



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

CLOTHING AND GEAR

R.A.N.G.E.R.S. at Birches Information Packet

Greetings from Camp Echo! Making sure that you have all of the right items for your program can be a bit daunting. This list provides detailed information about all of the essential clothing and gear items you will need for your time spent living at Birches and your off-camp overnight trip. Our goal is to prepare all of our campers well in advance of their programs so that every participant arrives at camp with a thorough understanding of what to expect during their session. If you have questions about R.A.N.G.E.R.S. or what to bring, please call the Echo office at (847) 475-7400 ext. 259 or email us at echoinfo@mcqawymca.org.

WHAT WE SUPPLY

Camp Echo's trip center provides all of the food, water, and shelter-related items for the R.A.N.G.E.R.S. program including stoves, cooking supplies, water purification systems, tents, tarps, and ropes. The trip center also supplies all necessary first aid equipment and emergency communication devices.

WHAT TO BRING

Weather at camp is often unpredictable. For this reason, having the proper clothing is critical. Please bring all of the required items on the packing list below. Some of the required items on your list will be provided to every camper. These items are indicated by a star. However, we do not require participants to use Camp Echo's gear. If you already own a starred item or would like to purchase or borrow your own gear from another source, you are welcome to do so.

Outdoor apparel is an investment. Shop around before you buy anything, read product reviews, and try everything on. Don't worry about colors or style—outdoor gear is meant to keep you warm, dry, and comfortable. Many Echo staff and participants use the following retailers when purchasing gear:

Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) - www.rei.com
Sierra Trading Post - www.sierratradingpost.com
Uncle Dan's The Great Outdoor Store - www.udans.com
Backcountry - www.backcountry.com

We also encourage you to borrow clothing and gear, especially if this is your first experience living in the outdoors. Echo's trip center has some outdoor clothing that campers are welcome to borrow. However, our selection is limited, so please contact the office prior to your trip to let us know what you would like to borrow, and we will let you know what we have available.

FABRICS

Warm, comfortable, quick-dry clothing is best in outdoor settings. Preferred fabrics include polyester, polypropylene, fleece, acrylic, rayon, and wool. Popular name brands for these materials are Polartec™, Thinsulate™, COOLMAX, and Capilene. Synthetic materials are always recommended for wilderness recreation as they are able to retain their insulating qualities when they get wet. Cotton and denim are OK to pack for your time at Birches, but are not ideal for the Pine River. Please be sure to pack at least 2 quick-dry shirts, 2 pairs of quick-dry shorts, wool socks, and warm synthetic layers for the off-camp trip.

PACKING AND STORAGE

Pack your clothing and gear in a duffel bag or small suitcase. Once you get to camp, Echo's maintenance team will drive your personal items out to Birches. Before you leave for your off-camp trip, your counselors will go through the packing list with you and the rest of the group to be sure everyone has everything they need. You may want to bring a small backpack or tote bag to pack items you might want in transit to and from the trip, but not on the trip (book, journal, etc). Any items you brought to camp that will not be going on the trip with you will remain at Birches until you return.

MEDICATIONS

Please do not pack any medications you take, prescription or over-the-counter. All medications must be checked in with a staff member at the departure buses in Evanston, or brought to the clinic by a parent if you are dropped off at Camp. Prescription medication must arrive in its original container with the prescription label intact. Remember to include detailed instructions for each medication on your health form.

EYE CARE

Camp Echo recommends glasses with a strap rather than contact lenses for the R.A.N.G.E.R.S. program. It is more difficult to maintain adequate hygiene when wearing contact lenses in a wilderness setting. Wearing contact lenses puts you at risk of several conditions and infections. These conditions can develop very quickly and can be very serious. If you do choose to wear contact lenses, bring both a backup pair of contacts as well as a pair of glasses. Be sure to bring enough contact lens solution and be diligent in your contact lens routine.

Every R.A.N.G.E.R.S. participant is required to bring a pair of 100% UVP sunglasses with a strap. Long days in the sun can be hard on the eyes, so it is very important that you bring sunglasses and wear them all day when off camp.

