



## NORTHWEST YOUTH CORPS NSC PARTICIPANT – Notes and FAQs on gear

### Gear we can get you:

Having the right gear is essential for having a meaningful experience with us. Proper gear keeps us warm, dry, safe, and allows us to focus on the task at hand. We recognize that plenty of people don't have the kind of budget to get everything in a short period of time, and we don't want that to be a barrier. As a non-profit organization, we also don't have the budget to provide everything to our members.

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We try to mitigate this by being able to loan or sell some essential gear at wholesale price. We are able to loan out, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and duffel bags. We are able to sell you, at wholesale price as a paycheck deduction, work boots \$60-70, leather work gloves \$8, and wool socks \$7.50. Let us know before you arrive, and we can make sure we have your size in stock and set aside for you.

We encourage you not to bring anything of great value. This can be monetary or sentimental. We will be doing real work out in the woods. Gear will get worn, ripped, torn, wet, bleached, burned, lost, and moldy, coffee stained, ran over by a bus, smelly, and subjected to a world of dirt.

It is important that you are able to see gear from a utilitarian sense; it allows us to get things done. It is not so much a fashion statement or status symbol. A \$7 wool holiday sweater from goodwill may be a better choice than this year's \$100 Patagonia compression jacket. A \$10 military surplus sleeping pad may be better than an expensive inflatable one. You will be living out in the woods with a crew where wearing a dirty pair of pants will be socially acceptable. Thrift stores, army surplus, or the clearance rack are your friends when looking for gear.

### Test your gear:

If you have the time, take your gear out for an adventure. Break in your boots to avoid blisters. See if your sleeping bag and pad keep you warm and comfy at night. Can you comfortably squat and hike in those work pants? You will not be allowed to work without a pair of boots in good condition.

### Layering:

Bringing multiple layers is the best strategy for staying warm throughout the day. It will be cold when we wake up in the morning, then get warmer as the sun rises while we move around, and then slowly get colder in the evenings. Being able to add or take off a layer as you go will be better than one bulky coat that you have to either wear or truck around. Rain gear and long underwear can make great layers for warmth.

### Multipurpose items:

We always try to take a minimalist approach at NYC. Your workday water bottle can also serve as an evening hot water bottle. A sweatshirt can double as a pillow. An inside-out workshirt can double as a laundry bag. A digital watch can also be an alarm clock. If you keep this in mind when packing, you will have less to worry about when in the field.

**Food:** During day projects please bring enough food for lunch and two breaks each day. You also need to provide breakfast and dinner each day on spike (camping) projects and trainings. You will learn about meal planning and most likely participate in family style meals with your crew.

**Cotton:**

Some cotton gear is fine to wear, such as pants and underwear. It becomes a concern when anyone is wearing cotton as a means of staying warm. Cotton is cheap, breathable, and soft, which makes it so popular. Cotton, when wet, will pull heat away from your body. Cotton socks will not be able to keep your feet warm and dry, which can lead to super low morale and trench foot – both of which are major safety concerns. Beware of “wool blend” socks that are actually only around 10% wool.

***Mandatory, provided by you:***

**Work Gloves** — 2 pairs of Leather work gloves. Leather is the industry standard work glove for the type of projects you'll be completing here at NYC.

**Coat for Work** — A loose-fitting jacket or sweater, large enough to wear over other clothes. Wool or pile coat stays warm even if it gets damp.

**Sweatshirt or sweater** — Heavy, long sleeve top that can be worn under a coat for additional warmth.

**Pants** — 2 or 3 pairs of work pants (Levi's, Carhartt, and wool pants are good). They should be loose fitting, but not baggy. Any pants with holes or patches are unacceptable.

**Underwear** — Enough to last a nine day (8 night) camping project.

**Socks** — Minimum 3 pairs of lightweight socks, and three pairs of heavy socks. (Six pairs total) Wool or synthetic fibers works best. Do not bring heavy cotton socks!

**Shoes for Camp** — These can be lightweight shoes, with no open toes, or open heels. It must fully cover the entire foot. NO Keens, Chacos, Teva, or Five Finger Shoes or Crocs.

