

Girl Guides Chinook Area

CAMP OKEEKUN MANUAL

Camp Okeekun is a hidden jewel in the SW corner of Alberta located just outside of Fort Macleod.



Okeekun means 'place where friends meet'

The camp opened in 1968 and has seen many changes and improvements over the years.

Our Girl Guide Camp is also available to the public to book for their events and special gatherings.

For bookings please contact: any-propertybookings@girlguides.ca

Camp Okeekun provides the perfect venue for:

- Outdoor Fun and Education
- Picnics and Parties
- Leadership development and team building
- Family Reunions and Weddings
- Company Outings and Corporate Retreats
- Religious gatherings and functions
- Other special events

Camp Okeekun offers affordable camping and has two indoor camping sites and two tenting sites that include two large play areas as well as a chapel/reflection area.

All sites have electricity, fridges, basic cooking equipment, BBQ's and campfire areas with benches. Running water is available at all sites except during the off season when it is brought in.

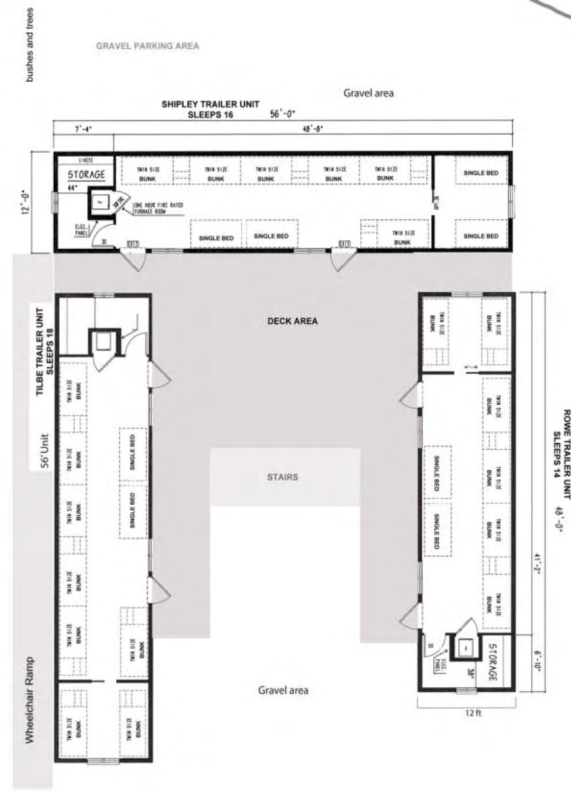
Indoor Camping Sites:

Our indoor camping sites have recently been rebuilt and renovated and all are wheelchair accessible.

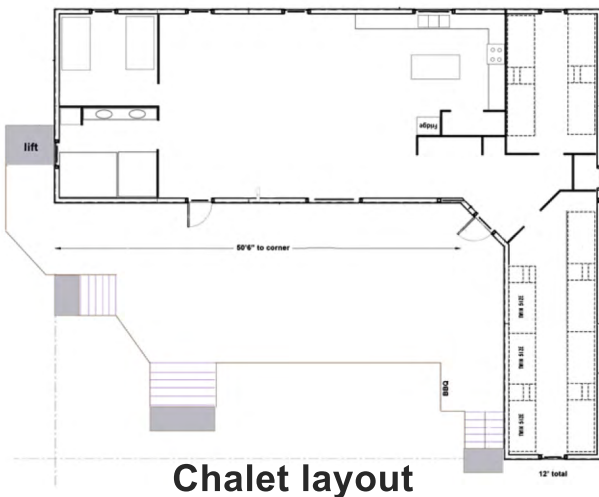
Olave House site: consists of a main kitchen building with a propane fireplace, 2 showers, a large covered deck, a craft building, three heated bunk houses that sleep a total of 48, two large gazebos and an outhouse building.



Olave House Sleep Trailers and layout



Chalet site: has a heated building that includes a main kitchen area, bedrooms that sleep a total of 24 in bunks and has indoor bathroom facilities. There is an outhouse for use in the off season. It has a large open deck with picnic tables. **NOTE:** This is the **only** site that is available **for use all year round.**



Tenting Sites:

The large grassed area at both of these sites will accommodate many tents.

