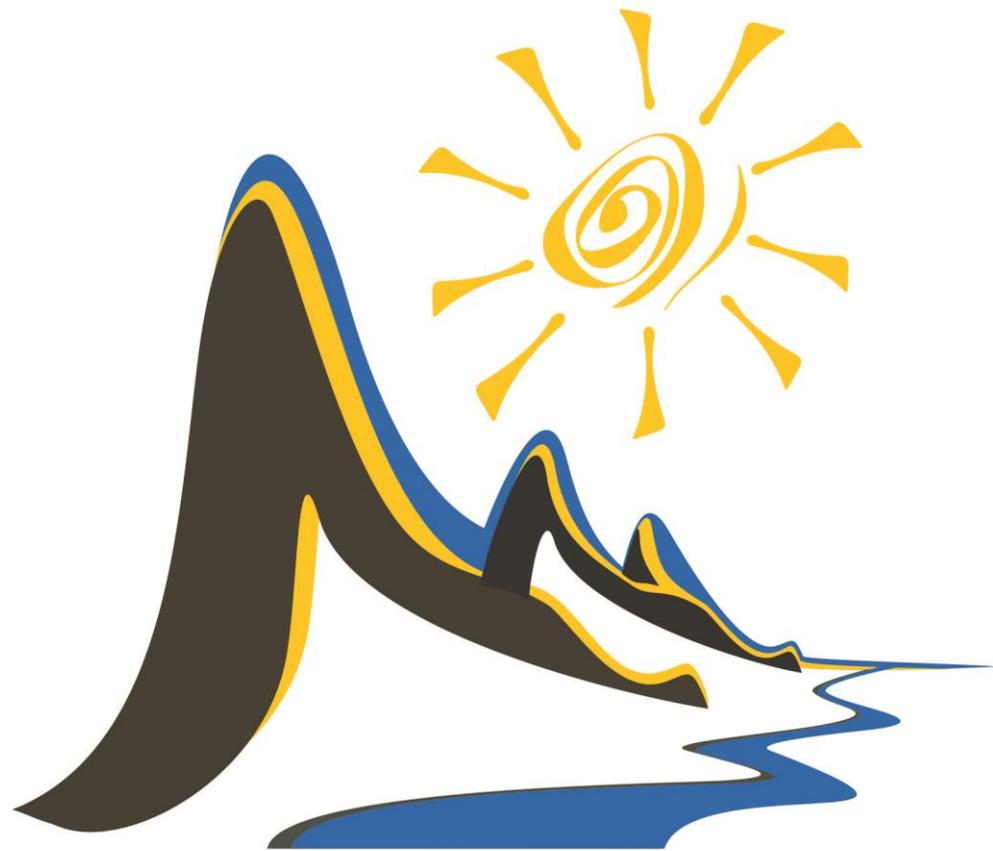


2013

Participant Handbook



**Sonshine**  
Wilderness Retreat

# Sonshine Wilderness Retreat PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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# Sonshine Wilderness Retreat

## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

### **Introduction**

Sonshine Wilderness Retreat (SWR) is a Christian wilderness ministry headquartered in Salida, Colorado. Taking advantage of the breathtaking wilderness surrounding the Colligate Peaks and the Arkansas River valley in Central Colorado, SWR is a place for adults to get away from the daily distractions that may hinder their relationship with God. SWR offers opportunities for excursions into the wilderness to experience creation, allowing individuals to reconnect with the Creator and replenish their spirit.

SWR trips are designed to encourage spiritual growth while enjoying outdoor adventure. The services provided by SWR set us apart from other outdoor experiences. SWR trips challenge and inspire through experiential application, offer unique growth opportunities while teaching the value of teamwork, encouragement, and shared experiences. Participants will learn to step out of their comfort zone as they face new challenges and see the benefits of conquering them.

