

## **Spruce Hole Yurt Instructions and other useful information**

**Write down the YURT COMBO here: \_\_\_\_\_**

Your trip leader has been sent the yurt lock combination by email.

### **Parking and the trip in**

If you are travelling in Colorado, go south from Alamosa on Hwy. 285 to Antonito. Take Hwy. 17 (the road to Chama) west from Antonito for 28 miles. If you are travelling from New Mexico, You can either go to Chama and take Hwy. 17 north for 20 miles, or go to Antonito on Hwy. 285 and then continue west on Hwy. 17 for 28 miles.

Look for a small sign that says Spruce Hole, and a plowed area on the east side of the road, which is located about ¼ mile north of the La Manga Pass sign. Pull off the road as far as possible (at least 10 feet) without getting yourself stuck. *Remember you are in a remote area, lock your vehicle and toolboxes, and hide any valuables from sight. We are not responsible for your vehicle during your stay at the yurt. Although rare, vehicle break-ins have occurred in the Cumbres/LaManga area in the past.*

**In the event of road closures from BOTH sides of Cumbres or LaManga Passes (Hwy. 17) on your ski-in day, we will be happy to reschedule your visit to the Spruce Hole Yurt. If one side of Cumbres or LaManga passes are closed, plan to come in on the other side. In the event of a major snowstorm, Hwy. 17 is usually open on the Colorado side (from Antonito, CO) before the New Mexico side is open (from Chama, NM). The reason why the Colorado side is open before the New Mexico side is that Colorado has more snowplows available than New Mexico.**

**DON'T FORGET** the lock combination that was sent to you and these instructions.

The trail to the yurt is marked with blue diamonds and/or blue flagging hanging in the trees. It is a Forest Service road in the summer so it is easy to follow. Follow the blue diamonds for about two miles, when you will make a right turn onto another roadbed and pick up a trail marked with blue diamonds and/or blue flagging. Continue past a green "Road Closed" gate, which may or may not be buried in the snow, for approximately 1/4 mile. You will see the yurt to your right at the base of a steep hill about 100 yards from the road.

When you arrive there probably will be some shoveling to clear the door to the yurt and the privy. There should be a shovel or two on the deck of the yurt or under the yurt with the wood pile.

### **Yurt Etiquette and Check-in/out time**

You need to leave the yurt in the same or better shape than you found it, so that the next guests don't have to deal with your dirty sheets and dishes, and they have plenty of wood to get a fire started. This means that you need to sweep the floors, shake out the rugs, clean the yurt, and restock wood and kindling before you leave. Also, we ask that you put on your own clean sheets and take off the soiled ones before you leave (put them in a laundry bag hanging between the beds).

Staying at a yurt is different than a motel, since the backcountry location makes it difficult to service on a daily basis. Someone will be checking on the yurt periodically, though, to bring up clean sheets, restock food staples, check on wood supplies and make sure that the yurt is in good repair.

Check in and out time is 12 noon. On weekends and around the holidays we already have back-to-back bookings, so your consideration is appreciated. If you want to explore the area without lugging along all your gear, feel free to store your gear under the yurt behind the wood pile.

### **Maps and GPS Coordinates**

The Spruce Hole area is located on the Rio Grande National Forest and a map is available from the Conejos Peak District, Rio Grande National Forest, 15571 County Road T-5, La Jara, CO 81140.

Spruce Hole is on both the Cumbres and Osier USGS topographic 7.5 minute quads.

GPS coordinates are 13 N 03 78859 E  
UTM 41 05710 N

### Elevation and Difficulty of the trail

The yurt is at approximately 10,500 feet elevation. The trip into the yurt has an elevation gain of 300 to 400 feet from the highway to the yurt. It is approximately a 2 1/2 mile trip into the yurt.

The snow and weather conditions will determine how difficult the trip will be. On average, you should plan an hour for every mile, or at least 2 1/2 hours to ski into the yurt. If you have to break trail in deep snow, the time to get to the yurt could double. The trail is not groomed. Plan to get an early start. We recommend getting to the trailhead no later than noon.

The trail is a roadbed and it is a fairly easy grade to the yurt. It is an ideal trail for novices and intermediate skiers, and should be a snap for experienced skiers.

### First Aid

There is a well-stocked first aid kit hanging on the side of the kitchen cabinets, next to the front door, locate it when you arrive.

