

SCOUTING IRELAND ADVENTURE SKILLS: BACKWOODS SESSION GUIDE



**Backwoods Adventure
Skills Stage 4
4x session plans**



Introduction

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

This guide contains a total of **four sessions** that 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', **three** of these can be completed within an indoor setting with an option for outdoor learning- if available- recommended. The **fourth** 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 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to set up a tarp bivvy shelter How to use tools safely. How to craft simple materials using natural materials How to set, light and maintain a fire How to complete camp cooking tasks including making scones/ bread twists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of equipment, kit, and tools for use on Backwoods activities How to navigate using the sun and the stars Tree and nature identifications and use in Backwoods Fire safety/ camp cooking.

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 Keeping warm/ kit	
Section/ Skill level	Beaver/ Beginner	Location	Den
Activity		Session length	Time
Activity		Resources	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. <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!!! Debrief by explaining that these are all clothes we should wear when going outdoors and that (unless it's a very hot day) wearing many layers (like an onion) and removing them as we get warmer is far better than turning up without the clothes we need and getting cold- we are prepared no matter what.	50 minutes	Suggested time: 15 minutes 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 happily and as minimally as possible with nature. With that said, there are things that we cannot replicate in the wild, or items we should should keep ourselves safe. This activity will explore kits and resources resources we should always carry with us. 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 & Snacks/ 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	15 minutes	Suggested time: 15 minutes 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, have the following available so that the group can make their own PERSONAL BOO BOO KITS PERSONAL 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. Have a few additional resources available and ask some of the group to show you how they should apply plasters and bandages- making sure that where possible, they only treat themselves, make sure hands are clean and that the wound is cleaned, and that the injury is well covered.	15 minutes	Suggested time: 15 minutes 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.	5 minutes	Suggested time: 5 minutes



