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Lecture - 79

SELECTION AND LAYOUT OF CAMP SITE AND CAMPING LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The history of recreational camping is often traced back to a British travelling tailor, Thomas Hiram Holding, but it was actually first popularized in the UK on the river Thames. By the 1880's large numbers of visitors took part in the leisure time activity, which was also considered as the late Victorian craze for pleasure boating. Thomas Hiram Holding was considered as the father of modern camping in the UK. The form of camping promoted by Thomas was something that he has experienced in the wild from his youth, when he had spent much time with his parents travelling across the American prairies. He later embarked on a cycling as camping tour with some his friends across Ireland, he wrote a book on his Ireland experience *Cycle and Camp in Connemara* which led to the formation of the first camping group in 1901, the Association of Cycle Campers, later known as the Camping and Caravanning Club. The Association later merged into the National Camping Club. The International Federation of camping Clubs was founded in 1932 with national clubs from all over the world affiliating to it.

Camping is an outdoor recreational activity, which involves an individual to stay outdoors and away from the comforts of his home in a shelter such as a tent, a caravan or a motorhome. The general idea is to take a leave from the developed areas to spend time outdoors in more natural ones in pursuit of activities providing the thrill and enjoyment. For an activity to be considered to be camping it is an essential characteristic that a minimum of one night is spent outdoors, and this feature distinguishes it from activities such as day-tripping, picnics and all other similarly short-term recreational activities.

Camping and leadership go hand in hand, while camping provides individuals with the skill sets required to survive in tough situations, leadership is essential that the campers don't lose hope and are directed to work in one direction so as to increase the probability of survival in the wilderness.

SELECTION OF CAMP SITE

Selection of the camp site requires intelligent planning. To break the monotony of daily life, to get the experience with nature and to learn something by doing, camp site should be far from the city. However the site should be linked with the road along with electricity, telephone facilities. There should be enough places to pitch tents, make provisions for bathrooms and lavatories, water facilities, wilderness, places for hiking, picnic, cook-out etc. The camp site should be away from any kind of hazards that may lead to a mishap. The camp site should be fixed after deliberate consideration of a lot of areas as camping is a highly organized education system promoting recreation.

Choosing the right campsite can make or break the camper's experience. A good site allows one to practice the principles of Leave No Trace camping. Before looking at the specifics of what makes a good site, one must make sure that the following things apply first:

- Is the area being considered for a camp, one of those in which camping is restricted or prohibited?
- The local authorities will have the details of local sites, so there should be communication with them; this will be very helpful for the organizer while deciding the location for the camp site.
- A preliminary visit to the site is the best way of making sure that you have enough information about the site. The best time to visit is whilst (or just after) it has been raining.

Site Selection Factors: The following things are a must when it comes to the selection of a camp site:

- Safe drinking water must be available nearby, as water is the basic necessity and it would be extremely difficult if there is limited or no supply of safe drinking water let alone for other daily uses.
- Well-drained land unlikely to flood in wet weather, preferably the location should have higher ground than the surrounding areas.
- Sufficient fairly level ground to accommodate the camp, at the end of the day all the campers will return to their camps to rest and get rejuvenated for the activities that are planned for the following day. There should be space to accommodate all the campers, plus the instructors', coordinators and the staff members as well.
- A sunny site is preferable, and a site which is not too exposed.
- Access to supplies for camp, no one can predict what would be required at what point of time during the entire duration of the stay in the camp area, hence as mentioned earlier it should be away from the city but still have access to the city and all the facilities.
- Adequate fuel supplies.
- Boulder-free sites are much better for sleeping.
- Activities.

CAMPSITE LAYOUT

Every site is unique, so it is impossible to say how an ideal site should be set out, but here are some basic components that need to be considered. Few of the most important factors that are found common in most of the camps are discussed hereunder:

1. Sleeping tent

Find a flat piece of land not too near any overhanging trees, especially ones which drop sticky resin which could ruin the tent. Make sure it is an area which would not become a stream or flood if it rains heavily and that the ground is solid enough to hold the pegs securely. Back your tent into the prevailing wind, making sure that the wind is not blowing into the doors.

2. Fire and chopping area

These needs to be reasonably close together, perhaps with the wood pile in between the two, but far enough away that the flames could never blow across the wood pile. Remember to keep a safe distance (approx. 3m) all around the chopping block.

3. Dining shelter & store tent

Keep them close to the cooking area, but not so close that there are any risks of setting light to the canvas. Try to make sure that the smoke from the fire will not blow towards the dining shelter. If possible, make sure that water containers are used in an area where any split water can easily drain away.

