



If you used your outdoor equipment last year, it is probably due for some maintenance. My has bounced around the globe a couple times, and might be unrepairable. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

With the New Year rapidly approaching, it is time to prepare for the “New Year, New Me” crowd, of which yours truly is not a subscriber. All the problems, worries, and concerns I had on December 31st do not magically disappear with the turning of the page on the calendar.

I told my wife that she needed to change the air in the tires of her SUV, as she did not want to ride around on the same old air for another year. Her response was particularly hurtful and very unbecoming of a person of her advanced years, and I plan to tell her so the first chance I get. Let’s just say her response was something about letting the air out of me.

I am sure that many of my fellow outdoor people received some new equipment and toys to fuel your outdoor passion, I know I did. Sad part is, the wind is howling down the chimney, and the wood pile is getting a bit low from all the fires to keep the house warm, it is difficult to think how many months before we can try out the new toys.

Maybe we can use the time to repair some of the temporary repairs we



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

made during last season and spiff up some things in preparation for next season. For example, January 1st is a good battery birthday date for all the battery-operated devices we own.

Smoke alarms make an annoying chirp when the batteries begin to age and changing them on an annual basis prevents that chirp. Although, I find smoke alarms to be a nuisance anyway, especially whenever I try and cook something in the house.

If you check around the house, you will find countless items battery operated, and New Year’s is a good time to replace all at once. Thermostats, button operated wall safes, CO2 detectors, household flashlights, and flashlights in your

vehicles, wall clocks, sprinkler timer boxes, and battery back-up alarm clocks, to name just a few.

This is a good time to investigate your pack. Last year’s Snicker’s bar has probably evolved into an intelligent life form and is grazing on a half of a leftover ham sandwich. You might want to open that pack with a long stick, in the backyard, if it is anything like mine.

My Posse buddy, Jerry, and I always enjoy a couple candy bars, after a successful mission. We add the bars in the spring, but by the end of summer, they are usually a mess. The summer heat, followed by the cold of the fall hunting seasons, leaves us with a Ziplock bag full of a mashed up, melted, and dried out pile of something inedible and unrecognizable. This may be a good time to replenish the stock.

Any outdoor person will testify that their sporting world and the associated equipment is full of temporary repairs. These repairs are often conducted streamside, on the boat, in the tent, around a campfire, or on the fly. Each of us has the intention of replacing

said temporary repair with a repair of a permanent nature when they have nothing else better to do. It is surprising how many better things there are to do.

The hip waders that have a tear in the side, the ones that you repaired with a piece of Gorilla Tape, could use a proper patching job, and now is a good time to do it. Left to itself, the tape will probably fail in the middle of the stream, around the beginning of April, best look into it now.

My tent has a tear in the ceiling, above one side. It is big enough that rain and snow come in without hesitation. I forget about it after every camping trip, only to remember it when pitching it on the next outing. Generally, I offer that side of the tent to my wife, telling her there is a great view of the Northern Lights, but she is too smart for that. Now is a good time to make a proper repair of the tent roof.

Hunters can find this a good time to give their hunting rifles a good cleaning. Get the barrels clean, wipe off all the mud, grime, and grease from last year’s trips afield.

I would suggest retorquing the action screws and checking over the scope mounts and rings for proper tightness. Better to do it now, than to find a problem on opening day.

It is too soon for us to de-winterize the RV, but you sure can start giving all the equipment a good going-over. The cabinets could probably stand a going through, removing all the leftover debris from last year, airing out bedding and blankets, and replacing any staples that may be getting low. There are battery operated items, like smoke detectors in the RV as well.

We have first aid kits in both vehicles, the RV, and in our packs. January is a great time to go through them and replace all the expired and used up supplies. Band-aids and tapes lose their stickiness with time, and I bet that bottle of Ibuprofen is about empty. You don’t want to be out of something when you really need it.

You probably want to make sure you have emergency supplies in your vehicle. Blankets, food, water, candles, chains, a shovel, and extra clothes, especially if you do any traveling over mountain passes. Check

the air pressure in your tires regularly during this time of year as cold weather brings down tire pressures. And speaking of those tires, that tire you plugged last July while on the trail, should probably be properly patched by a tire shop, as plugs are only a temporary repair.

I would make it a New Year’s resolution to use the first of the year to get all my temporary repairs made into permanent ones, but I would only fail, as there is always something else better to do. Besides, if you leave a temporary repair alone long enough, it becomes a permanent repair.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

Blue Mesa Reservoir lake trout tournament returns in 2024 with a \$10,000 prize purse

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

Anglers will once again have the chance to earn cash prizes this winter while helping Colorado Parks and Wildlife achieve management goals of lake trout within Blue Mesa Reservoir.

The Blue Mesa Reservoir Lake Trout Tournament is scheduled to run Jan. 1 through April 30. The third edition of this tournament is sponsored by CPW in an effort to reduce the population of lake trout 24 inches in length and smaller. This is the first time CPW has held this tournament since 2021.

This harvest-incentive tournament will help aquatic biologists maintain adequate kokanee

salmon fry survival by limiting predation from lake trout. Abundant kokanee are also key to maintaining excellent trophy lake trout growth and condition within the reservoir.

“Colorado Parks and Wildlife is asking anglers to be our partners in helping to manage the renowned Blue Mesa Reservoir fishery,” said Dan Brauch, aquatic biologist for CPW in Gunnison. “We know we can have an excellent kokanee fishery and a trophy lake trout fishery, but we need to continue our work for both species and we need the continued help of Colorado’s anglers.”

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A small lake trout is pictured after being caught at Blue Mesa Reservoir. (Courtesy photo/CPW)