Jennifer Peters Site : consists of an enclosed shelter with a wood burning stove, fireplace and picnic tables inside that will accommodate approximately 40. There is also a Gazebo with more tables outside, a YURT, an unheated emergency sleeping trailer that could sleep 26 and an outhouse building.



Jennifer Peters tenting site



Inside of J. Peters shelter



Yurt

Nancy Rutt Site has an open shelter with a wood burning stove and fireplace and approx. 5 picnic tables inside and a few more outside. It also has a small shed available for storing supplies, an unheated emergency sleeping trailer that could sleep 26, and an outhouse building.



Sleep Trailer at Nancy Rutt Site

Cook Shelter at Nancy Rutt Tenting Site



Inside of shelter

Shared Areas



Play Area at Tenting Sites



Play Area



Shared Reflection Area



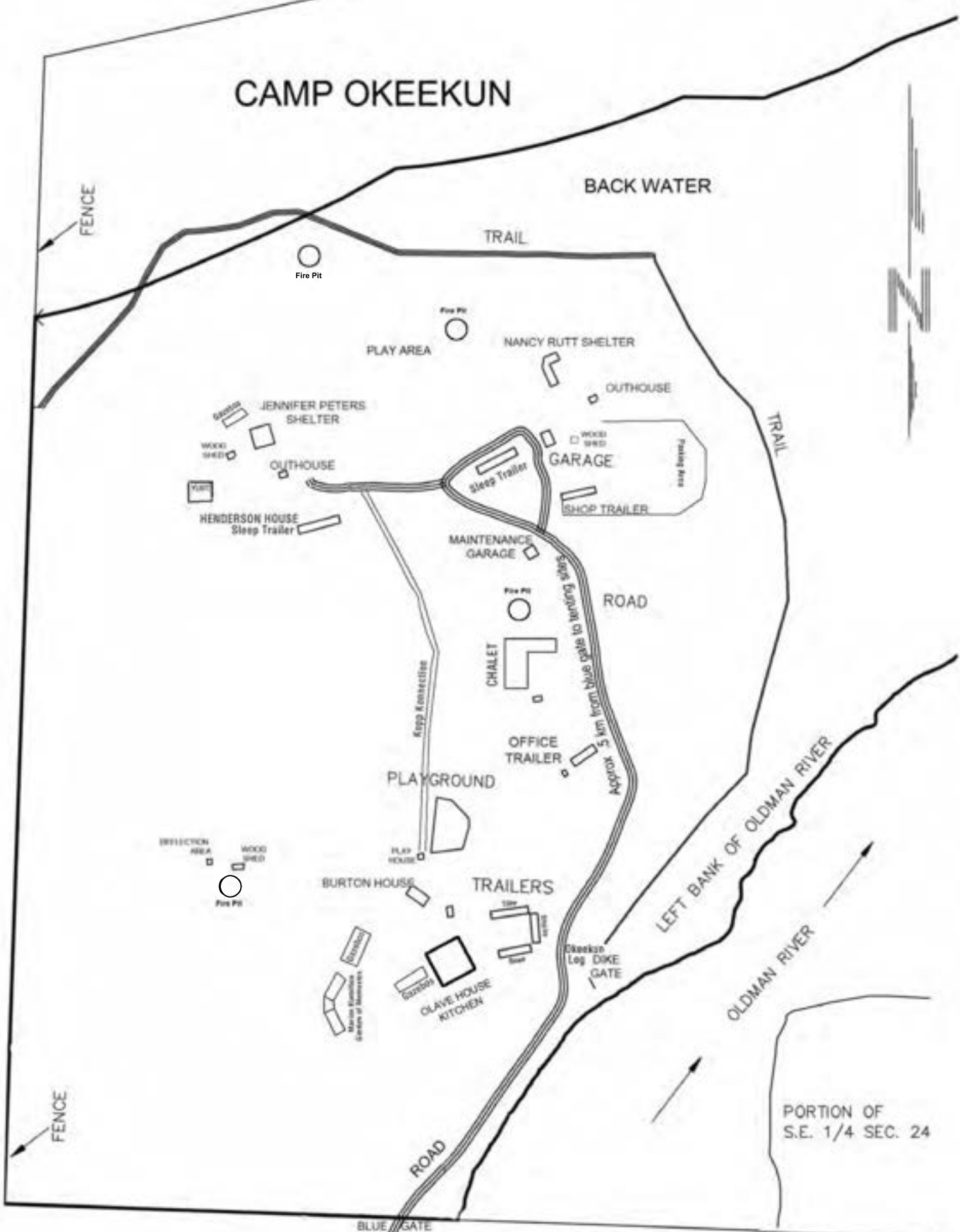
Marion Hamilton Garden of Memories



Kopp Connection



CAMP OKEEKUN



BACK WATER

TRAIL

TRAIL

ROAD

LEFT BANK OF OLDMAN RIVER

OLDMAN RIVER

PORTION OF
S.E. 1/4 SEC. 24

FENCE

FENCE

Fire Pit

Fire Pit

NANCY RUTT SHELTER

PLAY AREA

OUTHOUSE

JENNIFER PETERS SHELTER

WOOD SHED

OUTHOUSE

GARAGE

WOOD SHED

SHOP TRAILER

HENDERSON HOUSE
Sleep Trailer

MAINTENANCE
GARAGE

Fire Pit

CHALET

OFFICE TRAILER

Approx. 5 km from blue gate to tenting sites

PLAYGROUND

COLLECTION AREA

WOOD SHED

Fire Pit

BURTON HOUSE

TRAILERS

Okeekun
Log DIKE
GATE

OLIVE HOUSE
KITCHEN

Marion Krombholz
Mother of Okeekun

ROAD

BLUE GATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Important: Please keep in mind that the caretaker does not stay at the camp. The Camp Caretaker will allow for a 15 minute wait time before or after the estimated arrival time on your booking sheet. He may then leave and may not be available when you arrive (or even for some time thereafter). If you anticipate your arrival time has changed or you will be late, please respect his time and call the cell phone number that you have to make alternate arrangements. Be sure your contact number on the booking sheet is the correct one in case he needs to contact you.

Check in/out time must be prearranged with the camp caretaker.

Please No Pets on the Site!

Make all staff aware of all procedures included in this manual, especially the emergency procedures.