### **fees**

A total per-person **Fee** is provided, itemized by each activity. Fees to third party outfitters (excluding deposits) will be paid directly to them at the time of service, but are included in the total per-person fee provided by SWR. The portion of the fee that is paid directly to SWR is broken into two payments as indicated below and on the payment invoice:

- **First payment of 50 percent of SWR fees plus any outfitter deposit(s) are due within two weeks after the final trip itinerary and per person price have been determined and;**
- **Final balance of SWR fees due two weeks prior to group arrival date.**

**The deposit and fees are nonrefundable, but transferable** (i.e. Can be used for a participant you add, but cannot be returned to you or applied to the deposit or balance of a participant for whom you have already submitted a fee). The fee covers all expenses for your participation (unless otherwise indicated), which includes the services of SWR (equipment, Forest Service fees, staff leadership, food, devotionals and base camp use).

### **Donations**

Our ministry leaders and volunteers work hard to provide excellent service. SWR is a non-profit organization that relies mainly on donations to operate. If your group enjoys their experience, please feel free to donate so we can continue to provide this ministry for future participants.

### **food**

SWR offers a meal option, where we will provide high carb and nutritious food that will give you sufficient energy for your chosen activities. If selected, the details of the meal option will be discussed and finalized with your Group Coordinator. If any foods are a problem with your diet, this needs to be discussed with your Group Coordinator prior to finalizing the meals (See Group Profile Form). If SWR cannot provide alternative option, **you will be responsible for providing any appropriate substitutions.**

### **Safety**

SWR makes every effort to ensure the safety of each individual. SWR led activities include a certain element of risk. The SWR Ministry leaders are current in wilderness First Aid and CPR and understand the unique situations that may arise in the wilderness or on any of the various activities offered. As a result, they are trained in procedures for getting injured or ill people to medical facilities as quickly as possible. SWR has thorough documents that discuss our Policies and Procedures regarding safety, fire, and bears. You may read and/or download copies of our safety policies, and bear safety procedures from our website.

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### **Insurance and Emergency Medical Situations**

SWR does not carry medical insurance for its participants. **Each participant is financially responsible for any medical costs arise during your time at SWR.** You must complete all medical information on the Medical Form, as this information is critical in the event you would need medical attention. Nearby towns have emergency facilities and the staff is trained in emergency evacuation procedures. In the rare case of a life-threatening situation, SWR Leaders can arrange for emergency helicopter rescue by radio. In the event you must return to base camp because of injury or illness, another member of your group will be required to accompany and care for that individual until your group returns from their program/activity. **Note:** The SWR personnel will not administer any type of medication, including aspirin, Tums, Tylenol, etc. If you need any over-the-counter medications, you must bring them yourself. Be sure to let your staff know which medications you are taking.

In the event of an emergency at your home, a message may be left at the following phone number. We will make every effort to pass the message on to you as soon as possible. **Emergency contact: 1-719-966-7015.**

### **Physical fitness and Conditioning**

One of the biggest challenges you may face is the actual physical activity associated with many of our programs. SWR often uses the physical challenge found in the wilderness to encourage spiritual growth. For example, some activities may require carrying a 40-60 pound pack up and down mountain trails at high altitudes. This is why it is **necessary** for anyone who wants to take full advantage of the experience to be “**in shape**”. By the nature of many of the activities, some the excursions may not be for everyone. However, there are many other activities that provide incredible adventure without the same type of physical challenge. Please consider all factors when choosing from our wide variety of activities.

If you have any questions regarding the physical requirements for a particular activity, we strongly encourage you to inquire. **Ignoring the implied physical requirements and guidelines for various activities may place you and your entire group at risk for a medical emergency.** SWR strongly recommends a conditioning program for the more strenuous activities it offers. This should consist of aerobic exercise that builds up lung capacity (especially important at high altitude), and weight bearing exercises that build up strength and stamina. For example, consider walking or exercising with a weighted backpack to simulate a more genuine experience. Keep in mind that a summit hike may have an elevation increase of upwards of 5,000 feet and may take as long as 10 hours to complete.

SWR suggests getting a medical check-up before starting any physical conditioning program (As part of the Medical Form, a physician signature is required). Don't try too much too soon. Begin gradually and build up to the desired goals. It is better to develop stamina than speed. Be consistent. Get into a routine and stay with it. If you want to climb a mountain you need to be in shape.