**Sleeping Bag** — You will need a sleeping bag that is warm, lightweight, and compact. Your bag must be made with synthetic fibers that will dry quickly. Cotton bags are not acceptable. A sleeping bag that can withstand temperatures down to 20 degrees is recommended. You may purchase a sleeping bag from the NYC.

**Water Bottle** — Bring at least one 32oz water bottle for using at work or at camp.

**Tent** — NYC has group tents available for use, but you may use a personal tent for added privacy.

**Flashlight & Batteries** — Or a headlamp for camp evenings.

**Food Container** — This container needs to be big enough to hold all of the food you will need for up to 9 days. Container should be strong enough to keep rodents and birds out. Cooler for cold foods will be provided.

**Optional items:**

Long Johns, Wool Socks and Hat –Look for polypropylene or another synthetic. Cotton is cheap, but doesn't work when wet.

Bandana, Hat or Buff®

Day Pack – small type packs are fine

Moleskin or Mole Foam — this will give you relief from foot blisters.

Small Pocket Knife – NYC policy is that NO knife is to have a blade longer than 4". NO Axe Blades or Hatchets allowed.

Camera

Waterproof case for important stuff

Acoustic instruments

Compass or compact binoculars

Sewing kit

Band-Aids & first aid kit

Cards, small games, books

**FREQUENTLY ASKED GEAR QUESTIONS:****Q. My boots are not entirely leather, will those work?**

A. Unfortunately, no. We will be swinging sharp tools, maybe running chainsaws, and moving heavy objects. All-leather boots also provide the best ankle support when hiking. If your boots are not entirely leather, we will get you some all-leather boots via payroll draw. Think of a pair of all-leather boots as an investment that many outdoor careers require you to provide.

**Q. Can I bring cigarettes and smoke while I'm out there?**

A. Sure. Times when you may smoke may vary, as we don't allow smoking on the project site or during communal activities. We also don't allow smoking in the event that IFPL (industrial fire precaution levels) make it unlawful. We will cover this at orientation.

**Q. Can I bring my phone?**

A. Of course, and bring some headphones if you want to fall asleep to music at night. Use it to take photos, so you can remember your adventure. You are an adult and we will not be confiscating your phone from you. You will be expected to keep it in your pocket during the workday, group activities, and lessons. Keep in mind that you may not have reception where you are and that electronics can get wet, lost, and crushed out in the field. Many of our members appreciate the idea of not being reachable by phone and choose to leave their phones in a secure locker at headquarters – or in the crew vehicle to be used on weekends or during long drives.

**Q. Why can't I walk around barefoot or wear sandals or open heel/toe shoes while out there?**

A. This is primarily a safety issue. We are constantly moving objects that can crush your feet, camping in areas with sharp rocks and sticks, and living in remote areas where a foot injury is extremely difficult to medevac. If you are concerned about athlete's foot, consider bringing extra socks and foot powder. Camp is also a workplace where you are expected to wear a shirt and shoes.

**Q. Marijuana is legal in Oregon and Washington, why can't I bring it?**

A. NYC maintains a substance-free working environment at all times. Agency-wise, we see this policy as the best way to keep our employees and partners safe. We also work on federally owned lands paid through federal grants. We also ask you to not wear clothing with references to drugs and alcohol, as this can be detrimental to our professional image.

**Q. Can I bring my sweatshirt with a Budweiser logo on it or my hat with a marijuana leaf on it?**

A. In order to promote a drug free environment we ask that you do not bring any items that promote drugs, alcohol or tobacco products. You will be asked to remove items such as duffel bags, day packs, coats or shirts that display these ads. Minimal storage is available and in most instances we will request these items be sent home.

**Q. I am looking to spend some gift-cards or money on quality gear, what would you suggest?**

A. Long underwear, headlamp, sleeping pad. These are things that will likely not get beaten up out here and can be used for anyone who has an outdoor lifestyle.

**Q. Can I bring a first-aid kit?**

A. We do provide a comprehensive first-aid kit and a trained leader who can use it. If you have any unique needs or would feel better off with your own kit, feel free to bring your own. Please try to keep it compact and intentional.

**Q. Can I bring hairspray, cologne, make-up, and other grooming products?**

A. Limited space and time to apply these items on a regular basis will be extremely limited. Besides, if it smells good to you it might smell good to rodents or other animals and we don't want these items stored in a tent.