

# Adventure Trail Summer Camp



# 2012 Leader Guide

# 2012 Adventure Trail Summer Camp Schedule

## Friday

5:00 - 7:00 PM	Registration	Parker Lodge
7:30 - 8:00 PM	Welcome to Theme Area	Theme Area
8:00 - 9:00 PM	Camp Tour from Theme Director	Camp Wide
9:00-10:00 PM	Theme Area Campfire	Theme Area
9:15 PM	Leader Meeting	Craft Lodge
10 PM	Lights Out –LEADER ENFORCED	Camp Wide

## Location

## Saturday

7:00 AM	Reveille – LEADER ENFORCED	Camp Wide
7:30 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast	Dining Hall
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Flag Ceremony	Flag Field
9:00 - 10:15 PM	Program Session 1	Program Sites
10:30 - 11:45 PM	Program Session 2	Program Sites
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch	Dining Hall
1:00 - 2:15 PM	Program Session 3	Program Sites
2:30 - 3:45 PM	Program Session 4	Program Sites
4:00 - 5:15 PM	Program Session 5	Program Sites
5:30 - 6:30 PM	Church Services	
	➤ Catholic: Catholic Chapel	
	➤ Non-Denominational: Trading Post	
6:30 - 7:30 PM	Dinner (After Dinner Free Time)	Dining Hall
8:15 - 8:30 PM	Flags	Flag Field
8:30 - 9:30 PM	Campfire	Council Fire Ring
After Campfire	Leader Meeting	Craft Lodge
10:00 PM	Lights Out – LEADER ENFORCED	Camp Wide

## Sunday

6:30 AM	Hawaiian Dive (Optional)	PSR Beach
7:00 AM	Reveille – LEADER ENFORCED	Camp Wide
7:45 AM	Breakfast	Camp Theme Areas
8:20 AM	Theme Area Clean Up	Camp & Program
9:00 AM	Flag Ceremony	Flag Field
9:15 AM	Parker Challenge, Closing	Flag Field
10:15 AM	Camp Wide Clean Up	Theme Director Led
After Clean Up	Check Out	

*Programs and times are subject to change at **any time** at the discretion of Program Director or Camp Director.*

## **Trading Post (Located in the Craft Lodge)**

Hours: Friday:	5:30 - 9:00 PM	
Saturday:	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM; 12:30 - 5:30 PM;	7:00 – 8:00 PM;
	9:30 - 10:00 PM	
Sunday:	8:30AM - 11:00 AM	

## **Meals**

- Line up with your program theme group
- Be on time!!!
- Don't ask for seconds, kitchen staff will make the SECONDS call!
- When Returning for **seconds please use the same plate and utensils** to save on garbage.

## Key Staff

<b>*Camp Director:</b>	Bob Pederson
<b>Camp Caretaker:</b>	Tom Ebinger
<b>*Program Director:</b>	Chris Leither
<b>Asst. Program Director</b>	Zack Kuntz
<b>Medieval Leader:</b>	Zack Kuntz
<b>*Aquatics Director:</b>	Tim Krippner
<b>Nature Leader:</b>	Alex Klejeski
<b>Flintlock Leader:</b>	Will Riesdorf
<b>Wilderness Leader:</b>	TBD
<b>Native American Leader:</b>	TBD

