

SCOUTING IRELAND ADVENTURE SKILLS: BACKWOODS SESSION GUIDE



**Backwoods Adventure
Skills Stage 3
5x session plans**



Introduction

The sessions guides created by the SFNI Programme Lead have been designed to help support delivery of SI Adventure Skills Stages 1-4 in Backwoods, with each session guide pitched at a particular Section or level.

This guide contains a total of **five sessions** and provide activities that are intended to encourage and promote developing the necessary skills and knowledge linked to completion of each of the skills levels.

Sessions have been designed to be delivered within the 'den'; **four** of these can be completed within an indoor setting with an option for outdoor learning, if available. The **fifth** session requires to be delivered outdoors as part of a Backwoods Adventure to enable youth members to apply the skills and knowledge necessary to complete the skills level.

Completing the Backwoods Adventure Skill session

Before beginning delivery of the Backwoods Adventure Skill session, **it is important to do a few things:**

Firstly, read through the session plans and become comfortable with the activities described and the resources required. You may find that through experience that a different approach or activity may be better suited to deliver this training, so please adapt the session for what works best for you and the group.

Secondly, take time to plan delivery with the group, utilize **Plan, Do, Review**, ensuring the group have been engaged and explored the Backwoods Adventure Skill and chosen to take part and shape their experiences across this learning journey.

Finally, ensure that you as the facilitator are competent, comfortable, and capable of delivering this training. Ensure that any required **Risk Assessments** have been complete regarding these activities.

The table below highlights the practical skills that Scouters will be required to demonstrate and the knowledge that a Scouter is required to be confident and able to deliver.

	Practical Skills- Scouters should be able to demonstrate:	Knowledge- Scouters need to know:
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to prepare and teach others about 'survival kits'. How to use tools safely. How to make a 'feather stick' / How to carve a fishhook How to erect shelters. How to set and light a fire How to complete camp cooking tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of weather and environmental impacts on activities. Fire safety. How to carve using knives safely. The main principles of 'Leave No Trace'. How to raise help in an emergency scenario.

Using the Session Plans

The session plan has been developed to be delivered at a particular **Section/ ability level**.

Each session usually begins with an energizer activity, loosely linked to the learning activity, and contains an introduction, learning activity(s) and a close/ reflection element.

In the first column you will also find the **Adventure Skill objective** that the activity relates to.

A **description** of an activity to complete, related to the title and prompts on how to undertake the activity are provided.

A **suggested timing** has been included, for guidance only. It may be beneficial to slow down and stretch out activities dependent on your group.

A **resource column** includes a list of equipment and/ or external links to additional resources to assist in the delivery of the activity.

The last element of the session plan is a **review activity** which should be complete as part of quality assurance and recording.

Backwoods Adventure Skills Level 1		Session 2	
Section/ Skill level	Beaver/ Beginner	Location	Den
Activity		Session length	Time
		Resources	
Energizer – Competitive game	Dress like an onion This activity will be used to show the group how they should dress when preparing to go outdoors to complete a Backwoods Adventure.	50 minutes	Suggested time: 15 minutes
<i>I know what kinds of clothes to wear when going out into nature.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split the group into two teams and have the clothes piled up and ready for the teams to use. The teams must dress a member of the team up using all the clothes, (wearing them on top of the clothes they already are wearing), once dressed, the team member must complete 5 star jumps and then their team members begin to remove the clothes or unpeel them like an onion, and team members place these into the backpack- minus the boots!!! 	Large playing space	2x Lg pairs of shorts/ 2x Lg t-shirts/ 2x Lg pair of boots/ 2x Lg long sleeved t-shirt/ 2x Lg hoodie/ 2x Lg rain jacket/ 2x Lg pair of hiking socks/ 2x Lg wooly hats/ 2x Lg Backpacks.
Activity- Show & Tell/ Discussion	Kit, Kit, Kit Revisit the fact that Backwoods living is all about living harmoniously and as minimally as possible with nature. With that said, beavers we are things that we cannot replicate in the wild, or items we should bring to keep ourselves safe. This activity will explore kits and resources we should always carry with us.		Suggested time: 15 minutes
<i>I know what a basic survival kit should contain.</i>	Have the kits as described below ready, showing them to the group and discussing each of the items: Survival Kit (Youth Members) - Mylar (foil) blanket/ Whistle/ Torch/ Hand Sanitizer/ Glucose Sweets & Snack/ Water & Purification tablets/ Paracord Fire Kit (Scouters) - Flint/ Steel/ Homemade firelighter/ Fire Blanket/ Saw Shelter Kit (Scouters) - Emergency shelter/ tarp/ rope/ hammock/ carabiners Group First Aid Kit (Scouters) - As standard		Different kit items as listed. Backwoods Adventure skills guide SFNI Backwoods SI Resources
Activity-	Boo Boo Kits Having finished the previous discussion looking at Group First Aid Kits, next introduce 'Boo Boo Kits- personal first aid kits for junior members.		Suggested time: 15 minutes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, have the following available so that the group can make their own Boo Boo Kits: 6x plasters- various sizes/ antiseptic wipes/ 2x bandages/ safety pin/ lip balm plastic sandwich-bag/ sticky labels/ marker Make a kit up with each member of the group and place their name on the label. 	Resources to make Boo Boo Kit as described (+ additional)	Labels/ Marker SFNI Backwoods SI Resources
Review	Reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.		Suggested time: 5 minutes



