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Outdoors make you want to go in? Free equipment, advice available

By DILLARD STONE
Battalion Reporter

While a lot of us may not exactly feel at home on the range, the Memorial Student Center's Outdoor Recreation Committee is trying to at least get us acquainted with the basics of life outdoors.

The committee held a seminar on outdoor recreation on Friday in front of the Academic Building. Committee members gave demonstrations in such fields as camping, backpacking and outdoor cooking.

"Our main purpose is to sponsor trips, to get people in the outdoors," said Bryan Hall, a committee member.

"One way that we do this is by renting equipment," he said. "A lot of people don't know we do this, but we rent sleeping bags, tents, almost anything involved in outdoor recreation."

Renting equipment for a weekend trip is easy, Hall said. Persons may rent equipment Thursday from 11 a.m. to noon and 2-4 p.m., or Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Check-in time is noon on the following Monday. Equipment is rented to faculty and students on a first come, first serve basis. The general public may rent items after faculty and students are through.

Fun may be the goal of the committee, but safety and environmental awareness are its priorities.

"One of our major concerns is that people get out with the wrong equipment and wrong knowledge and get lost or hurt," Hall said.

To teach safe outdoorsmanship, the committee sponsors seminars every Thursday evening in Rudder Tower. Topics for seminars cover about any type of outdoor activity: caving, backpacking, camping, hiking, and fishing.

"We also try to teach environmental awareness," Hall said. "For example, how to hike and camp without destroying the wilderness." He added almost everybody who uses the outdoors frequently develops environmental concern.

In addition to the seminars, the committee sponsors several trips each year, including one each spring break to Big Bend National Park.

However, there are many other opportunities available to interested persons, Hall said. Individuals often sponsor their own trips by filling out a form, posting it, and letting people sign up.

"Every weekend there's something going on," Hall said.

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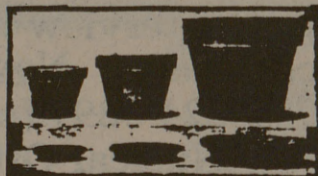
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