*\* denotes BSA National Camping School certified*

## Camp Rules

### 1. HAVE FUN!!!

- Adults must accompany their Cubs at all times. At least one leader should lead the den and one should walk at the rear of the den to ensure that all Scouts are accounted for and no one is left behind.
- Each person in camp must wear a color coded wristband. The wristband represents which group you are with.
- Your den must stay together at all times. (Remember that at camp your den may consist of Scouts from other packs.)
- The adults are responsible for the Cubs and their behavior. Please notify the Camp Director or the Program Director of any continuing problems that you may have with a Scout. **Verbal and physical punishment may not be used as a method of maintaining discipline.**
- While traveling through camp please walk, **do not run** and be courteous to the other groups.
- All adults and Cubs must wear **closed toe shoes** while in camp. Sandals, water shoes, or flip-flops are not allowed in camp except in the swimming area.
- Cubs are not to have knives** (even if they have earned their Whittling Chip), lighters, or matches.
- The swimming area uses the buddy system and everyone must abide by it. All safety rules in the swimming area as well as the archery and BB ranges will be strictly enforced.
- Adults should **not smoke in the presence of the Scouts**, if you need to please do so out of sight of the boys.
- Program supplies are for the Cub Scouts only. Tag-a-longs (non-registered youth) are not permitted to be with a den. All non-scouts must remain in our Siblings Program where we will have activities for them. Violation of this can result in the non-registered youth, their parent(s), and their registered siblings being sent home.
- If the event of an emergency in camp, the camp staff will inform the participants to stop all activities and will provide directions on what to do based on the emergency.
- There is **no food allowed in the camp sites** after lights out. Food will be allowed in personal containers during the day, but these containers must be returned to vehicles prior to lights out.

14. All injuries, no matter how minor it may seem, must be reported to the Camp Health Officer. The Health Office is located at the Dining Hall (After 8 PM Catholic Chapel). Each theme area is equipped with a first aid kit and first aid log.
15. **Alcoholic beverages and controlled substances are prohibited** on camp property and the Camp Director shall deal with the use of such accordingly.
16. Please remember that the camp staff is supported by volunteers, just like you and the other adults walking with your den. Adult walkers and leaders are expected to help and support the camp staff whenever possible.
17. Help keep the camp clean. Please place all litter in camp and place it in the trashcans where it belongs. (recycle containers are provided near the Craft Lodge and Dining Hall)
18. Please do not pick flowers, plants or peel bark off of the trees (even if they appear to be dead). Respect the animals that live in the camp and remember that they are wild. *"Take only pictures and memories and leave only footprints."*
19. All walkers are responsible for ensuring that that all of the Cubs in your Den are checked out and on their way home with an approved adult before you leave yourself. No Scout should be left alone at any time.
20. No motorized vehicles are allowed to be operated by any participant (youth or adult) at any location in camp. **All vehicles are to be parked in assigned parking areas** when they arrive in camp, and not moved until check out has been completed. No vehicles are allowed in the campsite area with the exception of camp vehicles.
21. Remember, when all else fails, see rule #1.

## **Check In/Check Out Procedures**

- All individuals entering camp must check in at Parker Lodge to receive a wrist band.
- One leader for the entire pack will check in the pack, the others will participate in the activities in the parade field
- Wristbands will be given out at Check in and are to be worn until check out
- Each person must also check-in with the program leader when they arrive in the campsites.
- The program leader will assign you a Parker Scout Reservation tent assignment or provide you with a place to put up your own tent.
- All individuals must check out at the conclusion of the weekend, again, one leader is all that is needed.
- Individuals leaving early, see #4 in the Camp Security Section
- You will not be allowed to leave until your camp site has been checked by the Program Area director, once this has been completed, return to Parker Lodge to complete the check-out procedure. You will receive your patches at this time.

## **Items not permitted in Camp**

- Knives or other sharp implements (Scouts only).
- Guns of any type.
- Flammable items, matches, lighters, etc. (Scouts only).
- No personal archery equipment
- No pets.
- Alcoholic Beverages

## **Uniforms**

1. Pack/Scouting T-shirts for program activities
2. Class "A" uniforms are required for evening flags
3. Class "A" uniforms are required for Saturday supper
4. Class "A" uniforms are required for the Saturday campfire
5. Class "A" uniforms are required for the entire day on Sunday