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 3			Session 1 Introduction/ Being Prepared	
Section/ Skill level	Cub/Scout/ Novice	Location	Den/ outside space	
		Session length	60 minutes	
	Activity		Time	Resources
Energizer – Memory quiz	Sun, Rain, Thunder & Gales A game to get the group moving and begin to think about types of weather that may occur across a Backwoods Adventure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Den or across an outside space set four points that represent Sun, Rain, Thunder & Gales. Gather the group in the center of the space and tell them you will call out one of the weather conditions, once they hear this, they must get to the point that represents the weather type and perform an action: Sun- fan themselves / Rain- arms over their head / Thunder- hands over ears / Gales- arms wrapped around themselves. The last person to get to the point and complete the action is out. Call out the weather types randomly, getting faster and faster until one person remains. 		Suggested time: 10 minutes	Large playing space
Introduction activity- Discussion	This activity should be used to reflect on what is meant by Backwoods Living, reference the skills developed at Stage 1 & 2 and explore the skills that will be learned at Stage 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit what is meant by the term Backwoods and Backwoods living, referencing the activities and experiences that should have been delivered as part of Stage 1 & 2 learning- having some props or associated Backwoods equipment may be beneficial for helping jog memories. Next, explore the skills that will be learned across Stage 3 and ask the group to think about them and give ideas as to how to go about learning these skills. 		Suggested time: 5 minutes	Backwoods Adventure skills guide
Activity- Discussion/ Show & Tell <i>I know how different weather conditions can affect a backwoods activity.</i>	Weather By stage 3, group members should have had a range of outdoor adventures and experiences. Ask them to think about some of these and discuss with you what the weather was like and what it is they took with them to prepare themselves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the group to tell you what types of weather they may expect on an outdoor adventure. Next using flip chart and markers complete a table with the group that demonstrates what clothing we should bring and in what weather conditions they would be used – ask the group to explain how these weather conditions may affect them individually or impact the Backwoods camp. Finally, have a backpack pre-prepared and discuss the gear/ kit that should be brought to prepare for a Backwoods Adventure- extra wet gear/ socks/ jumper etc. 		Suggested time: 15 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Flip chart/ Markers Backpack ready for a Backwoods Adventure- extra clothes, water, kit etc.
Activity- Discussion/ Craft/ Art <i>I can prepare my own survival kit.</i> <i>I can teach another Scout about preparing a survival kit.</i>	Survival Kits- Poster This activity will explore further what kit is required to be brought on a Backwoods Adventure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the group to think about some of the items that have been brought by them on previous adventures and to name what activities they have taken part in. Next explain that items within a survival kit should have multiple uses: For example, a 'Mylar (foil) blanket can be used as a mirror to summon help/ carrying the kit in a plastic Tupperware carton can double as a cup for water or food storage / electrical tape can act as a plaster / a bin bag can act as Bivvy bag etc. Split the group into smaller groups and ask each to design a poster that demonstrates what should be included in a survival kit and to list the other uses each item has. To complete the activity, have items available for each group to make their own survival kit and then ask them to go home and put together their own survival kit and bring it for inspection. 		Suggested time: 25 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Survival kit (multiple items) Paper/ Card/ Pens/ Pencils/ Markers etc.
Review	Reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.		Suggested time: 5 minutes	



