AMERICAN SURVIVOR

Survival Information For The Prepared Citizen

September/October 2010 ***$2.50 PER ISSUE***

Published by: Live Free, USA , www.americansurvivor.org, e-mail: lfinow@aol.com, or write: Live Free, P.O. Box 3295, Munster, IN 46321

LIVE FREE

PREPAREDNESS
SELF-RELIANCE
RESPONSIBILITY

IN THIS ISSUE: Outdoor Survival Part #1, Urban Survival Tools, How to Clean a Possum, Turning Point, Survival Wisdom from 304 BC, Patriots book review.

Surviving Outdoor Emergencies

You may leave civilization or civilization may leave you. Either way you need to know how to survive in the outdoors with minimal equipment.

Introduction

It has been a long-time since we published any articles on out-door (wilderness) survival. Since there are so many books and magazines devoted to the subject, we focused on other aspects of survival and self-reliance such as urban survival, medical emergencies, disaster survival and survival equipment. The fact is that Live Free started out as a gun club and then an outdoor sports club years before becoming a survival and self-reliance organization. Of course many of the so-called wilderness survival techniques are applicable to other emergencies, especially if one is forced to evacuate into the open countryside. So this will be one of a series of articles related to outdoor survival. I am fortunate to have lots of great photos from past Live Free training and lots of still effective illustration from long past articles. I will start with Planning and Safety, and then progress through all of the basic skill of shelter building, fire craft, water acquisition and purification, navigation, traps and snares, and edible plants. This will serve as a review of the basics and add some unique ideas as well.

Planning and Preparation

Once you have left the comparative safety of your home and ventured away from established facilities you have entered an environment where even slight errors in judgment or a bit of bad luck can have serious or even fatal consequences. An injury or an illness that occurs hours or days away from help, a sudden change in the weather or a miscalculation of your skills or the hazards can turn an enjoyable trek into a disaster. Here are a few rules for planning any extended (over a few hours) outdoor trek:

1. ALWAYS! Let someone know where you are going, what rout you will be taking and when you will report back to them that you have safely returned. Only this will assure that you will be missed and found if something goes wrong.

2. Check the weather forecast before you go and dress for what the weather could be, not just how it is.

3. Always carry a survival kit. See list to come.

4. Be sure to leave enough time to return or to establish a safe camp before dark

5. If possible travel in groups of at least three. This leaves one person to stay with a disabled victim while one goes for help.

6. If it looks to risky cancel! Don't let your pride and ego push you into taking a chance. Many outdoor emergencies start this way.

7. Check your gear before you go a critical item left behind or not working when it's needed most can be a serious risk.

8. When engaging in a new kind of outdoor activity take someone who is experienced or practice in a safe populated environment first.

9. When venturing into a new environment such as mountains, deserts, swamps, etc. Take a local guide and/or use extreme caution.

10. Be aware of your physical limitations and skill levels. Rambo was just a movie.

11. Everyone should have basic first aid training.

12. If you take life critical medications, take several days supply with you.

Outdoor Safety

Once you are out in the "out-back" safety becomes an essential part of every act. You are exposed to fire, poisonous plants, venomous insects and snakes, sharp tool, treacherous surfaces and often, loaded firearms all without warning signs, or timely medical services. Safety becomes even more critical than at home.

1. Stay hydrated. In hot conditions, don't wait to be thirsty. Drink as much as you can as often as you can.

2. Watch where you are walking. A trip or fall that results in a sprain or fracture miles from help can spell disaster.

3. Be alert of poisonous snakes. Watch where you put your feet and hands. Carry a long stick to probing grass and brush ahead. Snakes like cooling shade and hiding under rocks and logs.

4. Use extra caution when using knives and axes. Never cut towards you.

5. Keep tents, loss clothing and fuel well away from campfires
6. Only build campfires in permitted areas clear of trees, brush and grass. Clear a good area of bare earth around the fire.
7. Keep firearms on “safe” and pointed in a safe direction
8. Be aware of eye hazards when traveling through thick trees and bush, especially at night or at dusk. Keep hands in front of you
9. Avoid crossing fast running streams or ice if possible. If necessary try to use a secured rope to provide a safety hold.
10. Wear appropriate safety equipment for the activity such as gloves, safety glasses, helmets, or floatation devices.

