



Dear Scout Parent,

Troop 23 tries to present a diversified program for the Scouts. Winter camping is offered as part of the camping program allowing the boys to see camping and the outdoors in a different light as well as temperature. It is natural for parents to be concerned about their sons spending a weekend in the out-of-doors when the temperatures drop. Troop 23 is blessed with many Okpik Winter Camping trained Scouts and adults. They have been sharing this knowledge by presenting winter camping tips and equipment ideas the last few weeks to the boys at the troop meetings. Proper equipment and positive attitude are probably the two most important aspects of winter camping. A third important point is another proper shelter or a "Plan B" if someone has a problem. The troop has rented an enclosed shelter with a wood-burning stove to help anyone that gets chilled. This building will be manned day and night to assist with any issues that might arise due to the weather as well as injury. The participants can sleep outside in their tents or sleep in the heated shelter as they wish. Troop 23 tries to offer challenging activities for the boys if they wish to try with safety being the most important concern.

Regardless of where the participants sleep, a proper sleep system should be used. This consists of two sleeping bags or one heavy one with additional blankets, all on top of some sort of insulation. The insulation could be rigid building insulation (currently being made into pads at the troop meetings), several layers of corrugated cardboard, closed cell foam pads or self-inflating foam pads. Cots and air mattresses should be avoided as they become very cold. In addition to the bedding a clean sweat suit, warm socks and stocking hat should be used within the sleep system. Gloves for sleeping should be considered.

Daytime apparel should consist of layered clothing that breathes and wicks away moisture. It is the moisture that chills the most. This should start with long underwear, preferably polypropylene, but cotton is OK if extra is brought to change. The problem with cotton is that it does not wick and keeps the moisture on the skin. An insulating layer should follow of sweat pants, or insulated wind pants and a polar fleece or sweat shirt top. Once again cotton is OK but bring extra. Polar fleece is a wonderful insulating material that is warm even while wet. It is fairly inexpensive and you can get it at Wal-Mart or other department stores. You might want to get a couple of these in case one layer is not enough. An insulated jacket or parka should be the outer layer maybe covered with a rain jacket to break the wind. Smart wool or polypropylene socks are very good for the feet although expensive. Again, cotton is OK if several pair are brought. These should be changed often and the boys will be encouraged to do this. Warm boots are a must for any outdoor activity. Leave the gym shoes at home as they offer no protection from the cold. A hat that also protects the ears and gloves or mittens are a must. Mittens are actually better since they do not separate the fingers but allow them to warm each other. Extra hats and gloves/mittens are a good idea since they get wet or lost. None of the daytime clothing should be used in the sleeping system. *Attending Scouts should look at the attached winter equipment list. This supplements the one included with the permission slip.* Please pay attention to the required equipment. It is known from experience that forgetting required items will insure an uncomfortable time.

The Scouting program challenges the boys with age appropriate activities to keep them interested, learn by doing and improve their confidence. This is done via structured events with safety at the forefront of every activity. This outing was planned with the above in mind. The boys will be checked often during this activity. If you have any questions about this outing or winter camping, please call the Scoutmaster - Bob Marcanti (847-516-3493) with your concerns. On this outing, Mr. Marcanti will be unable to attend the daytime activities so emergency calls from home should go to Bob Heuser (cell no: 847-204-3271). Please bear mind that the cell phone coverage is very poor at Camp Lakota but messages will be checked often.

This outing is filled with fun winter activities and experiences to broaden the Scouts' knowledge and appreciation of the out-of-doors. It will be a fun outing that they will be proud of and remember for years to come.

Don't forget to bring a one-person plastic toboggan for sledding and to haul equipment.