## **Camp Security**

1. Identification of all camp attendees.
  - a. All Scouts shall be checked in and out each weekend. When on camp the Scouts should wear a scouting t-shirt and must have their wristband on.
  - b. All adults walking with the dens must have on the appropriate wristband.
2. Identification of staff members.
  - a. All staff members shall have on their I.D. badge.
3. Identification of visitors.
  - a. All visitors must report to the headquarters building and sign in with the registrar. They will be issued a wristband.
  - b. Before leaving the camp property they must sign out with the registrar.
4. Scouts leaving camp early.
  - a. The Scout(s) shall check out with their den leader then shall check out at headquarters with the registrar.
  - b. The registrar will ensure that the Scout is leaving camp with an adult authorized on their health form.
5. Unidentified visitors.
  - a. All persons on camp property should have an I.D. tag on. If they are walking with a den, ask them to put a wristband on.
  - b. If they are not with a den (i.e. they are walking in the woods, or appear to be watching the boys from a distance) immediately contact the Camp Director and Program Director.
  - c. Provide a description and location of where they were seen at, as well as which direction they were headed.
  - d. If you feel that this person is an immediate threat, notify the Camp director of this immediately and he will contact the appropriate authorities.
6. Areas off Limits
  - Staff Camp
  - Other labeled areas

## **Leader Responsibilities**

- At least **one** leader from each pack **MUST attend the cracker-barrel each evening**
- Will provide supervision and guidance for the youth of your pack attending the resident camp
- Guide the youth through the daily activities
- Know and follow the safety and emergency procedures
- Assist the youth with the preparation and cleanup of your assigned camping areas
- Be alert to the surroundings for safety violations
- Program staff are in charge
- Assist the program staff as requested
- Assist the youth as need in the program areas as staff cannot help everyone at once
- Make sure the youth are having a good time
- Make sure the youth are **drinking plenty of water** and have **full water bottles at all times**
- Make sure that everyone has a daypack (or pack) containing necessities as well as making sure everyone is prepared for all of the day's activities
- Sit back, relax, and have fun

## **Cub Scout/Webelos Scout Responsibilities**

- Respect staff other scouts and leaders
- Let staff know your needs
- Accept others differences
- Follow the Cub Scout Promise, and the Law of the Pack
- HAVE FUN

## **Health and Safety**

- Locations of Medical facilities
  - The medical office and Camp Health officer are located in Parker Lodge (Administration Building) and the Dining Hall. After 8 PM the Catholic Chapel is where health staff will be located.
  - First aid kits are located in each program area (including the beach and shooting areas)
- Health Forms
  - Your pack must turn in a Class 1 health form for every individual attending camp. It must be turned into medical staff at your packs arrival. If it is not, the individual will not be allowed to participate in Camp Activities until one is filled out.
- Medications
  - All prescription medications, other than immediate emergency need (i.e. inhalers) are to be secured at the camp medical office. A pack adult leader must accompany Scouts to the medical office to take medications. Complete the medication schedule for each youth prior to coming to camp.
- Use medical gloves whenever cleaning up bodily fluids (vomit, urine, blood, etc.). Soiled clothing should be placed in a plastic bag and bedding hung out to dry. Contact camp staff if you need assistance
- Imbedded Wood/Dear Ticks must be removed by the medical staff
- **All incidents must be reported to the medical office no matter how minor the cut. If a band aid is needed, it must be reported!**
- If you notice something unsafe, report it immediately to camp staff

## **Parker Scout Reservation Tenting**

- Adults and youth may not share the same tents unless; they are Parents, family or legal guardians of that child (one family unit – may share a tent) (Two different families units – may not share the same tent)  
**- PLEASE REFER TO THE BSA YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES-**
- No food or beverages should be brought into your tents. There are Raccoons, Skunks, Chip Monks and Squirrels that will find it.
- Parker does have a few tents that may be rented for the weekend. (Contact the Sartell Office prior to your camp weekend if you need to rent a tent) deposit maybe required.