4. Toilets

Make sure that they are down-wind from the main camping area. Provide some sort of lamp and ensure that there is water, soap and a towel so people can wash their hands.

Campsite Guidelines

Certain guidelines should be followed so as to make the experience a memorable one plus it is essential that it is the same for all the other campers who will be visiting in future too. It is of utmost importance that nature remains intact and it is our responsibility that the future generations too get to enjoy these benefits that environment provides, hence that following guidelines need consideration for the well-being of the campers as well as for the camp site:

- **Environmental Impact:** Use established campsites whenever you can. Due to the commercialization of outdoor camping, there are readymade campsites available at locations that provide a rich experience with all resources and activities depending on the requirement of the camp type and the age and level of campers involved. In India there are such facilities in a large number of locations from the north to the south of the country.
- **Safety:** Safety of the camp site as well as the campers is of foremost importance. One always wants to remember a casualty free camp rather than the one that involved any kind of mishap, it creates panic among the parents as well and they may not have the

confidence upon the organizers for future camps and activities. The safety of the nature is also essential, it is best to avoid dead trees and limbs (widow makers), and always good to be weather wise.

- **Size:** Comply with area regulations on group use. Choose a site that is large enough to accommodate the group.
- **Water:** Be sure there is a safe and sufficient supply of water.
- **Terrain:** Consider drainage, natural cover and sunlight before setting up camp.
- **Stoves & Campfires:** Use lightweight stoves whenever possible. Use existing policy if you must use a fire.
- **Privacy:** Respect privacy and solitude of others.
- **Permission:** When camping on private property, get permission in advance. Get permission from land managers for using public lands. Secure proper permits.

CAMPING LEADERSHIP

Progress in any field depends on the quality of professional leadership available. When any leader is striving to promote his profession, he is promoting himself directly or indirectly. Directly he is gaining stature and social recognition, and indirectly he gets the gains of profession through work. Leadership is not a quality which can be bestowed upon any person. One does not become a leader by accident. The responsibility of leadership comes on the shoulders of one who has his background of experience and training coupled with vital personal qualities, because these all add to the professional competence of the leader. One thing is certain that there are certain qualities which distinguish a leader from other individuals around. In general, the qualities that make the individual a great leader are confidence, diligence, courage, will power and determination, foresightedness, mental alertness, logical reasoning and decision making, sense of morality and a strict code of ethics, disciplinarian and dynamism. It implies that to be an excellent camp leader one should possess the above mentioned qualities. Though the qualities of a leader are innumerable yet the word "LEADERSHIP" itself contains the qualities of a great successful leader.

The responsibilities of the camp leaders can be summarized in accordance with the nature of their work. The responsibilities are summed up hereunder:

1. **Camp Director:** Head of the camp coordinators camp activities through the camp council.
2. **Deputy Director:** Allots responsibilities, looks after the needs of the campers and the staff. Some of the other responsibilities may include supervision, orientation and training, records and report maintenance, council meetings and administration.
3. **Program director:** Responsible for the camp program – plans and coordinates the activities, evaluates the program and responsible for the equipments.
4. **Health Director:** Responsible for sanitation and prevention of injuries and diseases, health inspection and first aid.
5. **Mess Director:** Works with the mess committee and is responsible for the supply and purchase of food stuff, deciding the menu and food service.
6. **Housing Director:** Works with the housing committee to arrange accommodation and other facilities for the campers and the leaders in some cases the grouping of the campers as well.

7. **Unit Director:** Works with the group leaders and counselors. He is responsible for unit activities for example attendance of unit for activities, setting up devotion, housing facilities, discipline in unit, individual and group problems, supervision of group projects. It may be summed up that the unit director helps to meet the needs of the campers.
8. **Counselors:** Works with the unit director and group leader, looking after the needs, health and activities, equipments, areas, report sickness, etc.
9. **Specialist:** Works with the program director. Mainly issues instructions in the particular activity that helps the camper in selecting and carrying out projects.

CONCLUSION

Camp and camping leadership are essential components of outdoor recreation. The need for outdoor recreation has become very important to break the monotony of our daily life in an effective manner. A person is equipped with life skills within limited resources so that he is refreshed and is able to carry out his office as well as home tasks more effectively. The camp leaders work tirelessly so as to make this experience the best for the campers. They plan each and every minute of the stay of the campers in such a way that the camper is engaged and learns in a positive and safe environment and go back completely satisfied with their experience.