SKIN CARE

All of our trips pack out with a liberal supply of sunscreen and bug spray; however, participants who are particularly prone to sunburn or who react strongly to bug bites are encouraged to bring their own supply of skin protection. If you are prone to dry or cracked skin, you may bring a travel-sized bottle of unscented lotion. Any product you bring must be unscented, as scents will attract animals and bugs.

CAMERAS

If you want to take pictures, we recommend waterproof, disposable cameras. If you decide to bring a non-waterproof camera to camp, we strongly encourage you bring a waterproof case or dry bag to prevent damage. Our trips are rugged and rigorous, and there is always a risk of losing or damaging your camera. Cell phone cameras are prohibited.

MAIL & CAMPER COMMUNICATION

Any mail sent to R.A.N.G.E.R.S. participants will be brought out to Birches, including camper email and replies through CampInTouch.

TELEPHONE

R.A.N.G.E.R.S. campers will be living in platform tents immersing themselves in an outdoor setting over the course of their session. They will be unable to place or receive phone calls. Cell phones are not permitted on any of Camp Echo's programs.

The R.A.N.G.E.R.S. counselors will have walkie talkies and cell phones while living at Birches in case they need to get in touch with camp or call for help. If an emergency situation arises and a parent or guardian needs to get in touch with a camper, please contact the Camp Echo staff at (231) 924-7076.

SLEEPING BAGS

Temperature and weather are unpredictable, so it is critical that your sleeping bag will keep you warm and dry. The sleeping bag you bring on your trip should be warm, lightweight, and packable. The best, insulating sleeping bags are made from down or synthetic materials. Bring a sleeping bag that is designed for temperatures of 35°F or colder.

Your sleeping bag should pack down to 20 liters or less. We also encourage you to pack your sleeping bag in a waterproof stuff sack; if your sleeping bag ever gets wet, it will be fully protected in a waterproof sack, and you will not risk sleeping in a damp bag!

Take time to shop around for your sleeping bag. Outdoor retailers like REI are excellent resources and their staff will be happy to help you find the best bag for your trip. Also, be sure to “try on” your sleeping bag before you arrive for your trip. Fully zip yourself inside, lie down, and wiggle around as you assess for warmth and comfort. The bag should be long enough to fully cover the top of your head while leaving room for your feet at the bottom.

SLEEPING PADS

We can guarantee a sleeping pad to every camper for the off-camp trip. However, if you would like to bring your own sleeping pad, you are welcome to do so. Your sleeping pad provides a warm, protective layer of insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. We highly recommend inflatable sleeping pads. Reliable brands include Therm-a-Rest® and REI. Inflatable pads provide more comfort and keep you warmer on cold nights. You can also look for a closed-cell foam pad at least 3/8-inches thick. At a minimum, your shoulders and hips should fit on your sleeping pad, though many people opt for a length that fits the whole body. Your sleeping pad should roll up to a small enough size that it can be easily packed into a backpack or strapped to the outside. Most sleeping pads are waterproof or water resistant, so you need not worry about getting a waterproof stuff sack. However, a stuff sack can help keep your sleeping pad cleaner and protect it from damage, so bring one if you like.

FOOTWEAR

Proper footwear is essential for a safe and fun camp experience. Your program will be much more enjoyable if you break in the shoes you plan to wear prior to the start of your session. Please take the time to shop around for footwear. Try everything on before making any purchases. Take the following information along with you when you shop:

WATER SHOES

A pair of water shoes is essential to all of Echo’s paddling trips. Water shoes can also double as camp shoes (i.e. a comfortable pair of shoes to change into at the end of each day). An old pair of sneakers can work as your water shoes, but keep in mind that they will take longer to dry out each day. Your water shoes must be secure to your foot. The shoes must have a strap around your heel and over your foot. We recommend Chaco, KEEN or Teva®. Please do not bring Crocs™ for water shoes, as they provide little support and are more likely to slip off your feet. Do not bring flip-flops.

