

STEVENSON

Sophomore Wilderness Expedition Criteria for Good Boots

Important: Purchase your boots NOW for the Wilderness Expedition. Properly fitted boots, already broken in, will help you avoid problems during the Expedition.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

<i>Support</i>	Ideally, you'll want to purchase a medium to heavy weight backpacking boot . Many light-weight leather or fabric-composite hiking shoes/boots are currently on the market. The majority of these have been developed for hiking with light daypacks on level terrain and do not provide sufficient ankle support for backpacking with loaded packs on rugged terrain. Nor do they provide enough cold weather insulation. Several people have suffered severely sprained ankles while wearing these boots; girls' ankles seem particularly susceptible. All-leather boots generally provide better support, however there are suitable non-leather boots that will work well. They should be have stiff soles and collars.
<i>Traction</i>	Deep cleat or lug soles are needed for traction in the mud and snow.
<i>Foot Support</i>	Make sure the boot has firm foot and arch support with at least a half shank or three-quarters of a shank in the sole. Do not get a full shank because it makes the boot too stiff for hiking.
<i>Protection</i>	Boots must be high and firm enough to support and protect the ankle.
<i>Insulation</i>	For cold weather, a good leather boot, sealed well, is perfect. Boots with padding or material such as Gore-Tex work well, also.
<i>Collars</i>	Scree collars are helpful, but not absolutely necessary.
<i>Recommended Manufacturers</i>	Vasque, Danner, Keene, Asolo, One-Sport, Timberland, and Merrell (this list is not all-inclusive). NOTE: gumboots (Sorrel), "Army," and "tennis shoe" style boots are not suitable.

If you have any questions please call Bob McCormick, Expedition director, at 831-625-8379.

FITTING THE BOOTS

Your child should be wearing a pair of light (liner) socks next to the skin and a pair of heavy synthetic or wool socks on the outside. The boot size may be ½ to 1 size larger than their street shoe size. If possible, girls should purchase women's boots. Some outfitters will help you select the proper type and size of boot. If you are choosing and fitting your own, use the following as a guide:

1. With boots unlaced, slide the foot as far forward as possible. You should be able to slide your index finger behind the heel inside the boot.
2. Lace the boot firmly. Toes should not touch the end of the boot and should be able to move freely.
3. Stand with your weight on the boot. The ball of the foot should not feel pinched.
4. When walking, the boot should hold the heel in place. Any rubbing will cause blisters.
5. Kick the toe of the boot into the floor, or stand toes facing down, on a slanted platform. If the foot slides in the boot, relace the boots firmly and try again. If the foot slips forward more than ½ inch, try a smaller size, as the toe should not touch the end of the boot.

CONDITIONING THE BOOT

After purchasing your boots, wear them indoors for several days and re-test the fit. Most stores will exchange boots if they have not yet been worn outdoors. (To avoid problems returning boots that do not meet specifications, please have one of the expedition faculty check newly-purchased boots before breaking them in). **CHECK WITH THE STORE ABOUT THEIR RETURN/EXCHANGE POLICY.** (REI will take almost anything back with no questions asked!).

Once you are sure your boots fit, you must break them in. The best way to do this is to wear them all day for four to six weeks before the expedition. **DO NOT PUT THIS OFF.** Boots should be waterproofed using a wax-based material such as Sno Seal or Nature Seal or a silicone based material such as Ultra Seal. Do not use oil products such as Neatsfoot oil; this softens the leather and will allow it to stretch. Do not use animal fat or grease such as mink oil or bear grease; this also softens the leather and may attract unwanted visitors from the woods.