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 3			Session 2 Knives & Crafting	
Section/ Skill level	Cub/Scout/ Novice	Location	Den/ outside space	
		Session length	70 minutes	
Activity			Time	Resources
Introduction activity- Discussion	<p>There is no energizer for this session as there is a lot of ground to cover and both you and the group will need to pay full attention to delivery.</p> <p>This session will further knowledge around safe and proper use of knives and how they support Backwoods activities.</p> <p>To prepare for the session ask each group member to bring in a basic pen/ pocketknife. Have 'soft wood' branches available along with vegetable peelers.</p>		Suggested time: 5 minutes	Backwoods Adventure skills guide
Activity- Show & Tell/ Discussion <i>I can use camp tools safely on camp.</i>	<p>Pocket Knives</p> <p>This activity is to build confidence in using knives and teach respect, caution, and safe practices- it will also demonstrate how a pocketknife is a useful addition to a survival kit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Blood Circle' - Bring the group into a semi-circle holding their pocketknife sheathed. Ask the group to place their arm (holding the sheathed knife) outstretched in front of them and to step backwards until there is enough space for an individual to make a 360 degree turn without touching anyone- this is the 'Blood circle' and when using any bladed object this is the space we must maintain. • Next talk through knife safety-for example: It is a tool, not a toy/ you never throw a knife, you never pass a knife to someone blade first/ the knife must be clean etc. • Explore with the group their knives, having one available for you to demonstrate with and identify the main blade and explore the other attachments and their uses. 		Suggested time: 10 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Pocketknife safety guide Pocket knife(s) First Aid kit Correct Adult Ratio-supervision of all
Activity- Practical <i>I can light a fire using natural tinder, fuzz sticks and matches.</i>	<p>Revisiting 'feather sticks'</p> <p>The activity will revisit carving skills and explore the correct methods to use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the group seated in the correct position, give each member a vegetable peeler/ soft wood branch and ask them if they <i>'remember how they made a 'feather stick' at Stage 2?'</i> • Demonstrate how to use the peeler to carve the branch to create a feather stick, ensuring you demonstrate how to carve away from the body and the correct position to hold, ensuring that the blade stays away from the inner thigh(s). • Once the group has the hang of using the vegetable peeler(s), move onto using the pocketknife to complete the feather stick. Please ensure that the blades are suitable and sharp enough, demonstrating this to the group and that you have selected the correct wood – Willow, Pine, Birch, Cedar to make carving as easy as possible. 		Suggested time: 25 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Vegetable Peelers Soft wood branches/ sticks.
Activity- Practical <i>I can make a simple fishhook.</i>	<p>Carving Fishhooks</p> <p>A requirement of stage 3 Backwoods skills is to carve a simple fishhook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwoods such as Oak or Maple are best, but as the group our novice, a soft wood that has a 'V fork' at one end may suffice for ease of carving. • Demonstrate to the group the correct technique to strip the bark away from the 'V' of the branch. Explain that the smaller side of the 'V' will be the hook and the larger part be the <i>'main trunk'</i> of the hook. • Strip and <i>'whittle'</i> the smaller portion into the shape of the point and then make 'notches' in the end of the larger trunk to enable a line to be <i>'tied to it'</i>. • Identify how <i>'Willow'</i> and sisal can be used to make a rod and line. • Remember to teach safe holds to use when carving/ always carve away from the body and be mindful of position. 		Suggested time: 25 minutes	As described. SFNI Backwoods SI Resources How to carve a fishhook with a penknife
Review	Reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.		Suggested time: 5 minutes	



