



The Pocket Survival Kit

Earlier this spring, we had a call out for an overdue couple. They were on an ATV and it had broken down, leaving them stranded. We found them late that night but discovered that they had nothing with them for just such an emergency. They had no survival equipment, food, water, or extra clothing. They explained that it was only going to be a quick excursion, not very far from the parking area. The couple learned how fast a quick trip could turn into a dire emergency.

Most of our outdoor activities do not take us more than a mile or so from a marked trail or road. Many of these trips are short of duration, such as a bike ride or a hike. In many of these instances, it is just not practical to carry a full survival kit.

I always recommend a full kit, with tools for just about any type of emergency, but it is easy to talk yourself out of carrying it on the short jaunt. For these reasons, I have compiled what I think would be an every day carry kit for the short trip.

This kit would be small enough to fit in a pocket of your vest while you hike up a trout stream, in a fanny pack on a hike, or a carry bag on a bicycle.

What if you stepped into a beaver hole on the bank of a stream and were unable to walk? The kit has the bare essentials but will seem like luxuries if you are forced to spend the night in place.

Here is a list to get you started. You can have some fun

customizing your kit to fit your own outdoor situation.

- Fire - a campfire at night will help you feel secure and keep you warm. Carry two types of ignition, waterproof matches, magnesium fire starter or a lighter. Throw in a wet fire tinder cube to help get it going.
- Multi-tool - pick one with a knife blade and a saw.
- Whistle - great as a signal device
- Poncho - one of the pocket size. Can be used for windbreak, shelter or rain protection.
- Paracord - 20 feet or so.
- Compass - you can orient yourself
- Duct Tape - from first aid to repairs, this is the miracle worker. Wrap 10 feet around a tongue depressor.
- Water purification straw - These lightweight filters will allow you to safely drink water from a puddle if necessary.
- Pocket first aid kit - Carry just the bare essentials to stop a major flow of blood or set a broken

bone. The minor things can wait until you get home to deal with.

- Cell phone - keep it turned off so the battery does not run out searching for service.
- Flashlight - small size with extra battery

You will want to carry most of these items in a waterproof bag to protect them from the elements. A quart sized freezer bag will work. The bag can also be used to hold water in a pinch.

You do not necessarily have to carry all these things together. You can carry the multi-tool on your belt, where it is accessible throughout the trip. The compass can be pinned to your collar and an emergency poncho will fit nicely in a back pocket. Use your imagination to spread out the load.

It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with how to use some of these tools. You may start your lunchtime campfire with the magnesium fire starter, so you know how it works.

You can purchase a small survival kit, but I have found they are full of things I would never use. I prefer to build a custom kit and fit it to my particular trip. That way, I know exactly what I have in my kit to call on in an emergency. Until next time, see you on the trail.

Mark Rackay is a freelance writer who serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Backcountry trails on the edge

One aspect of mountain biking I love is riding backcountry trails. In the early days of mountain biking that's all there was available to riders. All the fun and challenging trails systems we now have between Cortez and Fruita didn't exist 30, 20 or even 10 years ago.

By and large all the wonderful riding we have is considered Front Country accessible. In other words, it isn't that far from civilization. The trails are fun, challenging, but they aren't in really remote, wild places. Most of the time you see lots of other riders. If you have a major mechanical problem or medical issue help isn't that far off.

Sure, we had lots of remote jeep roads to ride, but what we really wanted was narrow, rugged trails that took us to really wild places. A lot of those trails became off-limits to mountain bikes when a series of bills were passed in Congress, creating wilderness areas.

The designation of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) back in the 1980's really hit mountain bike trail access in western Colorado. WSA's are large tracts of land that were set aside for wilderness consideration. The sticking point for many folks then and now is those areas have to be managed as wilderness until Congress acted or the lands were released from consideration. In many cases neither has happened.

The Black Ridge, Gunnison Gorge and Dominguez wilderness areas have been created as part of national conservation lands legislation. Several nice trails in those wilderness areas were lost to mountain bike use. The Pollock Bench Trail and Dominguez Canyon were the most publicized at the time. I rode both before the no bikes signs went up.

A little closer to home the trails in the Roubideau Area up on the Uncompahgre Plateau were seeing some bike use before bikes were prohibited. There's even an old stock driveway that goes up on Winter Mesa in the Camelback WSA that saw a few bikes back in the early 1980's.

There are some areas on the Uncompahgre Plateau and Grand Mesa that escaped the WSA moniker. Those places have wonderful backcountry trails that I have written about on several occasions. The likes of Flowing Park, Indian Creek, Mesa Top, Atkinson Bench, South Bear Pen Gulch and the 47 Trail remain open and are as wild and rugged as ever.

Access to those trails is well-established, but the trend of making backcountry trails off-limits to bikes continues in some quarters. In the proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-ENCA) 12 of the 120 miles of non-motorized trails outside wilderness will be open to mountain bikes.

Two of trails, Escalante Dry Fork and Muds Springs Gulch, are within the boundaries of areas that will be managed as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics - another designation used by the BLM to recognize wild and naturalness outside the scope of wilderness and WSA's.

Both trails go through some primitive, wild country and provide some quality backcountry riding. There is no stipulation in the regulations holding up their use by mountain bikers except the outdated and old guard attitude that bikes don't belong in wild places.

There are some diehard wilderness groups who hope that someday these places will be designated as wilderness. Tracts of land can be protected from development without the wilderness designation. The legislation that created the D-ENCA doesn't allow mining, gas and oil development or logging. All roads and trails must be designated - some very solid protections.

All hope is not lost. The local mountain bike group, COPMOBA, plans to meet with the BLM and other interested groups during the implementation of the new D-ENCA RMP travel plan to hammer out the final trail use designations. There's no reason quiet trail users can't co-exist on our trails.

Bill Harris is a long-time resident of western Colorado and author of "Bicycling the Uncompahgre Plateau."



Outdoors

By Bill Harris

If you go:

Stay tuned and hopefully route designations for D-ENCA will be forthcoming as the new RMP is implemented. The Nat. Geo. Trails Illustrated Uncompahgre Plateau North map covers D-ENCA.

CPW: Remember proof of ownership

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Colorado Parks and Wildlife reminds anyone planning to purchase a boat, off-highway vehicle or snowmobile that after Jan. 1, 2017, a new regulation requires that the buyer demonstrate proof of ownership before it can be registered. Failure to show proof of ownership will prevent the completion of the registration.

The agency recommends to all new owners that they ask for a bill of

sale during the transaction. For convenience, CPW offers a bill of sale template, available online.

If proof of ownership cannot be obtained, a physical inspection of the craft will be necessary and can be performed at any CPW office.

The bill of sale must include:

- Both the seller and buyer's printed names and signatures
- The vessel/vehicle identification number

- if known
 - The vessel/vehicle make, model and year - if known
 - Date of the sale
- Other forms of proof of ownership include:
 - Previous registration certificate issued by a governmental entity that lists the applicant as registered owner
 - Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (MCO)/Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO)
 - Certificate of Title
 - Any court issued

- document proving ownership
 - A physical inspection form completed by a CPW agent
 - Boats and off-highway vehicles must be registered with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, including motorcycles, dirt bikes, three-wheelers, all-terrain vehicles and dune buggies that are operated on public land or trails in Colorado.
- For additional details, visit cpw.state.co.us.






Marmot

NEW SEASON. NEW GEAR

New styles for Fall & Winter have arrived

Store hours: Monday-Saturday 9-6 Sunday 10-4

10 SOUTH SELIG AVE

MONTROSE, COLORADO 81401

970-249-4226

