# Track 1: Outdoor Skills and Survival

## SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO OUTDOOR SKILLS

**Overview:** The Outdoor Skills and Survival track introduces youth to the essential knowledge and abilities needed to explore the outdoors safely and confidently. In this first session, participants learn foundational skills. Through hands-on activities and group discussion, youth begin building the mindset and habits of preparedness, awareness, and respect for nature—laying the groundwork for future adventures.

**Objectives**
- Introduce youth to foundational outdoor skills.
- Build excitement and curiosity about outdoor adventures.
- Establish safety and teamwork expectations for future sessions.

**Supplies**
- Flip chart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Printed handouts: Outdoor Bingo and Outdoor Skills Overview
- Sample gear: 10 essentials (pocketknife or multitool, first-aid kit, extra clothing, rain gear, flashlight, trail food, water, matches and fire starters, sun protection, map and compass). Additional gear and items for the relay challenge game.
- Name tags or team identifiers
- Optional: snacks (trail food) and water

**Advisor Notes**
- Welcome youth warmly and set a positive tone for the program.
- Emphasize safety, respect for nature, and teamwork.
- Use visual aids and real gear to make the session engaging.
- Encourage questions and curiosity.
- Prepare a short story or personal anecdote about outdoor adventure.

## SESSION OUTLINE

**Welcome and Icebreaker Activity: Outdoor Bingo (10-15 min)**
- Handout bingo cards with outdoor items or actions.
- Youth mingle and find others who match the squares.

**Safety Moment: Check the Weather**
- Avoid surprises: Sudden storms, high winds, or extreme heat can turn a fun outing into a dangerous situation.
- Dress appropriately: Knowing the forecast helps you pack the right clothing and gear—like rain jackets, sun hats, or extra layers.
- Plan smarter: You can adjust your route, activity, or timing based on weather conditions.
- Check the forecast the night before and again the morning of your activity.
- Look for alerts like heat advisories, lightning warnings, or high wind conditions.
- If weather looks risky, have a backup plan or reschedule.

**Gear Show-and-Tell (15-20 min)**
- Display sample gear and explain its use.
- Let youth handle items and ask questions.

**Outdoor Skills Brainstorm (10-15 min)**
- On a flip chart, list some skills youth think are important (e.g., navigation, shelter building).
- Conduct a group discussion on why each skill matters.

**Gear Relay Challenge: Reinforce knowledge of the 10 essentials through a fun, active game. (15-20 min)**
- Divide the youth into small teams
- Set up a table or area with gear items (real or images).
- Each team races to identify and "pack" the correct 10 essentials into a backpack or designated space.
- Advisors can quiz teams on why each item is important.
- Variation: Use cards with gear names or pictures if real items aren't available.

## REFLECTION SECTION

**Advisor note:** These are sample questions. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions.

**Focusing Questions**
- What outdoor skill are you most excited to learn?
- What did you enjoy about today's session?

**Analysis Questions**
- Why do you think outdoor skills are important?
- What gear item seemed most useful to you?

**Generalization Questions**
- How can teamwork help in outdoor situations?
- What safety habits can you use in everyday life?

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## PRINTABLE HANDOUT: OUTDOOR BINGO

Instructions: Walk around and talk to members of your group. When you find someone who has done one of the outdoor activities listed on your bingo card, ask them to initial that box. Try to complete a row, column, or diagonal!

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Crossed a stream** | **Went hiking** | **Cooked outdoors** | **Went kayaking** | **Used a water filter** |
| **Used a first-aid kit** | **Learned a survival skill** | **Saw a deer** | **Used a compass** | **Saw a sunrise** |
| **Identified a plant** | **Used binoculars** | **Free Space** | **Made trail mix** | **Pitched a tent** |
| **Packed a backpack** | **Spotted a bird** | **Took a nature photo** | **Slept under the stars** | **Practiced Leave No Trace** |
| **Built a fire** | **Found animal tracks** | **Used a map** | **Followed a trail** | **Tied a knot** |

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## PRINTABLE HANDOUT: OUTDOOR SKILLS OVERVIEW

**Navigation**
- Learn to use a compass and read maps.
- Helps you find your way in unfamiliar terrain.
- Example: Following a trail or locating a campsite.
- Tip: Practice taking bearings and pacing distances.

**Shelter Building**
- Learn to build temporary shelters using tarps, rope, and natural materials.
- Protects you from weather and keeps you safe.
- Example: Building an A-frame shelter during a campout.
- Tip: Choose a dry, flat location and secure your shelter well.

**Fire Safety**
- Learn how to safely start and manage a fire.
- Important for cooking, warmth, and signaling.
- Example: Building a campfire with supervision.
- Tip: Always have water nearby and clear the area of flammable materials.

**First Aid**
- Learn basic first aid skills like treating cuts, burns, and insect bites.
- Helps you respond to emergencies and care for others.
- Example: Using a first aid kit to clean and bandage a wound.
- Tip: Keep a stocked first aid kit and know how to use it.

**Leave No Trace**
- Learn principles for minimizing your impact on nature.
- Helps preserve the environment for others.
- Example: Packing out trash and staying on trails.
- Tip: Respect wildlife and leave what you find.