## **Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior**

- Program area staff discusses the expectations with the camper
- Leader discuss expectations with the camper
- Alert the camper that the actions are inappropriate in a non-demeaning manner
- Redirect the behavior
- Give a verbal warning about consequences
- Remove the individual from the situation
- If cooperative after a few minutes, allow back to the activity, if not, suggest another activity. If this still does not work, a leader and the youth shall visit with the program director or the camp director.
- If safety is a concern the camp director and/or the program director shall be notified immediately.
- The camp director can request the removal of any participant (youth or adult) at any time.

## **Youth Protection**

- All BSA youth protection policies will be followed to the letter. If they are not, the individual in violation will meet with the camp director regarding the consequences.
- All registered adult leaders need to have youth protection training prior to coming to camp.

## **Latrines**

- There are latrines available in all campsites. Flush toilets are only available in the shower house. Trash must not be disposed of in any of these as well as they must be kept clean and orderly.
- Hand washing stations will be available at each camp site so hands can be washed after using the latrine and before meals.
- If supplies are needed, notify the Program area director so that they can be replaced
- Sanitizing stations are provided in each program area.

## **Buddy System**

- The buddy system must always be used in camp. There should never be one lost camper, as they should always have their buddy.
- Leaders should be notified of the destination if a pair of buddies is leaving the group as well as an estimated time of return.
- This includes all adults and youth

## **Smoking**

- If smoking is a must, it must be done **out of sight** of the youth.

## **Weather**

We always hope for good weather, but we are not always lucky

- In case of Rain, activities will go as planned, so rain gear is a must. If it becomes too heavy, rain locations for each program area have been assigned
- Weather will be monitored by Camp Staff
- In case of severe weather, camp staff will advise the campers to move to the emergency shelters as necessary.
- If you must take cover in remote areas, lie in a low depression until the storm passes!

## **Personal Food and Beverages**

- Personal food and beverages must be kept in personal vehicles overnight.
- There is no food or beverage (other than water) allowed in Parker scout reservation tents.
- Personal food may be in the campsites during the day, however during the night it must be returned to personal vehicles.
- Do not feed the animals no matter how "cute" they look

## **Emergency Procedures**

1. The emergency signal for Camp shall consist of honking horns being sounded at the Headquarters area. This signal shall be sounded for 1 minute.
2. With rare exceptions, the ONLY staff authorized to direct the emergency signal to be sounded will be the PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS, CAMP DIRECTOR, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AQUATICS DIRECTOR, CAMP CARETAKER and the HEALTH OFFICER.
3. Once the emergency signal has been sounded, all staff members will be notified what the emergency is by either the Camp phone system or by the portable radio system.
4. Once notified of the type of emergency, follow the appropriate directions listed below.

## Severe Weather and Lightening

1. Upon notification of severe weather stop all program activity unless directed otherwise.
2. You will be notified if you are to have the den report to a severe weather shelter. If you are, refer to the "Emergency Shelter" sheet for directions.
3. Secure your program supplies immediately and report to the shelter with the den.
4. Upon arriving at the shelter have the den walkers perform a head count, then report to headquarters via the camp phone system or radio system of your status.
5. Remain in the shelter until directed otherwise by the Camp Director or his designee.

## Tornado (Watch or Warning)

1. Upon notification of a tornado watch or warning, the Camp Director or his designee shall have all staff members notified to close their program areas and report with the den(s) at their area to the appropriate emergency shelter.
2. Upon arriving at the shelter have the den walkers perform a head count, then report to headquarters via the camp phone system or radio system of your status.
3. If sufficient warning is not received, immediately have all Scouts and adults in your program area seek shelter in a low lying area free of trees and lie down.
4. All staff members, adults and Scouts shall remain there until directed by the Camp Director or his designee.