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 3			Session 3 Fire & Cooking	
Section/ Skill level	Cub/Scout/ Novice	Location	Outside space	
		Session length	75 minutes	
	Activity		Time	Resources
Introduction activity- Discussion	<p>There is no energizer for this session as there is a lot of ground to cover and both you and the group will need to pay full attention to delivery.</p> <p>This session will involve lighting fires and as such you should reflect on skills and learning developed across Stages 1&2 and introduce the learning and requirements at Stage 3.</p> <p>To prepare, have tinder, kindling and fuel available along with matches.</p>		Suggested time: 5 minutes	Backwoods Adventure skills guide
Activity- Practical- knife skills <i>I can light a fire using natural tinder, fuzz sticks and matches.</i> <i>I can use hand tools correctly.</i>	<p>The ‘One match’ challenge- ‘Feather Sticks’</p> <p>This activity provides the opportunity for the group to light a fire using only natural materials and a single match. It will also reaffirm learning re knife skills and fire safety.</p> <p>Explain to the group that the challenge is to light a fire using only natural materials that are found in a Backwoods/ Woodland area- only one match will be provided, and a firelighter cannot be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first part of the challenge is to make a ‘feather stick’ – revisit knife safety and the ‘blood circle’ and provide each member a suitable piece of wood. Encourage the group to use their pocketknife and ensure you support and monitor them across this activity. 		Suggested time: 20 minutes	First Aid kit Pocket knives Soft wood branches
Activity- Practical- knife skills <i>I can light a fire using natural tinder, fuzz sticks and matches.</i>	<p>The ‘One match’ challenge- ‘Fire building’</p> <p>This part of the challenge will affirm fire safety and fire building techniques already instilled across stage 1&2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next part of the challenge is to set a fire and light it with one match only. Begin by asking the group to tell you how they should act when around a fire, what methods are available to them to extinguish a fire and to identify where the best place to set and light the fire will be – <i>a flat/ clear area with little or no canopy above them to a clearance of minimum 4 meters and built upon a clay/ sandy soil mound approx. 8” in depth.</i> As the weather conditions are not always amenable to ensuring there are plenty of dry materials available for fire lighting, have a collection of dry tinder, kindling and fuel materials available. Ask the group to separate these into their appropriate categories and then send them out to find additional materials across the Backwoods area- setting these into groups that are tidy and easily accessible. Next, working in pairs, set two small cone fires and use the ‘feather stick’ and match to light the fire and then attend to it using kindling. After you are satisfied that both fires have been lit, extinguish one in the pairing, and then ask them to attend to the other using the fuel, correctly setting/ not throwing it onto the fire. 		Suggested time: 25 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Dry tinder/ kindling/ fuel Additional tinder/ kindling fuel Carved feather sticks Matches Extinguisher resources
Activity- Practical/ Discussion <i>I know about food storage.</i> <i>I know the main principles of “Leave No Trace”.</i>	<p>Marshmallows</p> <p>A great way to finish the ‘One Match Challenge’ and to start a conversation around food storage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With pairs now attending their respective fires, break out the marshmallows and wooden skewers and ask them to toast their marshmallows. Begin a conversation by asking the group to explain to you what the problems with cooking are outdoors, how do we ensure food is kept clean and that raw and cooked foods don’t cross-contaminate. Also reference the importance of ensuring food is correctly cooked and talk about some of the items we can make or ‘double-up’ on regard cooking utensils. To finish, extinguish all the fires and ensure that the ground is returned to how it was found- discussing the main principles of ‘Leave no Trace’ and demonstrating how ‘fire can burn down’, using the trench spade to dig over the earth. 		Suggested time: 20 minutes	SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Fuel for fire/ Marshmallows/ Skewers Extinguisher resources/ Trench spade Leave No Trace Principles
Review	Reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.		Suggested time: 5 minutes	



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 3			Session 4 Building Shelter	
Section/ Skill level	Cub/Scout/ Novice	Location	Backwoods site	
		Session length	70 minutes	
Activity			Time	Resources
Energizer – Challenge	Simon Says - Twists, Turns & Knots This energizer is intended to act more of a demonstration than game with the intent of getting the group to revisit knot skills that they should have learned across Stage 2 Backwoods and any other Adventure skills they have undertaken. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each group member two lengths of chord. • At the front, using thicker rope, follow the actions of ‘Simon Says’ describing the process of tying a ‘reef knot’. • Now run through it again, this time leaving out a ‘Simon Says’ at an appropriate point. • Now repeat, demonstrating both a ‘bow line’ and ‘half hitch’. 		Suggested time: 10 minutes Rope/ Chord	
Introduction activity-Discussion	Reflect across the skills and learning at Stages 1& 2 around shelter building and tell the group that their next challenge is to work in teams of 6 to create a shelter big enough for them all to get inside and be comfortable. To prepare, collect a range of shelter building materials inclusive of sheets/ light plastic sheeting, bin bags, rope, sisal, bungee cords, masking tape, electrical tape, poles and walking sticks.		Suggested time: 5 minutes Backwoods Adventure skills guide	
Activity-Practical <i>I can build a shelter for six people.</i> <i>I know the main principles of “Leave No Trace”.</i>	Shelter challenge* This activity will encourage the group to work as a team and build a shelter big enough for 6 people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the teams as appropriate re numbers and set out into different categories the materials you have sourced to build a shelter. • Invite one person from each team forward and tell them they have 30 seconds to select one item from each category for their group to use in building a shelter. • With the selections made, the group now have 20 minutes to go into a Backwoods area and erect their shelters, working together as a team, finding additional, natural materials, and even negotiating with the other teams in the challenge. • When completing the challenge discuss with the teams the importance of positioning the shelter and its entrance, minimizing the damage we do to the environment around us (Leave No Trace) and in how to keep shelters ‘taut’ so that water runs off and limit the impact of the elements. • To complete this challenge, each member of the team must be actively involved in the construction and demonstrate good teamwork. • When all shelters are complete, ask each group to showcase them and then vote on which is the best. 		Suggested time: 35 minutes Backwoods area/ materials as required. First Aid kit SFNI Backwoods SI Resources *This activity is best suited for delivery in a Backwoods area- if none is available, you may wish to try and replicate in an open space using fence posts/ walls and spars etc. instead of trees.	
Activity-Practical <i>I know how to get help when someone is in trouble</i>	Getting Help This short discussion will re-affirm actions to take in the event of an emergency arising. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With shelters built ask the group to tell you: ‘How in an emergency would a shelter help?’. ‘What type of injuries might occur during a Backwoods Adventure?’. How can you differentiate between a broken and unbroken limb?’ ‘How could you raise help?’ and finally ‘How do you keep someone who is injured comfortable?’ 		Suggested time: 10 minutes	
Close Review	Return the site to how it was found – mindful of ‘Leave No Trace’ and reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.		Suggested time: 10 minutes	



