-size shoulder harness and waist straps to match your body size. Purchase a pack from a mountain sports store that takes the time to help customize the fit. Borrowing a pack can work, but you must ensure that the pack fits and is adjusted properly. CRMS has a limited number of quality packs to rent at \$5/day. For sizing questions and availability, please contact the CRMS Bookstore at (970-963-3984. If purchasing a new pack, expect to spend \$150-250+ for a quality backpack.

SLEEPING BAG: Synthetic bags are less expensive than down, are warm even when wet, and dry quickly. While they are bulkier and slightly heavier than down for the same warmth, synthetic bags are the best option for use at CRMS. If you already own a down bag, know that you will need to take extra care to keep it dry at all times to ensure it will keep you warm. A “three-season sleeping bag” should have a suitable temperature rating to approximately +15 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more about Sleeping bag temperature ratings [here](#). Expect to spend \$100-250+ for a quality sleeping bag.

Additional information on some of the other items on the [Wilderness Orientation Equipment List](#):

CLOTHING AND FABRICS: In an outdoor environment, wearing layers of synthetic fabrics works best and allows flexibility to remain comfortable in a wide range of weather conditions. Several layers of light clothing keep you warm and can be adjusted to changes in weather and/or activity. For example, wearing a synthetic long underwear long-sleeved shirt, and a fleece top allows you to adapt to changing conditions by adding or removing layers as conditions or exertion change. Aim to bring activewear made from wicking and quick-drying fabrics. Merino wool has the added benefit of having natural odor resistance qualities. When possible avoid bringing cotton fabrics as they lose insulative qualities when wet, dry slowly, and absorb moisture making them heavy.

SLEEPING PAD: The most simple and reliable sleeping pads are “closed cell” foam that can be found at most outdoor or sporting goods stores. Inflatable sleeping pads can be quite comfortable but can be vulnerable to puncture. If you choose to bring an inflatable sleeping pad, also bring a repair kit and take extra care to avoid a puncture.

RAIN GEAR: Good-quality coated-nylon rain gear is adequate for our use and can be found relatively cheaply. Cheap plastic or poncho-style jackets are not durable enough in the high country. Pullovers or hooded jackets are excellent. Gore-Tex™ or other breathable-waterproof fabrics work excellently but can be expensive.

GROUND TARP: A small lightweight nylon tarp or sheet of durable 6mm plastic is used as a ground cloth under your sleeping pad at night. Grommets on corners are helpful. Ground tarps should be ~5'x 8' maximum-size.

TOILET KIT: A travel-size toothbrush, small travel-size toothpaste, a medium-sized tube of SPF 30 or higher sunscreen, and Lip Block with sunscreen are all important items to bring. If you have a history of blisters consider bringing extra Moleskin™ and/or Molefoam™ for blisters, and foot powder. Girls: menstrual cycles may be affected by changes in activity and or environment; bring a double supply of tampons or pads. Do not bring lotions, deodorant, and other toiletries as the scents in these products can attract wildlife. Rest assured that your

leaders will provide additional information about caring for yourself and going to the bathroom in the outdoors.

CONTACTS/ PRESCRIPTION GLASSES: Blowing dust, rain, snow, and Colorado's dry climate can cause problems for contact wearers in the backcountry. It is a good idea to bring backup contact lenses and/or glasses to ensure you can enjoy the beautiful sights you will see on your trip.

MEDICATIONS: Prescription medications brought on trips should arrive in the original container with the prescription label intact. The prescription label is the documentation for your use of the medication during your expedition. The container should not include other medications, vitamins, etc. We also recommend bringing a spare set of medications, in case the first set gets lost or wet. Since many medications have contraindications involving sun exposure, high altitude, or other environmental implications, it is essential that you discuss your student's medications with your physician and also disclose to our Health Office and the trip leader upon arrival to CRMS.

NOTE: Each year, students show up with some equipment that is inappropriate or ill-suited for our purposes. In our experience, there is often confusion surrounding the following items:

Leave all knives behind (including Swiss Army or Leatherman-type knives). These items are prohibited in the dorms and on campus and should be left at home. CRMS provides knives when needed on our trips.

Do not bring heavy, insulated ski parkas for Outdoor Trips; lightweight insulated shells work best to keep you warm and dry and can compress into a small space when not in use.

Water bottles need to have a secure, screw-top closure and be drip-free. Bottles with straws and flip-tops often leak. Water bladders used in hydration packs are only appropriate for mountain biking, day-hiking, or trail running trips. Nalgene-brand water bottles are popular, lightweight, secure and available at the CRMS Bookstore.

CRMS Electronic Devices Policy for Outdoor Program Trips: Cell phones, E-Readers, Tablets, and other electronic devices are not permitted on CRMS trips. The only exception to this rule is a dedicated camera. If you have questions about what is permissible, please contact the school. Furthermore, if you would like to learn more about our emergency communication protocol, please feel free to get in touch with the Active Curriculum office.

IN SUMMARY

Taking the time to fully understand what you need to attend to before arriving at CRMS will help make your Wilderness Orientation experience more enjoyable and the busy beginning of the year less hectic. You are now done reviewing the Wilderness Orientation Primer, if you are a parent please ask your child to now also review all of this content. Please contact Renée Thibodeaux at rthibodeaux@crms.org with any questions.