



## *Charmin, duct tape, Zip Lock bags top outings list*

By Don Jordan

There are some things you should never forget when you take a long fishing or camping trip. Sure, you need all that fishing gear, right down that little sack of rubber bobber stoppers, and every camper needs a sleeping bag and a cooking kit.

But if you think all you need for a fishing trip is tackle and bait, chances are good that you've been caught up the river without a roll of toilet paper. If you ain't got toilet paper, you ain't got shit.

Paddles are important, but when it comes down to it, so to speak, there's nothing worse than resorting to field expedient toilet paper, especially in spring when every available leaf is wet and rotting.

Finding a replacement for good ole American T-P isn't an easy chore. Corn cobs are hard to find on the lake and even harder on tender parts. Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops catalogues are printed on coated paper and, therefore, lack absorbency and gentleness. Fingers work OK, but most of us have trouble with the details. Yuk.

Most experienced outdoors folk have learned this lesson the hard way and take great pains to avoid being caught short of bum wading. A fly-fishing buddy of mine, Forrest Reider of Superior, Wisc., keeps spare rolls everywhere--under car seat, in glovebox, trunk, tackle bag and fishing vest. He's a walking supply store, and you never have to worry about being caught short when on the water with Forrest.

Just remembering to bring it along isn't good enough, however. An unprotected roll doesn't last long around water. Top-of-the-line T-P behaves like a water magnet. You have probably found a forgotten roll in some storage compartment after a rain. There are few things more disgusting than a saturated roll of toilet paper sloshing about the bottom of a boat.

So, never take a roll anywhere without first putting it into its own, personal plastic zip lock bag. Use the heavy freezer bags. Put it back in the bag after you use it, be sure you seal the bag, and always keep it with you.

Toilet paper isn't the only thing a good outdoors recreator needs but often forgets. Number two, so to speak, on the list is duct tape. Duct tape is also called "duck tape" Homophones are often very confusing. This set of same-sounding words is confused by the existence of a company that makes duct tape but calls it duck tape. Got that?

Duct tape is one of the great inventions humankind. Most users rank it right up there with the first stone tools.. Originally designed to seal joints of heating ducts, the utility of this miracle of modern technology surpasses everything but the wheel.

On a wilderness canoe trip in northern Ontario a few years ago, duct tape saved the day for two expdations padders, Ned Bleuer and Rod Montgomery. Their Folbot was apparently destroyed when it wrapped around a boulder in a churning rapid. They were 25 or 30 miles to the nearest road, and the terrain was mountainous and rugged.

They cut saplings to replace broken boat framework and used duct tape to hold the replacements together. It worked, and they were able to float out of the wilderness instead of hiking.

Duct tape can mend holes in boats, or hold a ripped tent or tarp together and keep it waterproof. It mends holes in mosquito netting and screens. It will hold a broken fishing rod together for awhile, and fashioned into a safety strap, will keep your glasses from falling into the lake.

You can mend an car's radio antennae with it or use it to hold a red piece of plastic over your tail light when the original lens gets broken. It makes a secure closure device for metal cans, and I've used it to hold a broken canoe paddle together.

A good saying to remember is: If you can't fix it with duct tape, you don't need it.

The outdoors man or woman armed with duct tape and "backed up" by a good supply of T-P is an unstoppable force to be reckoned with in the woods or on the lake.

In comparison with these two items, every other item you can take into the great outdoors is secondary. But there are four other simple items you will find useful in the wilderness!--spring-loaded clothespins, super glue, wire twisties and zip-lock plastic bags.

Zip-lock bags are right up there near duct tape and toilet paper. As noted, a roll of paper's productive life is severely limited without a zip-lock bag.

Heavy zip bags are great for carrying your corn meal and flour mixture for frying fish, and just about anything else you need to keep dry is suited for the baggie.

Here's a good baggie tip: Squeeze the air out of the bag as you zip it closed and be sure it is closed. Air inside a bag makes it hard to stow and easier to puncture, and an unzipped bag of flour and corn meal can make a real mess inside a pack.

Always take a few spring-loaded clothespins in your tackle box or pack. Besides using them to hang stuff on a line, they make excellent field expedient downrigger trolling clips, closures for potato chip bags and more. The spring part of the clothes pin can be used to replace a broken carburetor spring, and I have used spring clothes pins to hold wires together. They're great for hot-wiring motor vehicles.

Speaking of springs, never head out without a ball point pen. The spring in retractable, push-top pens isn't very strong, but it works fine to replace a broken bail spring on an open-face spinning reel. I used them for just that purpose at least two or three times on fishing trips.

Never leave home without a good supply of wire twist closure devices somewhere in your gear. "Twisties" are right up there with duct tape. How did we ever live without them?

Big twisties are best, because length and heavy wire expand their versatility. A good twisty can seal a plastic garbage bag full of dry clothes and keep them dry when you dump the canoe. A twisty can secure your two-piece fly rod in one unit when broken down, and you can hang a candle lantern just about anywhere with a long twisty.

When squirrelling away outing gear, always keep your eyes peeling for good twisties. Don't save the paper kind. Look for the deluxe, plastic or vinyl-coated ones that come with electronic products. They're more durable and won't rust as quickly as the paper ones.

Super glue is the last item on the must-go list. Super glue or Krazy Glue work about the same. The difference is in the packaging, and, in this case, there is a major difference.

Super glue comes in a pliable, squeeze tube with screw-down closure. The cap is great for stopping leaks, but the soft tube can get punctured easily unless you protect it in a hard container. Krazy Glue has a neat, pin-point type dispenser on its cap, but that cap doesn't stay tight. You could glue everything in your pack or tackle box into one solid mass if there's a leak. Krazy Glue does come in a hard, protective container, however.

If you can't decide which glue to take, take both. In that case, if you forget your Charmin, you can glue your cheeks together to avoid soiling your underwear.



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