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 3			Session 5 Backwoods Adventure	
Section/ Skill level	Cub/Scout/ Novice	Location	Outdoor Backwoods site	
		Session length	As necessary	
Activity			Time	Resources
Preparation	<p>To complete Skills Stage 3 in Backwoods Adventure Skills, the group must partake in at least three Backwoods activities additional to those undertaken at Stage 1</p> <p>Before completing this session, discuss with the group the upcoming adventure and make sure they know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing to wear/ bring along with what should both be in their own personal survival and personal first aid kits. • Ensure that maps of the site are available, noting all access points and places to raise help if required. • Ensure all Risk assessments have been performed and that consent for activities is collected. • Identify all other kits and equipment that need to be brought. 		Suggested time: N/a	Personal First Aid and Survival kits/ Maps Fire/ Cooking kit/ equipment Tarp/ Rope/ Carabiners Risk Assessments & Consent forms
Activity- Show & Tell/ Discussion <i>I have attended at least an additional three Backwoods activities.</i> <i>I can use hand tools correctly.</i> <i>I know the main principles of "Leave No Trace".</i> <i>I can light a fire using natural tinder, fuzz sticks and matches.</i>	<p>Completing a Backwoods Adventure</p> <p>How you run Backwoods activities will be dependent on you and your experience, what follows is only a suggestion, however, please ensure that whichever way you run the activity that fire safety, fire building and lighting, shelter building, food prep / cooking and how to use tools safely are all referenced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On arrival, identify a clear, flat space to set up a fire that will have a minimum of 4 meters clearance around the radius of the fire and is clear of the canopy above. Set the fire on a fire blanket, using an 8" clay/ sandy soil mound for the base of the fire, building on top of this. • Discuss fire safety and then ask the group to find dry kindling, tinder, and fuel (twigs/ grass/ branches) to help you start the fire. • Using vegetable peelers, follow the guidance for using bladed equipment and make 'feather sticks' and use these to light the fire. • Next, in groups, build a few basic shelters, using tarp and sisal etc. to demonstrate the skills learned in building such a structure. You may also want to ask the group to build a 'lean to' shelter using naturally found materials only. • Camp cooking- prepare ready cooked meats and vegetables, cooking both using skewers and baked in tin foil, having toasted marshmallows as dessert is always a great sweetener and finish to cooking activities. • Using either a fire blanket or water source, demonstrate how to extinguish the fire safely and use a trench spade to cover the area with soil. • Dismantle shelters and return Backwoods area to how it was found. • Please ensure that for all tools/ equipment used across the activities, that you provide a demonstration on how these are correctly used- only Scouters should use tools at this stage as a point of safety. 		Suggested time: N/a	Backwoods Adventure skills guide Kit/ equipment as required to complete the activity. Fire blankets (x2) Water source Prepared food stuff/ extra-long skewers Tarp/ Rope/ Sisal/ Paracord/ Carabiners Group First Aid Kit SFNI Backwoods SI Resources SFNI Pioneering Guide- Ropes & Knots
Review	<p>Reflect on all the learning delivered asking youth members to tell you one thing that they have learned and evaluate the activities with the Group.</p> <p>Complete all recording and monitoring of completion of Adventure Skills as performed by the group to achieve Skills Stage 3</p>		Suggested time: N/a	