Survival Kits for Outdoor Emergencies

We have published lots of kit lists over the years. There are 72-hour survival kits, auto survival kits, home survival kits, and dozens of evacuation packs. This list is just for surviving short-term (a few days) outdoor emergencies. First of all are the “absolute minimum” items that any self-respecting “survivor” should have at all times. Real survival/self-reliance people would not go out to empty the trash without this stuff! These are basically “pocket items” that you would have even if you are going to be out for only out a few hours and a few yards from the road.

1. A pocketknife (at least!) a knife gives you a huge advantage in every survival situation. Think about all the survival techniques you see on TV, in the movies and in books. How many can be done without a knife. Not many.
2. Waterproof matches and/or a small magnesium fire starter. Flint and steel or a fire-bow will be no substitute for having these.
3. Water and/or a way to purify it. Purification tablets or a filter straw may work but you still need a container.
4. A miniature flashlight. Uses are obvious
5. A loud whistle for signaling for help
6. Some form of shelter from rain and wind. This can be a Space Blanket ™, Rescue Blanket ™ or rain poncho, or even some plastic bags depending on pocket or pack space.
7. A cell phone. I don’t like to depend on technology, but not having one when it could save your life or someone else’s would be foolish.

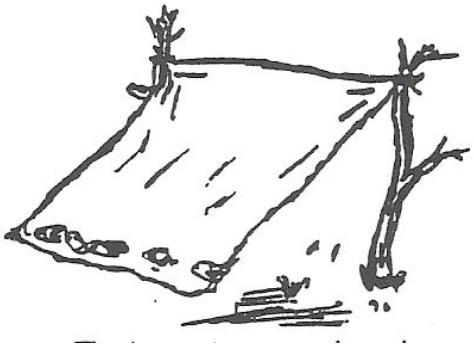
A more extensive kit would be packed in a small backpack or fanny pack and would include:

1. A full size hunting/survival knife
2. A full size Space Blanket ™
3. Survival cards or a miniature survival manual
4. A metal cup for purifying water, boiling water and cooking food
5. Energy bars and jerky
6. A compass (a GPS too if you must)
7. A multi-tool or Swiss Army ™ knife
8. Extra socks
9. A wool cap
10. A dust-mask

11. Snare wire
12. Metal signal mirror
13. Paper and pencil
14. Smoke and/or flairs
15. A candle
16. Safety pins
17. 20' – 50' of HD nylon cord
18. A small first aid kit
19. A small role of electrical tape

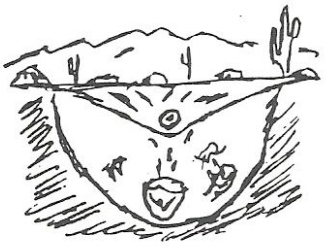
Two items that cost very little take up almost no room. And weigh very little are plastic bags and heavy-duty aluminum foil. You can add these items to pockets or kits and they can substitute for several other critical items. Heavy aluminum foil can be used to reflect fire heat. Signal for help (as a mirror) , be formed into a water container to gather and boil water and even cover a wound. Large plastic bags can be fashioned into a rain and wind protective suit, made into a small shelter, used to gather water and even make a floatation device. In other-words they can save your life.

Shelter made from cut plastic bag(s)



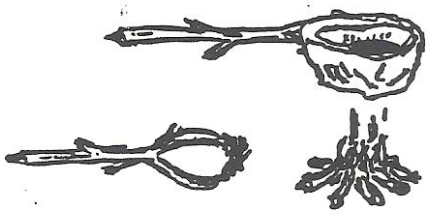
Large plastic bag used as rain and wind suit. Note a second bag can be tucked under the belt to create a water-proof skirt to keep legs dry