## Lost Camper

1. When it is realized that a Scout is unaccounted for, the den walkers' will halt den activity, assemble the den and conduct a head count.
2. The Camp Director shall be notified immediately.
3. Have the den remain in your program area and the den walkers' shall conduct a limited and immediate search, **NOT** to exceed **FIVE (5)** minutes. They shall search the following:
  - a. Restrooms (men and women), trails and roads, cars and vans, last program site the den attended.
  - b. If this brief search fails to produce the missing Scout, the Camp Director will have the emergency siren sounded and all staff members will be notified to have their dens report to the flagpole in the activity field.
4. Immediately secure all program materials and report to the Camp headquarters for instructions.
5. The Camp Director will assign two adults to drive all camp roads and report their findings. They will then report to the Camp entrance to act as security until notified.
6. The Camp Director will brief the remaining staff on their search assignments.
7. The Camp Director will notify the proper authorities and Council Program Director.
8. The Program Director will have each den perform a head count to ensure that there are not any other missing Scouts or that the Scout is not with another den.
9. Upon completion of the assigned search activities all staff members shall report back to headquarters for reassignment.

## Lost Swimmer

1. Upon notification immediately stop all program activity and secure all program supplies.
2. Have the den walkers' take a head count of the dens and have them report immediately to the flagpole.
3. Report immediately to the swimming area to assist with the lost bather search.
4. There are additional duties, so even if you are a non-swimmer report to the swim area.
5. The Program Director or his designee shall report to the flagpole and have all dens perform a headcount to ensure that the Scout is not with another den.
6. The Camp Director shall notify the appropriate authorities and the Council Program Director.

## **Fire**

1. Upon notification of a fire on the property, immediately stop all program activity and have the den walkers perform a head count.
2. You will be advised whether to have the den remain in place or to report to the flagpole in the activity field.
3. Secure your program supplies and report to headquarters.
4. The Camp Director or his designee shall notify the fire department.

## **Injuries and Illness**

### **Minor Illness or Injuries**

1. Provide immediate care for the injury/illness.
2. If the patient is a Cub, have him brought to the headquarters/health lodge by an adult and the Cub's buddy.
3. If the patient is an adult, have them report to the headquarters/health lodge with another adult or two Scouts.

### **Life Threatening Illness or Injury**

1. In the event of a serious or life threatening illness/injury, the staff member in charge shall notify the Health Officer, Camp Director, and Program Director via Camp radio system or runner (and yes we mean runner).
2. While awaiting their arrival, the staff member in charge shall use the available resources and personnel to administer immediate care as qualified (i.e. apply pressure to stop bleeding, perform CPR, etc.).
3. The Health Officer shall assess the situation and administer the appropriate medical care.
4. The Camp Director or his designee shall notify the fire department of the need for EMS.
5. All staff not directly involved with the incident shall remove themselves and the Scouts from the area until the incident is under control.
6. The Camp Director will notify the Council Scout Executive, Council Program Director, or Council President of the incident.
7. The Camp Director will secure the names, addresses, phone numbers and statements of all witnesses.

## **Camp Evacuation**

1. Should the Camp need to be evacuated the Camp emergency signal shall be sounded.
2. All staff members will be advised by Camp phone or radio system of the situation.
3. All program supplies shall be secured.
4. Have the den(s) perform a head count and report to the flagpole in the activity field for further instructions.
5. Report to headquarters for further instructions.

## **Fatality**

1. Should a fatality at camp occur the following steps will be performed?
2. The Camp Director/ Professional Partner (District Executive or District Director on site) shall notify "911" emergency.
3. The Camp Director/ Professional Partner (District Executive or District Director on site) shall notify the Council Scout Executive, and Council Program Director of the fatality.
4. Action steps will be given by the Council Scout Executive, Council Program Director, or Professional Partner (District Executive or District Director).
5. The area that the injury/illness occurred shall be immediately evacuated and the den(s) that were in that location shall be taken to the Headquarters area and attended to by the assigned staff members.

## **Emergency Shelter Locations**

Parker Scout Reservation:

<b>Medieval Times</b>	<b>Miller Castle</b>
<b>Native American Village</b>	<b>Miller Castle</b>
<b>Flintlock Settlement</b>	<b>Miller Castle</b>
<b>Wilderness Fort</b>	<b>Miller Castle</b>
<b>Nature Camp</b>	<b>Miller Castle</b>

Each camps Program staff leader will immediately lead all occupants of their theme area to the pre-designated shelter. A head count will be done to determine any missing persons at that time. In the event not everyone is accounted for, only staff members and appropriate personnel will begin the process of locating the missing person or persons.

