

FAQ

Please contact your teacher or CI Program Director Madeline Bachner Lane madeline@cottonwoodinstitute.org with specific questions or further clarification.

Why can't I/my child bring a cell phone on a trip?

There are many reasons for this. Primarily we want students on CI trips to focus on the experience itself, on the natural world around them, on the group of people they are with, and on their own needs and feelings. Phones distract from all of this.

Phones are also expensive devices that don't fare well in the woods, in damp conditions, in the cold, with no electricity. There is seldom cell coverage and often students have a lot of new gear and can get a bit disorganized and potentially lose a phone.

In case of an emergency, our CI instructors all have their phones and will get a hold of CI staff when needed.

Our request to leave phones behind has the best interest of students and the experience of the trip in mind.

Solo hablo español. ¿Quién puede ayudarme con mis preguntas?

Pídale al maestro los formularios traducidos o llame a nuestro personal bilingüe al 303.447.1076 x 703 o vicki@cottonwoodinstitute.org

Are there bathrooms on my trip?

CI trip instructors will explain what the bathroom availability is on each trip. Most trips have an outhouse. Very few trip locations have running water. Some trips require digging a hole for solid waste. All trips set up a handwashing station with soap and water for cleanliness and to avoid the spread of disease, particularly before meals and after using the bathroom.

Are there showers on the trip?

There are not showers available on CI trips. We provide camping experiences. Skipping a shower for 20 hours has no ill effects on the human body and might just be a great experience!

What about bears (and other creatures)?

In Colorado there are black bears (*Ursus americanus*). For the winter and early spring trips bears are hibernating or winter sleeping (typically October - April or early May). At other times of the year black bears try to avoid humans, particularly larger and loud groups (which we often are). CI instructors are all trained to pack food and trash away in bear boxes, vans, or bear hangs to avoid interaction due to food. Students are all instructed to keep food out of tents so as not to tempt any creature, from mice and squirrels, to bears who can all do damage to a tent for food.

Mountain lions also exist in the Colorado Front Range and are even more careful than bears to avoid humans. If encountered, both species are typically easily scared away by yelling, banging pots and pans or hiking poles, and presenting a large human front (standing tall, standing together in a group, not running, picking up dogs and small children etc.).

CI is yet to have a negative interaction with a predator on a trip.

The most common and most frustrating animal we encounter are squirrels who are a threat only to food that is left out or kept in tents. Grey jays are a mountain bird that will also steal food.

Groups also commonly see hawks, deer, scat and tracks from coyotes and the occasional bald eagle.

What if I need to get in touch with my child?

If there is an emergency situation at home and you/your student need to be contacted while we are in the field, please call Ford Church, Executive Director, or Madeline Bachner Lane, Program Director at 303.447.1076 x 700 or x 701. We can make contact with the group in an emergency. We urge you not to try to contact groups in the field except in an actual emergency.

Where will participants sleep?

Most all of the CI trips provide a camping experience with students sleeping in sleeping bags on top of insulated sleeping pads on the ground in tents. Students typically share a tent with 2-3 other students of the same gender. Individual sleeping arrangements can be provided in solo tents so that everyone is as socially comfortable as possible on the trip. We have also allowed students to try hammocks, tarps, and other sleeping arrangements within reason and considering risk management protocol. Please let your teacher know ahead of time if you/your student might want to talk privately about their sleeping situation.

What if I don't have or cannot afford all this camping gear?

Don't fret! There is no need to purchase gear for this trip. Talk to your teacher or call Cottonwood Institute 303.447.1076 x 703 or email vicki@cottonwoodinstitute.org to reserve gear to rent or borrow. Clothing, gear, or supplies should never be a reason not to go on a CI trip. Let us help!

What if my student/I have allergies?

Note any allergies, injuries, conditions, or illnesses on the registration form. Please call our Program Director Madeline at 303.447.1076 x701 or email madeline@cottonwoodinstitute.org to discuss the particulars of your allergies and management plan. CI has and will continue to offer some mitigation for allergies on our trips, but we do have limits and each person has individual concerns and comfort zones. We can decide together if the trip is a good fit and how best to manage allergies, injuries, conditions, or illnesses in the field.