### **Equipment Provided by SWR**

If any SWR equipment is damaged or lost by the group, the group will be responsible for replacement of the item(s).

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## **What to Bring**

This is a list of recommended clothing and personal gear to bring on your trip. The list is based on a typical 5-Day adventure (3 days of activities) assuming car camping and the group meal plan. If your group chooses not to purchase the meal plan, your group will be required to bring the food and cooking equipment. The non-cotton or blend clothing is recommended for excursions that require physical exertion or include getting wet, such as hiking or rafting.

This list is a guideline, quantities and additional items are at your discretion given travel arrangements. You may choose to bring things not included in the list. Some items listed below could be brought for your group to share (i.e. insect repellent, sunblock, hand sanitizer, etc.).

## **Clothing**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4 pair socks – 2 lightweight and 2 heavyweight (wool or synthetic blend, Non-Cotton)
- \_\_\_\_\_ An adequate supply of underwear
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long underwear – top and bottom (Non-Cotton or Cotton blend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Swimsuit/Board Shorts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3 T-shirts (Non-Cotton or Cotton blend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long sleeve shirt (Non-Cotton or Cotton blend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fleece pullover or zip-up
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Pairs of shorts – or 1 pair shorts and 1 pair pants that zip off to shorts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Pair of long pants – for warmth (Non-Jean)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rain pants (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rain jacket (quality with hood, NOT an emergency poncho)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jacket (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 hats - 1 for sun protection and 1 for warmth
- \_\_\_\_\_ Light Gloves (if a beginning or end of season)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bandanna (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hiking boots or Hiking shoes (waterproof, no tennis shoes, must be already broken in)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Second pair of closed toe shoes (for camp or if your other shoes get wet)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shower shoes or flip flops
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water shoes (preferably closed toe, may be old tennis shoes) (required if whitewater excursion is selected)

## **Personal Gear**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sleeping Bag (20 degree or warmer)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insulated Sleep Pad
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tent (with good rain fly or share with a friend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Camp Chair
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daypack, like a school backpack (large enough for food, water, gear, and extra clothes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 - one-quart or more water bottles or a water bottle and a water bladder
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spoon/Fork or camping spork

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Large camping cup for food and drink, or small cup and plate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insulated mug (for coffee, tea, hot chocolate)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Small flashlight or headlamp (with fresh batteries)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Whistle (required)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 or more 55 gallon trash bags (used to cover and keep packs dry)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ziplock bags (to sort, carry, protect personal gear and food)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Roll of Duct Tape (one for group)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunglasses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunblock with high SPF rating (travel size or share with a friend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lip balm with sunblock
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medicines (labeled) (If you need any over-the-counter medications, you must bring them with you.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand Sanitizer/Neosporin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Band Aids
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insect repellent (may share with a friend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Towel/rag (quick dry preferable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soap/shampoo
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deodorant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toilet paper (biodegradable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Baby wipes (may share with friend)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Skin lotion (unscented)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Small Bible (with old and new testament)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note pad and pen/pencil
- \_\_\_\_\_ Camera (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ear Plugs (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Moleskin (optional for blisters)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Powder (optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quarters (for coin operated showers in town)

### **Items Not to Bring**

Firearms, fireworks, alcohol, tobacco products, illegal and/or recreational drugs. These items may be prohibited by the Forest Service and/or could take away from the experience of a wilderness adventure. **If found, these items may be confiscated.** Perfume, and electronic devices (ipods, tablets, laptops, games, cell phones, etc.) are items we suggest not to bring to the campsite or on the excursions. Perfume attracts insects and wild animals (bears). The electronic devices are one of the major distractions in our lives and the point of being on this trip is to get away from these distractions. However, if your worship music resides on your ipod, tablet or smart phone, we ask that those devices only be used for music not checking emails, facebook or other social media.