Feel free to ask the Caretaker for advice/assistance

Note: Treated well water (tested and monitored by Alberta Health) is available on site from mid May through September long weekend (weather permitting); otherwise, blue 5 gal. water jugs will be supplied with water brought in from the Town of Fort Macleod.

- Out-of-bounds areas are posted. The river is out of bounds – there is **NO** swimming on the site.
- Utilities - wood, water, heat are shared resources - conservation practices would be appreciated.
- Pour all greasy liquids, dish water etc. (strain solids out before dumping) into designated tanks. Absolutely no garbage or sanitary supplies are to be dumped in latrines – please use paper bags and remove same at end of camp.
- Cover the bottom and sides of pots with dish detergent before using them on an open fire so that the black will come off more easily.
- Keep storage areas in order. Use the equipment marked for your site. If you use it, clean it. Do not transfer items from one site to another. Check with the caretaker if you need something.
- Prevailing winds are from the southwest at Okeekun so, if possible, avoid placing tent doors in that direction.
- Propane is an explosive, flammable gas. Take precautions. If needed, the caretaker can assist with hook up and provide instruction on the use of the two-burner camp stoves, BBQ and free standing propane lights. Notify the caretaker when tanks become low on fuel or if you require more.
- Remember, power sources may malfunction so pack your bags accordingly. There is no heat in the sleeping trailers at the tenting sites and only a small propane fireplace in the Olave House kitchen building.
- Camp Okeekun is private property. For your safety, gates should be kept locked for the night. The contact person for your camp will have access to a gate code or a key to a padlock. Codes are changed regularly. In the event of minor concerns, notify the caretaker so the matter can be pursued. A contact number will be available. Any threatening trespassers or major concerns should be reported immediately to the RCMP
- **OPEN FIRES ONLY** in barbecues and fire pits. Be certain that your fire is out before leaving it – it should be cold to your touch. In the event of a total fire ban designated by the Municipal District of Willow Creek, propane will be your sole fuel.