Plastic bag material used to make a water still

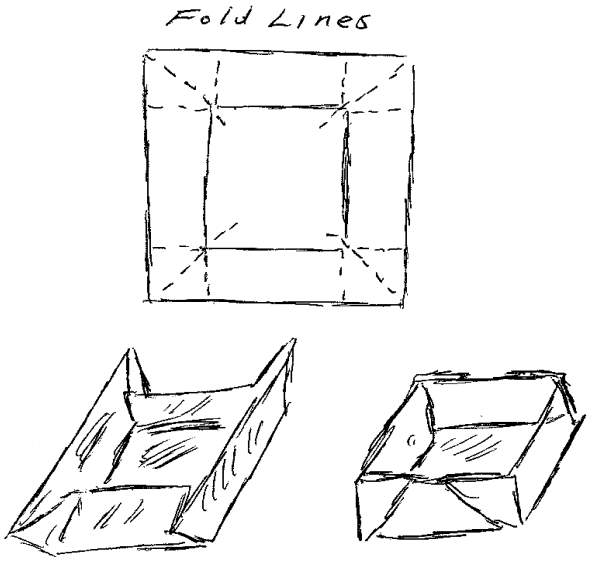


Plastic bag used as a floatation device

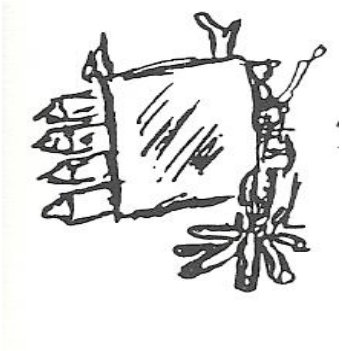
Heavy-duty foil formed over a forked and bent branch to boil water



Heavy-duty foil folded to form a container. This also works with some tree barks.



Heavy-duty foil as a fire reflector



TURNIING POINT!

Ordinarily we keep Live Free USA news for Live Free Report and reserve the space in this publication for 100% survival and self-reliance information. However, it is critically important to remind members that we are approaching a turning point in the progress of Live Free USA.. At our next Annual meeting in March of 2011 there will be no pre-slated officers. Every nomination must be filed by the nominee or others by the end of January 2011. So, start thinking about who to nominate for what office. No nominations - no officers – no officers – organization. Get the picture. By March our growing membership will start to overwhelm the very few volunteers that now maintain the mailing list and prepare the hard-copy mailings. We have been growing and making great progress, but this could be lost if we fail to fill our offices with active officers and the volunteers they need to keep things going. We have faith that you will not let that happen.

Urban Survival Tools

Surviving in an urban or suburban environment requires some tools that are not required or are less critical in the woods. There are a lot more blind corners, dark enclosed spaces, and solid obstacles in towns than in the open

forests. We will not be discussing universal survival needs such as first aid kits, food, water, effective camouflage or other field kit items. I also will not cover weapons in detail. Obviously high capacity handguns, carbines and short-barreled shotguns are better suited to urban situations than long-barreled weapons. A good quality "survival knife" is essential in all environments. The following items are of special value when moving through a built-up area.

Stainless-steel mirror: As you move through or around buildings you will need to peek around corners, over walls and through windows and doorways. A small stainless steel camping mirror on a short handle could truly save your life.

Variable intensity flashlight: The new "tactical" flashlights that can be set to give the minimum light when you don't want to be noticed and a very bright light and/or strobe to blind potential attackers as you move at night or through darkened buildings is essential. These are expensive, costing from $50.00 to $200.00, but well worth the cost for all kinds of emergencies.

Axe/Hatchet: You will probably need to cut through locked buildings to avoid danger or find shelter. This will necessitate breaking windows, gates, fences and doors. You may also be forced to escape through a wall or locked door.

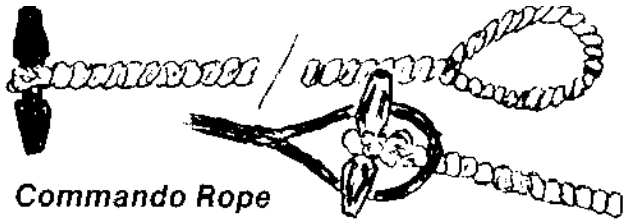
Pry bar: You may need to pry open a door, move debris or break a lock. This is useful in escape, rescue and even self-defense

Wire cutters: While you probably are not going to carry a pair of heavy bolt cutters around, you should have something capable of cutting fence wire and barbed wire that you encounter.