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 4			Session 1	
			Equipment/ Shelters	
Section/ Skill level	Scout/ Venture/ Competent	Location	Den/ outside space	
		Session length	60 minutes	
Activity			Time	Resources
Energizer – Memory quiz <i>I know what equipment I need to bring with me on a backwoods activity</i>	I am going on a... A memory game that should be used to exemplify the planning process and kits required for undertaking a Backwoods adventure activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring the group together into a circle and start the activity by saying 'I am going to the forest to have a Backwoods Adventure and I am bringing...' Next say an item that you would bring that forms part of a Backwoods equipment, kit or clothing that should be brought. The person to your left should then repeat the phrase 'I am going to the forest to have a Backwoods Adventure and I am bringing...' repeat the item that was last said and then add a new item to the list. Do this until everyone has repeated the list that is made (adding items along the way) and then the leader who started repeat the list back. Use the list as an opportunity to have a discussion around what items should be brought when completing a Backwoods activity. 		Suggested time: 20 minutes	Knowledge of equipment/ kit/ tools to bring on a Backwoods Adventure.
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 & 3 and explore the skills that will be learned at Stage 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the skills that will be learned across Stage 4 and ask the group to think about them and give ideas as to how the group could go about learning these skills. 		Suggested time: 5 minutes	Backwoods Adventure skills guide
Activity- Practical <i>I know how to set up a tarp bivy shelter suitable for two people.</i>	Tarp Bivvy Shelters- The race In the previous activity you should have referenced 'tarp(s)' as a piece of equipment to bring, this should lead into the next activity and demonstrate the process involved in setting up a Tarp Bivvy shelter, providing a practical experience for the group to try it themselves. You should also include a discussion as to when this type of shelter is useful. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate to the group the correct technique to set up the shelter and ensure that guidelines are taught and poles secure. Working in groups, set a challenge as to who can erect a shelter the quickest, but also correctly. Provide support, guidance, and encouragement across the activity. Hold a discussion around the use this type of shelter provides and in what circumstances they would be used, <i>i.e., adverse weather conditions or keeping someone who is injured safe and sheltered.</i> Run another 'race' to see who can dismantle their shelter and put away the equipment, storing it correctly. 		Suggested time: 30 minutes	Outside Space SFNI Backwoods SI Resources How to set up a tarp bivy video Tarp(s)/ Peg(s)/ Bivvy Bag(s)- Bin Bag(s) / Pole(s)/ Branch
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 4			Session 2 The World Around Us	
Section/ Skill level	Scout/ Venture/ Competent	Location	Den/ outside space	
		Session length	75 minutes	
	Activity		Time	Resources
Energizer – activity <i>I can find directions by using star constellations method.</i>	The stars in the sky This activity should be used to demonstrate how to find <i>Polaris</i> - the North Star and demonstrate how useful it is to help when navigating at night. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for 7 volunteers, provide six of them with a head lamp or small torch and the seventh with the larger torch. Next arrange the six into the shape of ‘<i>The Plough</i>’ star constellation and place the seventh member a little distance away from the ‘<i>two pointers</i>’ stars in the constellation (the lip that forms the pouring end of the plough) they are the North Star. Turn off the lights and switch on the torches. Next ask the six in the Plough constellation to keep their formation and slowly rotate around the North Star, demonstrating that <i>Polaris</i> stays relatively static above the North Pole providing you with a ‘<i>North direction</i>’. You may wish to arrange the group into other recognizable constellations so that they are aware of what these looks like in the night sky. 		Suggested time: 10 minutes Dark space 6x headlamps or small torches / 1x large torch Constellation Navigation link	
Introduction activity- Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the skills that will be learned across this session inclusive of navigation and exploring the natural world around us, something that Backwoods living enables us to do easily as we are immersing ourselves in nature. 		Suggested time: 5 minutes Backwoods Adventure skills guide	
Activity- Demonstration <i>I can find directions by using the sun/watch method.</i>	The watch trick- navigation This should be a quick simulated demonstration to the group and will require you to show practical application across your next Backwoods Adventure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with the correct process to follow to use an analogue watch to help you navigate using the sun. (Link in the resource guide) Demonstrate the process to the group (using a simulated light source if necessary) taking the time to explain what you are doing and reminding the group about the DANGERS of looking directly at the sun. 		Suggested time: 5 minutes Analog watch as compass link Watch / light source	
Activity- Learning Activity <i>I know about nature and what you are likely to see and experience as part of a backwoods activity.</i>	Leaf Ident This activity should begin to explore the different flora that you will come across when taking part in a Backwoods Adventure. It should also be used to explore fauna/ wildlife that you may also come across as part of an activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a ‘<i>Tree ident</i>’ resource that you are comfortable in delivering (links to resources opposite) and run the activity with the group. This activity can be run as part of a den night, but you may also want to reinforce the learning by applying knowledge practically across a visit to a wood land site. Engage the group in a discussion identifying the trees, their wood types and usefulness within Backwoods living. Further expand the discussion by exploring wildlife and other useful plants that are found within a Backwoods setting. 		Suggested time: 20 minutes SFNI ‘From Small Acorns’ session guide Woodland Trust tree ident activities Tree ident printed	
Activity- Learning Activity <i>I can make simple containers using natural materials.</i>	Container crafting This activity will demonstrate two methods for making ‘ <i>simple materials</i> ’ using natural materials. (links to resources opposite) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using paper or cards, demonstrate how to fold these to create a rudimentary container to use as a storage device. Next provide the group with some – air dry clay’, explain that clay can be found in abundance around rivers and flood plains and can be used to create containers. Follow the instructions in the linked video and create a clay pot that should dry quicker than usual as you are using ‘air clay’. 		Suggested time: 30 minutes Paper/ card Making containers from paper Air dry clay Making containers from clay	
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	

External web links – SFNI are not responsible for 3rd party content and information found on related links/ sites.

- <https://www.naturalnavigator.com/find-your-way-using/stars/>
- <https://www.wikihow.com/Use-an-Analog-Watch-as-a-Compass>
- <https://sfni.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/26.8.22-From-Small-Acornes-Programme-Guide.pdf>
- http://treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activitymenu/?cat=tree_id
- <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Easy-Paper-Box>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn7oTvw8QRY>