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### **How to be Comfortable**

To be comfortable in the wilderness, you must prepare physically, mentally, and expect to endure hardship. Plans may change, food may change, weather will change, tent mates may change, equipment may break, and accidents may happen. All you can do is plan ahead and keep a good attitude.

It is important to be comfortable and warm in what you wear. **Footwear** that is waterproof, or can be waterproofed (such as leather boots) works great. Other footwear may get soaked and require extra socks to keep your feet dry. Bring a large plastic bag for your shoes so they don't get the tent dirty or wet. Nothing dries as quickly as you would like. You need to bring an extra pair of shoes to wear while in camp, or while your other pair is drying. Polypropylene **socks** dry easily and keep the moisture away. Any type of wool blend will keep your feet warmer and dryer than cotton. Warm, dry, healthy feet will improve your outlook. In choosing outerwear like pants, shirts, sweaters, and coats, keep in mind the idea of layering. **Layering** allows you to put on and take off what is needed so you don't sweat and make yourself colder. The pants that zip off into shorts are great. They save you from bringing a second pair of shorts or pants and work well during a hike. Fleece, wool, and synthetics are great in the wilderness. A good **waterproof** top and bottom are right up there with footwear in importance. When it rains, you want to stay dry. With ponchos, rain will splash up and make you wet and miserable and cheap ponchos tear easily and prove to be quite useless. It is best to have a **rain suit** (parka with a hood, and pants) that you can put over clothes for protection and warmth. Go for quality. The Rockies can be unpredictable. The temperature may vary from the 30's to the 80's. There may be rain, hail, snow, clouds, or sunshine – all in a day. Snow is not unusual in July and it will rarely be hot. SWR also recommend using **synthetic (Non-Cotton) fabrics**. You don't need to get the most expensive gear and clothing to have an enjoyable and comfortable experience. Many quality items can be found at the Army Surplus store, second hand shops, or local sporting goods stores. Academy Sports often has fleece and quality synthetic athletic wear on the sale rack for under \$20. Have fun finding those great deals.

**Sleeping** warm is incredibly important for comfort. As soon as the tent is set up, get your sleeping bag out of the stuff sack and spread it out. This allows the bag to regain its loft and insulate better. When you go to bed, don't wear the socks you have been wearing all day. They have a lot of water in them and are compressed. Keep a pair of socks just for wearing to bed. Don't wear wet or dirty clothes to bed. Either use the mummy hood on the bag, or wear a stocking cap. Your head loses more heat than any other part of your body. You can put clothes in your sleeping bag to keep warm. This leaves less room for your body to heat. Bring a small pillow case to stuff with a jacket or clothes. Your sleeping pad meant to insulate you from the cold ground, not merely for comfort. You may wake up a lot, be cramped, ache, etc. You may want a pair of ear plugs for snoring tent mates. You can buy a better pad at an outdoor store (a wide selection of prices and styles). Anything that will cushion should improve your sleeping tremendously. Also, many pads have a chair-kit that allows you to turn the pad into a comfortable chair. This is well worth the extra money.

You need to commit to doing what is necessary to be healthy. It is important to eat everything provided. You don't need to pack a bunch of extras, but a few snacks are great for the trail. Adding a drink mix to your treated water is very popular. **Drinking water** is the most important aspect of staying healthy. With climate, altitude, and increase in exercise, the body requires more water than normal. Feel free to take ibuprofen etc. for aches and pains, and we recommend Tums to help with altitude. Do not take anything else, unless it is a regular prescription. If there is an emergency, your staff must know what kind of chemicals are in your system.

Wet-wipes are a great to **stay clean** in the wilderness. The public camp sites do not have showers, so you will more than likely not be taking a shower every day. Coin operated showers are available in towns. The number of times your group visits the showers, will be determined by your group. In most cases, groups travel to the showers one or two times during the trip. Some hand lotion may be great for chafing areas like boot tops and under the pack strap areas. Powder is great for feet and other areas of moisture. Every little bit helps.

Do your **best to plan ahead and prepare**. Expect the unexpected and embrace the unknown. To be in the wilderness is a privilege that few people have. The more comfortable you are, the more you can relax and enjoy it!