### **Wood and Deer Ticks**

Deer ticks, also known as blacklegged ticks, are just one of thirteen known tick species in Minnesota. They are most common in the east and central areas of the state and are found in hardwood forests and wooded and brushy areas. Deer ticks are potential carriers of Lyme disease, human anaplasmosis and babesiosis.

#### **Risk timeframe**

Primarily risks are from mid-May through mid-July when the smaller nymph stage of the deer tick is feeding. Risk is present, but lower, in early spring and again in the fall (late September-October) when the adult stage of the deer tick is active.

#### **Prevention**

Check and re-check for ticks when you are in tick-infested areas.

1. When in deer tick habitat, walk in the center of the trail to avoid picking up ticks from grass and brush.
2. Wear light colored clothing so ticks will be more visible.
3. Create a barrier to ticks by tucking pants into socks or boots and tuck long sleeved shirt into pants.
4. Use a repellent containing DEET or permethrin, and carefully follow the directions on the container.
5. After being outdoors in tick habitat, get out of your clothes immediately, do a complete body check, shower and vigorously towel dry. Wash your clothes immediately as to not spread any ticks around your living area.
6. Pets should also be checked for ticks.

#### **Tick removal**

The risk of getting a tick-borne disease is small if the tick is removed soon after it becomes attached. Deer ticks must remain attached one to two days to transmit Lyme disease, and about one day for the other diseases.

1. Take precautions when in tick habitat, but don't panic if you find a deer tick on you. Not all ticks are infected, and prompt tick removal can prevent illness
2. Use tweezers to grasp the tick close to its mouth.
3. Gently and S-L-O-W-L-Y pull the tick straight outward.
4. To avoid contact with the bacteria, if present, do not squeeze the ticks' body.
5. Wash the area and apply an antiseptic to the bite.
6. Watch for early signs and symptoms of Lyme disease.

(Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)

Please Print Your Own Copy to Bring To Camp!!!

## **Bee Stings**

Symptoms vary from local reactions of pain, redness at the sting site, and formation of a wheal (raised bump usually pale in color). Localized itching is common and redness in the first 24 hours can become as large as 12 to 18 inches in diameter. These reactions are initially scary promoting people to seek medical attention.

As per the Merck manual, the average person can tolerate 10 stings per pound of body weight. The average adult can withstand approximately 1000 stings where around 500 stings can kill a child. Anaphylaxis and death can occur from one sting if the individual is highly allergic. Usually severe reactions will occur in the first hour. Most will occur in the first 15 minutes. Practically all severe reactions if they are to occur will happen in the first 6 hours.

Many individuals have been given false information on allergic reactions. As per Auerbach in his Wilderness Medicine text: "There is no correlation between systemic reactions and number of stings in the past or number of stings per incident and severity of an allergic reaction." "In a study of 138 adults with a history of anaphylactic reactions, 99 had no anaphylactic reaction to later stings, 17 had more severe reactions, and 22 had mild reactions."

Children less than 10 years old and the elderly, older than 70, have less severe reactions than younger adults.

## **Bee Sting Treatment**

### **Stinger Removal**

It was once thought that stingers should be scraped out with a credit card, finger nail, or any such device. Research has shown that the best course of action is to pull the stinger out as soon as possible with your fingers. The remaining venom in the sac of the stinger DOES NOT increase the reaction should you inadvertently push more venom into your wound.

### **Outdoor Treatment and Prevention**

During Survive Outdoor presentations, many questions have been posed about Epi-pens. Should children on Boy Scout outings have them if they have never had an allergic reaction? Yes, we do not know and cannot predict allergic reactions, specifically anaphylactic reactions. All scout leaders and adults should have one in their medical kit before trips to the outdoors. These can be prescribed by your healthcare provider. The ABC's, Airway, Breathing, and Circulation, must be adhered to in that order.