### Warmth

Getting a fire going should be one of your first tasks. There should be detailed instructions next to the wood stove on the best way to start a fire with the stove, without creating a lot of smoke.

Wood is stored under the yurt (more shoveling may be required here too) An axe should be inside to make the big ones into little ones. Please be careful. Start with some newspaper and very small pieces of kindling, the smaller the better. There is a damper rod located on the top portion of the stove, above the door, pull it all the way out to open. There is also an air inlet control on the bottom right side, pull forward to open fully. It's a good idea to split plenty of kindling in case you need to restart the fire in the middle of the night, and the next guests would be pleasantly surprised to find some waiting.

We now have a limited stockpile of oak firewood for your use (oak is the densest wood). Please use it sparingly so that everybody gets some, a couple of pieces before bedtime will help the fire to last longer.

*There is a fire extinguisher inside - make yourself aware of it's location.*

### Water

You need to make all your water for drinking, cooking, dishes, and washing so get started as soon as the fire is good and hot. Use the big shiny pot in the yurt to melt snow on top of the woodstove. There is also a large bucket to transport snow, by keeping it full inside of the warm yurt, you will be getting a little headstart. Start with a little bit of clean snow in the bottom, adding more as it melts.

Yes it is possible to scorch snow and it tastes really yucky! So start out slow. Having enough snow melted before lights out means coffee first thing in the morning, and full water bottles the next day.

Now that you know where the water comes from, you understand why it is so important to go potty in the privy only (That means you guys, no whizzing off the porch) and to dump all greywater at the base of a nearby tree.

You need to purify or filter your water before drinking it. You can use iodine or another chemical treatment, or you can simply boil your water a few minutes and then let it cool for drinking water.

### Let There Be Light! (and a stove to cook on)

Both the lights and cookstove run on bottled propane.

There are two large tanks directly under the kitchen area (you might have to dig again)

When you first arrive at the yurt, SMELL, if you smell gas, leave the door open, check to see if the main valve is off, and don't go back in until all is clear, if you don't feel comfortable, ski out! We want you to be safe.

Now that all is safe:

1. Check to see that all four lights and the cookstove are turned off. The stove has a knob for each burner. The lights have small levers on the side that should be in the down position.
2. Now turn on the main gas valve. This is the one on top of the tank under the yurt, which has the regulator, and hose coming out of it, please don't turn on the valve on the spare tank.
3. When it is time to rustle the pots and pans, you will have to individually turn on and light each burner. Make sure to turn each burner completely off after each use.

4. The four propane lights need to be lit individually as needed. These lights are very similar in operation to a propane powered camping lantern. They use a mantle which is extremely FRAGILE. Please do not touch or jar them or they will break. If you find one broken there are spares located in the kitchen cabinets. You will need to remove the glass globe which is held on the fixture with a small set screw. Then remove the remnants of the old mantle by lifting up and slightly turning the retaining collar. Carefully unbox the replacement mantle and hang it from the burner nose. Before replacing the globe, light the mantle without turning on the gas, it will flame and smoke for a few brief seconds. Now you can replace the globe and light the fixture as described below. There is a lever on the left hand side of each light fixture. This lever needs to be pushed in gently and rotated upwards in order to be lit. (Have a match burning before turning on the gas.) The lights are not adjustable for brightness, they are either on or off. When you are through with the light, push the lever in and down to extinguish it.
5. When it's time to ski out, first make sure all the lights and stove burners are off and then turn off the main valve. PLEASE DON'T FORGET!
6. RUNNING OUT OF PROPANE AND SWITCHING THE TANKS. We try to switch the tanks before they actually run dry, so you probably won't have to deal with this, but just in case you do, follow the directions carefully. When the propane supply gets very low the lights will dim considerably and may start to pulsate erratically, and the cookstove flame will be very small. The lights will occasionally fluctuate in intensity, so don't confuse this with running out of gas.

If you do think that the propane bottle is actually empty, you will need to switch to a full one. The bottles that are still full will be marked with a tag. There will be a wrench in one of the cabinets in the yurt, that you will use to loosen and tighten the fitting.