You will need to bring the following items to camp with you:

- a. Long Matches (for propane lanterns & stoves)
- b. Garbage Bags
- c. Extra Toilet Paper/Paper Towels
- d. Dish Soap, hand soap and sanitizer, cleaning supplies including Bleach, Vinegar, SOS
- e. Oven mitts and towels as necessary
- f. **Your Camp Confirmation form**

Note: *For the tenting sites: Tents are provided for Chinook Area Guiding Groups only.*

Some patrol boxes with cooking equipment are available to ALL Guiding groups, just arrange with caretaker upon booking.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Groups are responsible for bringing their own cleaning supplies.

No Food is to be stored on the floor unless it is in covered plastic storage bins.

All food is to be removed from fridges and freezers at the end of each camp. Wipe all appliances inside and out with vinegar/water solution.

Stoves, Ovens and BBQ's must be thoroughly cleaned.

Mouse Droppings Cleaning Kit (If necessary): Store J-Cloths, dust masks, rubber gloves and a spray bottle in a large Ziploc bag. Wearing gloves and mask, fill spray bottle with a small amount of bleach and water. Spray on J-Cloth (not on droppings as the virus will spread with the spray) and wipe up droppings. After cleaning, discard gloves, mask and cloth. Rinse spray bottle and return to Ziploc bag.

WHEN LEAVING

- **GARBAGE, including recyclables: each group is responsible for removal off site.**
We do not supply extra garbage bags.
- Return all equipment to its proper place. Report items requiring maintenance or repair to Caretaker.
- Please leave all buildings clean. Sweep and wash the floors and put things back where they belong.
- All stoves including small propane stoves must be cleaned after usage. Check that fridges and all containers and cupboards are cleaned of foodstuffs. Clean stove, fridge, BBQ etc.
- Make sure all cooking equipment is clean.
- Clean outhouse and sweep and mop floors of all buildings used.
- Have your confirmation forms with you and report to the caretaker for inspection of site and equipment at the pre-arranged time before leaving. Update and sign confirmation forms with caretaker after inspection. By ensuring that a site report is completed we are better able to serve you, so please take the time to go back online and offer feedback.
- Please practice Low Impact Camping - Leave only your footsteps behind.

WALKS & TRIPS AROUND CAMP OKEEKUN

Around the Site Itself: Okeekun offers a varied terrain with many signs of wildlife and a multitude of plants. With 50 acres, a hike around the camp can be very informative and enjoyable for all campers.

Hike Along the Dike: A hike along the dike from Olave House can take you to a pond at the north end for a pond study or to the Town of Fort Macleod, heading south. It is an easy, enjoyable walk - from the residential site to the bridge takes about twenty minutes at a relaxed, easy pace.

To the Fort: A hike from Okeekun to the Fort in Fort Macleod is great. It takes about 45 -60 min. at a leisurely pace and can be accomplished by all ages of campers.

Old Fort Site: Situated almost directly across the river from the campsite. Hike along the dike to the bridge, follow the road into town to the first street, go east and parallel the river past the town water sewage plant and follow a road north into the treed area - trail should lead across a backwater dip onto higher ground (island). In early summer you may have to ford the stream. Old basements are very visible by a cluster of large poplar trees. Approx. three km. one way.

Visit the R.N.W.M.P. Historical Cemetery on the same hike. The cemetery is located just south of the sewer plant. (R.N.W.M.P. site well marked with a white picket fence).

Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo Jump: Now designated as a world historic site. Situated north on Highway 2, turn west at the Spring point road (approximately fifteen kilometres). The site is on the north side of the road approximately twenty kilometers from Camp Okeekun.

Wilderness Park: Situated adjacent to Camp Okeekun as you turn off secondary Highway 811. Excellent trails and well marked, self-guided nature walks with easy access from Camp Okeekun by vehicle or a twenty minute walk. A play area is also available .

ECOLOGICAL HABITATS OF CAMP OKEEKUN

Camp Okeekun is an enormously rich area for ecological and nature studies. We are tremendously lucky. It has four distinct habitats and lots of small mini-habitats. This sheet is an introduction to the riches that are yours for the looking.

The four main habitats are: the slough, the river beach and its mud flats, the bush, and the prairie. In addition to these, there is the area near the campfire and the entrance to the tenting sites where there are many introduced plants from the old nursery garden. As to mini-habitats, every bush standing by itself is home to dozens of animal and insect species as is every rotten log and every clump of grass.