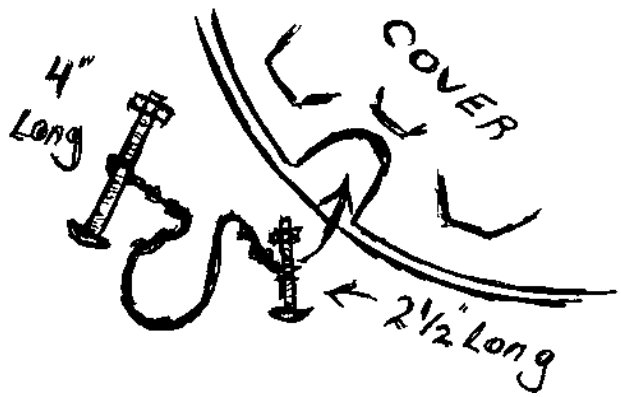
Smoke bombs: Smoke can be used to distract potential attackers or to cover your movement across an open street. It can also be used to smoke out hidden trouble. Remember that most smoke bombs will set fire to buildings and furniture so use them with discretion. The larger smoke bombs made for paintball games work well.

Heavy gloves: Having leather faced work gloves will protect you from broken glass, jagged metal and nails. You cannot afford hand injuries and possible infections under these conditions

Rope: Rope can be used to climb or descend walls and obstacles. You may need it to pull open doors or drag away obstructions. Consider making up a "commando rope" like the ones used by the British in World War Two. They use a 6-foot long heavy rope with a large loop tied on one end and a wooden handle on the other. These could be linked together to make a ladder or used in many other ways.



Manhole cover lifter: Street manholes access underground electrical valets, sewers and storm drains. These can serve as emergency blast shelters or escape routes. While these covers are very heavy they can be pulled open using a device made from two bolts tied together with a two-foot length of strong cable or wire. See illustration on nexy page.



Most of these devices can be used for escape, defense and rescue activities depending on the circumstances.

How to Clean a Possum

By Ken

A good size possum can reach 9 pounds provide a family decent meal Many people prefer to put an opossum in a safely wired pen to feed them for two or three weeks before eating them “to clean them out”. They will eat about anything but old or vegetables or fruit is good along with lots of clean water. If it is young, say 1 1/2 to 3 lbs, it can be cooked a lot like rabbit. If it is larger, soak it over night in salt water and make it into a stew or some dish that allows you to cook it until it gets tender.

Killing & Skinning

Possum are much harder to kill than rabbits which are a snap to kill with a sharp blow behind the neck with a stick. Once dead, remove head, tail, and feet at the knees. Then skin just like you did the rabbits. The skin will be a little harder to take off than rabbit skin, but it will not tear and will come off in one piece. Then you clean it and cut it up just like you did the rabbit.

Cleaning

Possums have musk glands which must be removed when it is cleaned. The fat is not strong flavored or smelly but most cooks remove all the body fat to make the meat less greasy. The meat is light in color, fine-grained and tender with generous fat deposits between the bands of muscle. It is relatively easy to separate, especially if it is chilling first to harden the fat which makes it easier to pull off. Opossum meat has had as much of the fat as possible removed, soak in salt water (3 tablespoons salt to gallon of water), soak overnight before cooking. Some people like to marinate it before cooking for 4 to 6 hours (in 1/2 teaspoon ground sage, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon salt, and 1/4 cup vinegar to 2 cups water or cider to cover); but this is not really necessary.

Cooking

Place opossum in deep kettle, add enough water to cover well and cook well without sticking or scorching. Add a medium onion peeled and cut in half and a medium apple (not peeled and cut in half), salt to season according to size of opossum. (Add boiling water if it cooks out before tender). Cook on medium heat for a long as it takes to have meat tender when tested with fork stuck into it. When tender, remove onion and apple.

Carefully place opossum in large baking pan and remove all layers of fat that remain if you can. Then use 1 or 2 sticks of butter, chipped over or rubbed on opossum. (This is not necessary, but could be used to season it). Pour some of the broth from "par boiling" (first cooking) around opossum in baking pan. Use lots of black pepper, sprinkle opossum lightly with flour to help brown, take spoon and put some broth lightly over flour (this is "basting").

