

## Wilderness Way Tips by Tamarack Song

### How to Operate a Wilderness Laundromat

Next to “Where’s the bathroom?” the most common question from those new to my wilderness camp is, “How do I do laundry?” When left to their own devices, they usually try to duplicate a washing machine – boil water, add soap, agitate, wring, rinse, wring. It works, but it’s a lot of work.

Unnecessary work. There is usually no need for tubs or buckets, hot water or elbow grease. Even soap is dispensable. As with most aspects of wilderness living, the doorway to ease and comfort is breaking out of old thought patterns and envisioning new, different ways of doing things. Washing clothes in the wilds can be fast and simple, even to the point of avoiding much scrubbing. Here is how I run my laundromat:

- **Prevention** To keep clothes from getting dirty, take off, roll up, use rags and aprons.
- **Rotate and Air** Change socks and undergarments daily, hanging worn garments in sun and wind to dryclean sanitize.
- **Natural Agitation and Microbial Action** Suspend in stream or wavy lake and let the water and little buggers do the work.
- **Pour, not Dunk** Eliminate need for bucket and large quantity of hot water by pouring water into garment rather than immersing garment in water.
- **Snow Wash** Stomp or rub dry snow into clothing, shake and repeat if necessary.
- **Dry on Body** A single layer of clothing can dry quite quickly just from body heat.
- **High Dry** The higher clothes are hung the more quickly they will dry. Clothing can also freeze dry, however it takes considerably longer than in above-freezing temperatures.

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