First make CERTAIN that all of the lights and the cookstove valves are turned off. Next, take the wrench underneath the yurt to the propane tanks. IMPORTANT. The threaded connections that join the tank to the supply regulator are reverse threaded, meaning, turn them clockwise to loosen, and counterclockwise to tighten. Choose a tank with a tag indicating that it is full, check that the valve is fully closed (clockwise), and remove the plastic plug from the opening (clockwise). Next, close the valve on the empty tank (clockwise) and remove the supply regulator from the empty tank and thread it into the full one. Please remove the full tag from the bottle that you just disconnected. Don't overtighten the regulator. Next turn on the valve of the full tank that you just connected. When you return to the yurt, light the cookstove first, as it will be easier to purge the line of air this way. You may have to hold a lighted match to the stove and lights for several minutes, in order to purge the air.

## Sanitation and Such

### *Dishes*

Washing your dirty dishes is a little different than at home. You want to use as little of your precious water as possible. First remove as many food remnants as possible. There are a couple of rectangular plastic tubs which can be used for soapy and rinse water. Don't use too much soap. If you will be doing dishes later on, save your water, at least the rinse water to use as the wash water.

### *#1 and #2*

Well this is pretty self-explanatory. Please don't throw any inorganic trash into the privy. Also, please don't put any sanitary napkins or tampons in the privy.

### *Disposal of greywater and food scraps*

Please dump dirty water of all kinds either at the base of a tree away from the yurt, or into the privy. Put PLANT BASED food scraps ONLY in the privy – MEAT SCRAPS AND FAT ATTRACT BEARS AND OTHER WILDLIFE. PACK OUT ANY MEAT SCRAPS AND FAT ALONG WITH YOUR TRASH.

PLEASE PUT COLD WOOD ASHES IN THE PIT TOILET, NOT ON THE SNOW!

## Beds and Bedding

The yurt is equipped with a queen bed/futon, double bed/futon and two twin beds - enough bed room for 6 people. There are also plenty of pillows and blankets at the yurt so you don't have to bring a sleeping bag if you don't want to.

PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE NO LONGER PROVIDING SHEETS AND PILLOW CASES FOR THE BEDS. YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN SHEETS OR BRING A SLEEPING BAG.

Extra blankets are in the large wooden bin between the beds.

### **Ventilation**

The large plastic bubble on top of the yurt can be opened for additional ventilation, by turning the lifting screw. Don't open farther than two inches and **BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO OVERTIGHTEN** the screw when closing. Please remember to close the dome before you leave.

### **Housekeeping**

We hope that our guests before you left the yurt in a satisfactory condition, Please clean up, sweep the floor and shake out the rugs before you ski out. Thank you very much. Follow the checklist by the door.

### **Garbage and leaving goodies behind.**

Please pack out all of your garbage and recyclables. While we appreciate the thought, think twice before leaving foodstuffs behind for future guests. That can of soda will certainly explode and make a sticky mess, and while that apple looks yummy now, what will it taste like after several freeze and thaw cycles? Return all foodstuffs to the plastic containers under the countertop so as not to attract any uninvited furry guests.

### **Emergencies**

**MAKE SURE BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME, TO LET SOMEONE KNOW WHEN YOU WILL BE RETURNING!!** They will be the ones who will call the sheriff, or other authorities, in the event that you do not return. The contact you gave us for emergencies, is in case someone calls us looking for you.

### **Blizzards and Hazardous Weather Conditions**

If the weather outside looks frightful, stay inside! Do not attempt to leave the yurt to explore or return to your car if conditions outside are hazardous. We would rather you stay an extra day or more than attempt to ski or snowshoe out in hazardous weather conditions.

### **If someone is Injured**

If possible, at least one person should stay with the injured person and two people should ski or snowshoe out to get help. A first aide book and a first aide kit is inside the yurt for your use.

### **Sheriff and the Nearest Phone**

If you have a cell phone, you can contact the Conejos County Sheriff's Department at 911 or 719-376-5921 and the Ambulance Service at 719-376-5921. They will contact Search and Rescue, in the event you need their services. You may have cell phone reception but more likely, you will need to go to an area to get cell phone reception.

Please review the information on altitude sickness, hypothermia, frostbite, avalanche dangers and sunburn which is included on our website under the Necessary Forms & Information tab.

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PLEASE don't litter, or otherwise spoil this wonderful area. Leave it as you found it for you and future generations to enjoy.

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