Get into the habit of carrying an inexpensive magnifying glass with you. Get on your hands and knees regularly and use the magnifying glass, and a whole marvelous new world will open up for you, full of colour and movement, beauty and wonder.

Each of these four main habitats has its specific populations with their own food webs, their own special interactions and interdependencies, but of course they do overlap with neighbouring habitats. This area of overlap is called an "ecoface" - that is, a place where one "eco-system" faces another.

Also provided are lists of the kinds of species that you will find in each habitat. Here are some suggestions about how to look, where to look, the kind of things to look for, and bring to the girls' attention.

At the slough, gather at the edge of the water. Don't let people put their hands in the water, as this will stir up the mud so no one can see. Sit still and stare intently till you begin to see little things moving around. Point them out to each other. Use dry stems as pointers if need be. Have *The Golden Book of Pond Life* handy and refer to it. Note the plants that grow in the water, under the water, beside the water. Note the creatures that live on the water, in the water, near the water. Check out the birds that live around the slough - blackbirds of various kinds, flycatchers, kingfishers and swallows. Why do they like to live near water? Remember every creature in the world likes to live near its main food supply and near shelter.

On the river beach and bank most of you need little help. The tracks of birds and animals coming to drink are very clear. Beaver live all along the river; there are deer and muskrat as well. Herons, sandpipers and killdeer are all common. You will most likely see the heron as it stalks along the bank in the early dawn or late in the evening. Try getting up at dawn and sitting on or near the beach. Keep very still and quiet and see what comes along. Watch for the kingfisher who nests in holes in trees along the bank. The bush area near the water is different from the bush near the tenting sites. There is more black birch, that likes to have "wet feet", and you can find the diamond willow down on the point where the backwater and the river nearly join. Also you will find small wet-loving plants like silverweed on the banks. The *Field Guide to Mammals* and the *Field Guide to the Western Birds* are both useful here. (Also *Birds of Alberta*, *Golden Field Guide to Birds*).

In the bush - in the dry bush higher up nearer the tenting sites and the Chalet, the birds tend to be smaller ones like gold finches (the so-called wild canary), the various sparrows such as the grasshopper and chipping sparrows and the small warblers. But there are some bigger ones - the Eastern Kingbirds like to sit on the tip of a dead tree watching for insects, the catbirds are in the thickets, and there is often a marsh hawk patrolling the open areas. The plants include the fruit-bearing bushes such as saskatoon, rose, wolf willow and buffaloberry. You may find big anthills in the dry bush area. Try sprinkling these with a few brown bread crumbs with a little sugar. The little cottontail rabbits live in the bush and under the roots of trees. Sit quietly, watch and let the life of the bush start up again all around you as the creatures realize you are not going to hurt them.

The prairie is mainly on the landward fringe of the camp where the road comes in from the highway, though there are patches of it in clearings in the dry bush. This area is interesting as the plants here are a mixture of the ones of the true prairie near Lethbridge and the foothill plants of the Porcupine Hills, which makes it an "ecoface" itself. The kinds of life to look for here are the ground squirrel/mouse/predator kind of cycle. The coyotes live mainly on prairie where they can catch mice and gophers - they can be heard howling from the north ridge. There are several badgers on the north end of the camp. There are some big hawks and short-eared owls around. The snipe have an aerial display in summer in which they dive headlong for earth, and the wind in their wings makes a sound usually described as "winnowing". There are flickers living in the dead trees around the edges of the prairie who feed on the kind of ant that makes little "volcanoes" in the sandy ground.

Try visiting any of these sites at different times of day, as the kind of life you see will change according to the time, with some creatures preferring full hot sun, and many preferring dawn or dusk or even night. Look for droppings, tracks, feathers, chewed stalks and leaves. These are the clues to who has been where and when.

CARE & USE OF DOME TENTS

PUTTING UP Prevailing winds are from the SW at Okeekun - if possible prevent placing door in that direction.

- Lay tent out on a flat surface.
Floors are easily perforated (torn) - place on grass away from debris.
- Follow directions in tent bag for assembly of your particular tent. **Be careful - PUSH, DON'T PULL!**
- Stakes on four corners may be pushed in before or after construction, according to wind.

