

# Footwear for the slop



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Water is your best friend, and your worst enemy. You must have water to survive, without it, three days and you are off to paradise. Place your carcass in extreme heat, like the desert, add some physical exertion to the game, and you might cash in before the 24-hour mark. Having enough water is your best friend.

The enemy water can attack by simply falling out of the boat, where a person can only hold their breath for a couple minutes, and the enemy water finishes you off. Fall into very cold water and you can succumb to a cold shock that will finish you off before the hypothermia does, usually less than five minutes. A place where water can be a real problem for outdoor people is when you have wet feet.

Working offshore boats for many years in the tropics, my feet were wet all the time. I had to wear a rubber boot with a non-slip sole, to keep from breaking by lower half trying to remain standing in rolling seas. These rubber boots were always full of water, from the sea and perspiration from the heat. This leads



My Woody Sport pair on the right, has been through a lot over the last 10 years, and still going strong. The Muckster II pair on the left are going to get a real workout in Africa this summer. (Photo/Mark Rackay)

to fungal infections like athlete's foot, and others that cause itching that on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the worst, rates right around 43.

Long-term exposure to cold and wet can cause the blood vessels to constrict and skin tissues to die, creating a condition known as trench foot. For us outdoor folks, hiking, hunting, fishing, and for those of us who work outdoors, wet feet can be a serious problem, but we usually aren't out there long enough to develop trench foot or fungal infections. We can, however, have our own set of problems.

Most of our trail shoes, mid-height boots, and even the full-size lace-up boots, are treated with Gore-Tex, and it is a wonderful product for the outdoor person. Heavy dew on the grass, walking in fresh snow, rainy conditions, and even the occasional foot

plunge into the creek are all no match for Gore-Tex. However, if your adventure takes you into the deeper standing water, serious mud, pouring rains and standing water in fields, those outdoors shoes just won't cut it.

Gore-Tex isn't made for shoes to be used as a pair of waders. Besides, there are holes in those shoes that allow the flowing water inside. There are the holes for the laces, around the tongue, stitching around the soles, and don't forget the big hole at the top because they don't come high enough up your leg to keep the water out.

About a decade ago, a buddy and I went on a moose hunting trip in Newfoundland. The outfitter recommended rubber boots for all the walking and wet conditions. Most of the hunters in camp brought the old-fashioned rubber boots, the ones that fit

like an oversize Hefty bag, and allow you to turn around inside the boot. To compensate for the poor fit, we always wore two pairs of socks, but I doubt five pair would have made a difference. These type of boots are great if you are just going to stand in water or mud, but terrible if you actually have to walk. I showed up with a good pair of Woody Sport Muck Boots, and it was the right choice.

Back in 1999, Jim Donohue founded the Original Muck Boot Company. He got tired of trying to hunt, fish, hike, work, and walk, in those traditional rubber work boots available at the time. He also wanted something that would help keep your feet warm and dry in cold and snow conditions. He came up with a bootie-style that was comfortable and supportive for walking, easy to get on and off, light-

weight and dry. Instead of all the heavy rubber, he made the uppers out of flexible and comfortable neoprene.

Muck boots have continued to evolve over the past 25 plus years and are now available to fill just about every niche an outdoor person might need. With dozens of styles available, everyone can find one for every need. Whether it is boots, mid-length, shoes, or slip-ons, there is a style for everyone and every condition.

Some are insulated and designed to keep feet warm in cold and wet conditions, while others are designed to keep feet from overheating in hot and humid conditions. There are models with steel toes for serious work, stiff and rugged soles for the tough terrain, and softer, more supportive models suitable for the person who is going to put some miles on.

On the Newfoundland trip, I discovered that the ground is just a sponge; everywhere you go, with a collection of moss, lichen and berry plants. Standing water is everywhere you step, and many "sucker" holes are hidden, just waiting to break an unsuspecting ankle. I fell into a hole at least once a day. Other than my ego, I was fortunate not to break anything vital. Even though we walked 8 to 12 miles a day, those boots were the right choice.

Those Woody Sport Muck Boots have been on a dozen trips since then. They survived 2 weeks on the Parana River in Argentina hunting water

buffalo, and at least a half dozen elk hunts. They live in my ready-gear for search and rescue missions to this day.

For this season, I bought a pair of the Men's Muckster II Ankle Boot. This lightweight pair makes the perfect boot to wear around camp. It will also be great when you have to head out of camp in a hurry, and don't remember to change boots before you go, as it is durable enough to handle anything, yet comfortable enough to make you forget you are wearing it.

I won't suggest you ditch all your other footwear and switch over to Muck Boots, but you should have a couple pairs in your footwear battery. If you are like me, you will find yourself wearing them much more than you thought you would. While they are not going to replace my Hoka Speed goat trail shoes, of my Danner mid-length hikers, they are the best there is if your trail leads you into the slop.

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## Colorado Parks and Wildlife resumes ANS sampling efforts in the Colorado River for 2026

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has begun aquatic nuisance species (ANS) sampling efforts on the Colorado River for 2026. CPW staff will conduct weekly shoreline and water samplings along sections of the Colorado River between Granby and the Colorado-Utah border. These frequent samplings are part of CPW's increased efforts following the discovery of zebra mussel veligers (larvae) in the river in July 2024 and adult zebra mussels in the river in 2025.

In 2026, CPW is expanding our partnership with River Corps, an AmeriCorps program operated by the nonprofit River Science, which places members with organizations and agencies throughout Colorado. River Science members help their assigned organizations improve the efficiency, efficacy and scale of river data and management to improve recreation, water resources, and overall resiliency. Three River Corps members have been placed with staff from CPW's ANS program,

two of whom are focused on expanding CPW's capacity to monitor the Colorado River.

CPW and River Corps ANS technicians will utilize different techniques, including collecting water samples using a plankton net, to survey for invasive mussels. Each of these techniques will target a different life stage of the species. Water samples will be sent to the ANS lab in Denver to be evaluated for the presence of mussel

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Colorado Parks and Wildlife invasive species specialist throws a plankton tow into the Colorado River to collect water samples for zebra mussel testing. (CPW/R. Gonzales)



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