Backwoods Adventure Skills Stage 4		Session 3 Fire & Cooking	
Section/ Skill level	Scout/ Venture/ Competent	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 involve lighting fires and as such you should reflect on skills and learning developed across Stages 1,2 & 3 and introduce the learning and requirements at Stage 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare, have tinder, kindling and fuel available, along with fire lighting tools Self-raising flour/ sugar/ water/ sticks/ branches/ additional utensils 	Suggested time: 5 minutes Backwoods Adventure skills guide	
Activity-Demonstration <i>I know how to treat cuts and minor burns.</i>	Fire Safety & Emergencies This activity will reference fire safety measures and first aid to use across Backwoods activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit 'fire safety' and ask the group to tell you behaviors and rules that they should follow. Demonstrate and practice the treatment of minor cuts and burns with the group, using practical application to support this learning. 	Suggested time: 10 minutes SFNI Backwoods SI Resources First Aid and burns kit/ additional resources	
Activity-Practical <i>I know how to prepare a fireplace and light and maintain a fire using minimum resources</i>	Setting Fires This activity should assess the ability of the group to set, light and maintain a fire using simulated resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In groups provide enough materials required to build and start a fire – ask the group to tell you what materials/ resources found across Backwoods areas that could be used as tinder, kindling and fuel. Set fires on appropriate prepared areas as per 'good/ safe practice'. Ask the groups to maintain their fires to ensure that they are hot enough to cook on and revisit basic hygiene and camp cooking safety. 	Suggested time: 20 minutes Outside space SFNI Backwoods SI Resources Tinder. Kindling/ fuel/ ferro rods/ fire lighter	
Activity-Practical <i>I can make camp bread such as twists and scones.</i>	Bread Twists This activity will demonstrate how to make and bake a camp bread twist using an open fire- please remain vigilant regard safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare with the group the ingredients for making camp twists, discuss hygiene and then create a dough. Roll the dough into sausage shapes approx. 12" in length and twist each sausage loosely around a suitable stick. Cook the dough over 'embers' and not 'flame' for approx. 15 minutes, turning the twists every 5 minutes and then enjoy. Use the exercise to further explore the importance of cooking on embers as opposed to direct flame to ensure an evenly well-cooked meal. Extinguish fires and return the site to how it was found, referencing 'Leave no Trace'. 	Suggested time: 30 minutes 500g Self raising flour 3 Tablespoons of sugar 300-500ml of water Mixing Bowl Suitable stick/ branch How to make campfire twists (link) Materials/ equipment to extinguish fire.	
Additional activity	Planning an overnight Backwoods Adventure To complete Stage 4 of Backwoods Adventure Skills the group will have to partake in an overnights activity, whilst the cooking of Bread Twists is happening, it may be beneficial for the group to begin to plan where, when and what this adventure will look like.	N/a	
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 4		Session 4 Overnight Backwoods Adventure	
Section/ Skill level	Scout/ Venture/ Competent	Location	Outdoor Backwoods site
		Session length	As necessary
	Activity		Time
		Resources	
Preparation	<p>To complete Skills Stage 4 in Backwoods Adventure Skills, the group must partake in an overnights Backwoods activity</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. • This may also be an opportunity to explore 'Hammock & Tarp' camping if you have the skills and resources to facilitate this. 		<p>Suggested time: N/a</p> <p>Personal First Aid and Survival kits/ Maps</p> <p>Fire/ Cooking kit/ equipment</p> <p>Tarp/ Rope/ Carabiners</p> <p>Risk Assessments & Consent forms</p>
Activity- Show & Tell/ Discussion <i>I have attended at least one backwoods based overnight activity.</i> <i>I know how to prepare a fireplace and light and maintain a fire using minimum resources</i> <i>I know about nature and what you are likely to see and experience as part of a backwoods activity.</i> <i>I can find directions by using star constellations and the sun/watch method.</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> <p>You should also revisit sun and star navigation skills, maintain fires with minimal resources, container crafting and camp cooking skills, as well as apply knowledge re flora and fauna ident and use.</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. You may also wish to set up the camp area for sleeping using these shelters. • Camp cooking- prepare ready cooked meats and vegetables, cooking both using skewers and baked in tin foil, bake camp twists and have toasted marshmallows as dessert. • 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. 		<p>Suggested time: N/a</p> <p>Backwoods Adventure skills guide</p> <p>Kit/ equipment as required to complete the activity.</p> <p>Fire blankets (x2)</p> <p>Water source</p> <p>Prepared food stuff/ extra-long skewers</p> <p>Tarp/ Rope/ Sisal/ Paracord/ Carabiners</p> <p>Group First Aid Kit</p> <p>SFNI Backwoods SI Resources</p> <p>SFNI Pioneering Guide- Ropes & Knots</p>
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 4</p>		<p>Suggested time: N/a</p>