Your water shoes should be broken in before you arrive to camp. Wear them as much as you can before your session begins.

CAMP SHOES

We recommend bringing a pair of comfortable shoes to change into at the end of each day. Your camp shoes must strap to or slip on securely to your foot. Comfortable sneakers or a pair of Crocs™ make great camp shoes. Water shoes like Chaco, KEEN or Teva® also work well.

If you have any questions about R.A.N.G.E.R.S. or what gear you will need, please contact the Camp Echo office.

Phone: (847) 475-7400 ext. 259
Email: echoinfo@mcgawymca.org

WHAT TO BRING

R.A.N.G.E.R.S. at Birches



Camp Echo has partnered with Uncle Dan's (www.udans.com, 901 Church St, Evanston, IL). Uncle Dan's is offering a 10% discount on items that are not already on sale.

Do not pack medications (prescription or over-the-counter) in your luggage – you will need to check them in with staff at the buses.

Required Clothing

- 1 pair of water shoes
- 1 pair of camp shoes⁺
- 1 rain jacket with a hood
- 1 pair of rain pants
- 1 long underwear top (synthetic/wool; no cotton)
- 1 long underwear bottom (synthetic/wool; no cotton)
- 1 pair of warm long pants (fleece or wool)
- 2-3 pairs of wool socks (1 Pair for the trip)
- 5-7 pairs of shorts (2 quick-dry pairs for the trip)
- 8-10 t-shirts (2 quick-dry shirts for the trip)
- 1 fleece pullover or jacket
- Underwear for 2 weeks (2 pairs for the trip)
- 2 swimsuits
- 1 hat with a brim
- 1 warm winter hat

Required Gear

- 1 20 liter dry bag*
- 1 sleeping pad
- 1 sleeping bag (20 liters or smaller)
- 1 stuff sack for sleeping bag (waterproof preferred)

Other Required Items

- 1 toothbrush
- 1 tube of travel-sized toothpaste
- 1 tube of SPF lip balm
- Travel-sized toiletries (shampoo, soap, etc)
- 1 pair of sunglasses with a strap
- 1 flashlight or headlamp (headlamp preferred)
- 1 box of one-gallon re-sealable freezer bags
- 2 32-oz. hard plastic water bottles
- 1 plastic bowl
- 1 spoon
- 1 van bag (backpack or tote bag)

Optional Items

- 1 bottle of personal bug spray
- 1 bottle of personal sunscreen
- 1 2 liter 3 liter hydration pouch (also called a bladder)
- 1 mosquito head net
- 1 small camp towel
- 1 small camp pillow
- 1 camera (also recommended: waterproof case)
- Journal
- Book
- Playing cards
- Insulated mug with lid
- Extra batteries for flashlight or headlamp
- Camp suds (travel-sized and biodegradable)
- Lotion (travel-sized and unscented)
- Hairbrush or comb (travel-sized)

Do Not Bring

Electronic Screens or WiFi-enabled Products:

- Cell phones
- Game devices (i.e. Nintendo DS or PSP)
- MP3 players with a screen (i.e. iPod Touch, Classic, or Nano)
- Devices with Internet connectivity
- E-readers (i.e. iPad, Kindle, or Nook)

- Glass containers (aerosol cans discouraged but permitted)
- Guns, knives, weapons of any sort
- Bottled drinks or food (other than for bus to camp)
- Alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or intoxicants
- Money, valuable jewelry, or keepsakes (or pets!)
- Matches, lighters, firecrackers, sparklers, or equivalent

***These items WILL BE PROVIDED to every R.A.N.G.E.R.S. camper. If you already own these items or feel that you may need an extra supply, feel free to bring them.**

+ Camp shoes are required ONLY if your water shoes are sneakers. If your water shoes are sandals designed for outdoor recreation (like Chaco, KEEN, or Teva®) you need not bring a second pair of shoes, as these will dry quickly and provide comfort throughout the day.

The McGaw YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen clothing or items. Please label everything.