Place in 350 degree F. oven and brown light brown or as brown as you wish -

watch and continue to sprinkle top of opossum with broth (or butter). When done and ready to eat, the opossum should be very real brown. To keep it from getting hard, brown it in oven to light brown on top, then with some broth in pan, put it on top of stove, cover and baste often and let it cook on low heat so it won't scorch on bottom. This is similar to cooking duck. Removing that fat from opossums, then cooking until tender is the key and the use of a pressure cooker or crock pot maybe useful.

(Army Cooking, l9l0 Style, from an old U.S. Army manual)

Clean and skin the 'possums, allowing them to hang in the open air for several hours, then place in refrigerator for at least 24 hours before cooking. Stuff with an ordinary bread stuffing (sage preferred). Set in a deep pan so that no part will project above the top; season well with pepper and salt, and pour about one inch of beef stock or canned beef bouillon into the pan. Fill the vacant spaces with peeled sweet potatoes, and sprinkle a little flour over the whole; cover with a crust, the same for a pot pie, omitting the fat, as the crust will be removed after baking and will not be served. Allow to bake slowly for about three hours. Remove crust and serve hot. The crust will absorb most of the fat from the opossum.

{note: under survival conditions, the fat laden crust would be eaten for the much needed calories. Ken)

Patriots

A book Review

Everyone reads, but very few write. I get dozens of e-mails every week with links to websites that are recommended. Many of them look interesting, but I only have time to look at a few and no time to write up reviews. The same goes for books. Members have been talking about the book Patriots by James Wesley Rawles for month, but not one review has been written. In fact, I can think of about eight books I would love to see reviewed in our newsletter. I am just too overloaded with Live Free projects to do many reviews. So, if you think a website is good or a book is worth reading, type up a paragraph and e-mail it to me at lfinow@aol.com. **Just telling me about a book or sending me the link to a website is zero help.**

Patriots is a hybrid book. By that I mean that it is a story and a how-to manual at the same time. On the story side we have a group of people from the Chicago area that establish a fully self-sufficient survival retreat in the northwest. On the manual side we have technical information throughout the book on weapons, food, radios, tactics, alternative energy, water, advanced medical procedures and just about everything related to survival. These include very specific details and even sources of equipment. The major part of the story deals with how the various members of the group manage to get to the retreat through a lawless and chaotic America. Then there are encounters with would be bandits and desperate refugees. We take a short side trip to see how two brothers are able to dodge the law, establish new identities and survive off the grid. Back up at the retreat, more members show up and some selected refuges are allowed to join the group. A few years go by as they

use up their supplies and move towards self-sufficiency. Contact is established with another local survival group and a mutual aid agreement is established. The inevitable outlaw biker gang takes over a nearby town and is wiped out by the well armed survival groups. Of course we get to the part where the UN backed, self-proclaimed, and unconstitutional government tries to take over the area. The survival groups morph into militias and unite in an effective and ruthless gorilla campaign that eventually drives the dictators out of the northwest and then out of the whole country. There are detailed descriptions of various raids and battles that include tactics, and equipment. A truly constitutional and restricted government is established and everyone lives happily ever after.

Patriots is both readable and informative. I would like to think that it would convert a non-survivalist, but the occasional preaching and the revolutionary ending might frighten the less resolved. While the focus is on the well-financed and well-established retreat that few can afford, we also get a look at a variety of tactics and equipment that could work for the average smart survivor. The end game of the story is a libertarian dream, but there are a lot of other ways that a post collapse world could go. For one thing, the bad guys could win. The technology for counter insurgency warfare is much better than that faced by the hero's of the book. The militias could be divided along religious and ideological lines and turn America into a landscape of warring territories run by warlords. There are lots of very smart people out there who would be ready to lead and mislead for their own agendas if a collapse occurs. Enjoy the read. Learn from the text. Prepare for the kind of situations described in the book. Hope we can all survive and stay free without going this far.

Patriots, Ulysses Press, 400 ages, paperback, $14.95 at Borders Books.

SURVIVAL WISDOM

"Wherefore the citizens ought to practice war [survival] not in time of war, but rather while they are at peace. And every city which has any sense should take the field at least one day in every month having no regard for winter cold or summer heat and they should go out in masses, including their wives and their children … and they should have tournaments [training] imitating in as lively [real] a manner as they can, real battles"

Plato, 304 BC

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