IMPORTANT! Front stakes should not be positioned too snugly as this applies too much pressure on the zippers.

- Erect fly. Attach to tent, secure with ties as needed.
- Sweep tent floors often to remove dirt and grit.

Zippers are the most vulnerable part of the tent - don't abuse them. The lip at the front entrance is not meant for you to step on. The girls need to be reminded of this.

Please No Shoes Worn in the Tents.

Great Idea - Try a rug piece inside the door of the tent to pick up dirt and debris. A cardboard box (to collect boots and shoes) near door (in or out depending on the weather) works as well.

TAKING DOWN: *Tents must be clean and dry before storage. During wet weather, check with caretaker.*

- Clean out pockets. Tents must be absolutely dry and swept clean. If you sweep to the front of the tent when they're up, you can sweep it out easily when tents are collapsed - the front lip disappears.
- Zippers - Close every zipper except the front door - if you wish you may close the screen. If you forget you'll have a balloon to fold, not a tent.
- Remember not to remove stakes until the very last.
- ***Carefully*** remove poles. Pack them up. Try to roll tent with as few creases as possible and make length close to length of tent bag.
- Please clean the stakes (rub off mud) and keep grass out of bag.
- Check content list in tent bags. Record missing or broken items and attach to top of tent bag and report to caretaker before leaving.

This & That

- Night time causes considerable condensation. Good ventilation helps.
- Mildew/stains - rinse tent with a clear water and vinegar solution. Allow to dry thoroughly.

Rain, Rain, Rain!

- Keep all bedding and bodies away from tent edge always.
- Vestibules collect rain and collapse - drain as needed.

ENJOY YOURSELF

EMERGENCIES



**If there is an emergency
Dial 911**

**Emergency Site Address is:
#3 Secondary Highway 811**

Our legal address is SE24-9-26 W 4th.
From Fort Macleod go north on Hwy 811 over
the green bridge, then take the first right approach
and follow the road back to and along the river
right into the camp. The blue gate is kept locked
except when the camp is being used.
There is **NO PHONE** at the camp.

Move all people on site to a safe location
Report to Caretaker or to contact number provided

**Guiding groups to follow their
Emergency Response Plan.**

**EACH BOOKING MUST HAVE
A CELL PHONE ,CHARGING
UNIT AND A VEHICLE ON
SITE.**

Any threatening trespassers or major
concerns should be reported
immediately to the RCMP at
403-553-4406.

**Make all staff aware of all
procedures included in this
manual, especially emergency
procedures.**

ACCIDENT

- **Dial 911 if an emergency.**
- Treat injuries as best you can until help arrives. Groups are required to bring their own First Aid kits.
- If possible, transport to Fort Macleod Hospital.
- **Every camp must have a phone and car on site.**

FIRE *Be familiar with location of fire extinguishers, etc. Every camp should conduct a fire drill as soon as possible after arrival as part of their regular camp routine.*

After alarm (banging of pots and pans or other predetermined alarm), have campers meet at the flag-pole at the site you have booked or other area pre-designated by person in charge of your camp.

If there is an actual fire, move all people on the site to a safe location.

- If you are unable to control the fire with extinguishers (located in each building), call **911 (see emergency info above)**
- If possible, shut off propane tanks.
- Immediately notify other groups using Camp Okeekun at the time.
- Contact the Camp Caretaker, Camping Adviser or Campsite Facilitator. Emergency numbers are posted in each building.
- If there is a need to evacuate, proceed to dike area along the river if possible and exit camp along the road and if necessary, meet at a safe area by the river and await help or further instructions

FLOOD : Note: Water Levels are monitored by the Camp Caretaker and Area Camping Adviser. If it appears the camp is in danger of flooding, all camps will be cancelled or evacuated as necessary. If an unexpected flash flood should occur or, if for some reason, campers are unable to safely leave the camp – call 911, then all campers should go to the decks of the sleeping trailers at their campsite as this is the highest point at the camp and wait for help.

EVACUATION: Contact Camp Caretaker immediately to help organize evacuation and give directions to a safe meeting place for parent pickup.