Here are the steps to take when stung in the outdoors by a bee or wasp:

1. Pull stinger out.
2. Cool compresses or ice.
3. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) should be given to decrease minimal allergic reactions.
4. If a severe allergic reaction occurs, you must transport immediately and resort to basic life support.
5. In addition to Benadryl, it has been shown that Cimetidine (Tagamet) and H2 blocker can also help decrease the allergic response.

([www.survivaloutdoors.com//reference/beeswasps/index.asp](http://www.survivaloutdoors.com/reference/beeswasps/index.asp))

## **Mosquitoes**

Mosquitoes are small bugs that are an inevitable part of camping. They can carry numerous diseases including West Nile. You can protect yourself from them by using diet containing bug repellent. Aerosol cans are not allowed in camp.

## Swimmers Itch

**There are actions you can take** to help reduce the odds of getting swimmer's itch. To understand which actions make sense it is important to look at the organism's biology. The organism which causes swimmer's itch has a complicated life history. However, an important fact to consider is that the critter starts out in the intestinal lining of waterfowl, mostly ducks. **So if you, or maybe your neighbors, are currently feeding waterfowl (ducks and geese) from your dock, stop.** If ducks like to loaf on your dock do what you can to discourage them. You can try an owl wind sock, or statue. Place the wind sock or statue on your dock and move it around every other day or so, so the ducks do not become accustomed to it. If ducks don't hang out around your property then the source of the problem may be elsewhere in the lake and this strategy won't help much.

If ducks do not congregate around your dock the swimmer's itch organism may originate somewhere else in the lake and is being brought to your shoreline wave action or currents. The life stage that causes swimmer's itch is called a "cercaria" which is an immature stage of a blood fluke common in waterfowl. The cercaria only lives for a day or so and typically inhabits the upper few inches of water which increases its chances of coming into contact with a duck (its definitive host). This behavior makes it easy for them to be moved around the lake, and tends to concentrate their numbers along the shoreline. **Strategy number 2, avoidance, swim from a raft or boat farther out from shore where you are less likely to come into contact with the cercaria.** This strategy may not be practical if you don't swim or have young children who want to play in the water near shore.

Although the cercaria can enter your skin while you are wading or swimming you can also carry the critters out of the water with you. If swimmer's itch is a problem in the lake you live on it is important to towel off immediately after getting out of the water. The organism in the droplets of water on your skin will look for somewhere to go as the droplet of water evaporates; into your skin is their next refuge. So, if you did not pick up an infection in the water you can further reduce the odds of getting swimmer's itch by drying off with a towel. **Solution numbers 3, dry off with a towel soon after getting out of the water.**

If these strategies don't work for you there is the option of getting a permit from the DNR to use copper sulfate to kill the snails which are an intermediate host of the parasite. Infected snails release the life stage (cercaria) that actually causes swimmer's itch. The copper sulfate will only kill the snails present at the time of application; any snails which enter the area afterwards will not be affected. The relief provided may be temporary and more than one treatment may be required. Usually only a small percent of the snails in a lake carry the infection, and they may not be the ones around your dock.

The good news is the blood fluke which causes swimmer's itch cannot complete its life history in the human body. Your body's immune system detects the cercaria as a foreign protein, attacks and kills it shortly after it penetrates your skin. The severe itch and accompanying welt is an allergic reaction to the infection. There are several over the counter remedies your pharmacist can recommend to help relieve the discomfort, but please see your physician to get a definitive diagnosis.

Not everyone is sensitive to swimmer's itch. You may have noticed that some people show no symptoms of swimmer's itch even though others swimming at the same time and place break out severely. The literature indicates that only about 30 to 40 percent of the population is sensitive to swimmer's itch infection. But, much like poison ivy, your sensitivity to swimmer's itch will increase with each exposure.

(Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)