

Keeping cloths clean at Philmont Backpacking Washing Machine

How many change of clothes need to be carried at Philmont or any multi-day backpacking trip? One way to reduce the number of socks, underwear, shirts and shorts carried is to wash them on the trail. Here is a way to make a lightweight washing machine to carry on your next long backpacking trip. Get a 2 gallon zippered ziplock bag and label it "Wash" (so you don't accidentally store your food in the ziplock you wash your underwear in). Every couple days follow these steps:

1. Place socks and underwear (and/or shirt) into bag
2. Add water (cool or warm – not hot)
3. Add two drops of Campsuds
4. Massage bag for a few minutes
5. Pour water down sump
6. Refill water in bag - shake to rinse suds from cloths
7. Pour water down sump
8. Hang out cloths to dry (do not tie clothesline to live trees)

You could carry just one extra pair of clothes to wear while washing your other set of hiking clothes and letting them dry. Note to those thinking they can get by with only a single set of hiking clothes - it is dangerous not having a dry pair of clothes to put on in the case of hypothermia.