

Keeping clean at Philmont Multi-Use Wipes

This article will describe two different kinds of wipes -- each with multiple uses. The idea for the first kind of wipe arose from a discussion in the Backpacking Light discussion forum on multi-use gear. The topic was camp towels. Campers know of many uses for bandanas, and scouts are asked to bring three to Philmont. The suggestion was to use Handi-Wipes in place of a bandana. They are reusable, cheaper, more absorbent, and faster drying than cotton bandanas. After testing different varieties of Handi-Wipes, I have found that "Heavy-Wipes" brand of Handi-Wipes is the softest, toughest, fastest drying. I have sewn two together to form a pack towel, plus I carry a single one as a small bandana. The single one can be used to take a "sponge bath" out on the trail.

The second type of wipe is useful for keeping clean on the trail. This is unscented, moist, biodegradable wipes found in the Wal-Mart camping section. They come in a resealable package of 30 extra-large wipes. And claim to completely degrade in 21 days in the wild. There is the obvious use as toilet paper, and there are potential medical and cleaning uses. I have considered the use of this wipe to help keep sleeping bags clean. At the end of each day after dinner and before going to sleep use one wipe for all the following uses:

- Clean face
- Clean hands
- Clean under arms
- Clean feet
- Clean genitals
- Finally use this wipe as toilet paper
- Throw away

Put on sleep clothes and crawl into sleeping bag.