

www.cooltears.com

May/June 2023

COOLtears™

and tiny campers
MAGAZINE



Ampicamper: Is it a teardrop or a boat? with Mike Sawyer

PLUS:

- Demystifying Teardrop Electrical Systems: A Guide to Wire for Shore Power
- Leave No Trace: Dispose of Waste Properly
- And Much More!

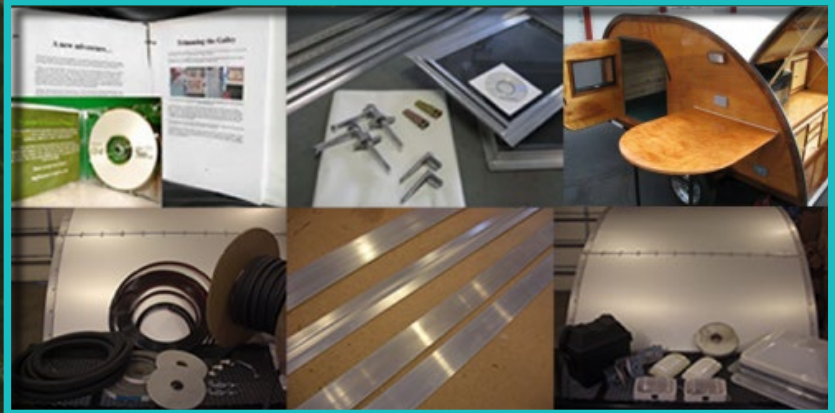
**BIG
WOODY**

**Serious about building
a teardrop camper?**

Big Woody Camper
ULTIMATE KIT

\$1039⁰⁰ plus shipping

Teardrop Campers



Handcrafted Custom Campers.
Plans, kits, parts and accessories for the home builder!



BIG WOODY CAMPERS

715-271-0465 | www.bigwoodycampers.com



Built in the USA

Covers, Shades and Tent Solutions for :

- Little Guy Trailers
- R-Pod Trailers
- T@B Trailers
- T@G Trailers
- A-Frame Trailers
- inTech Trailers
- Hiker Trailers
- and many more

BahaQue
www.pahaque.com

Poway, California
Call us toll-free at
888-700-TENT
(888-700-8368)

Also available at:  **TearDropShop.com**

AUTOWBRAKE
TRAILER MOUNTED BRAKE CONTROL
MADE IN USA
A KYLIE GROUP, LLC COMPANY

HIT THE OPEN ROAD

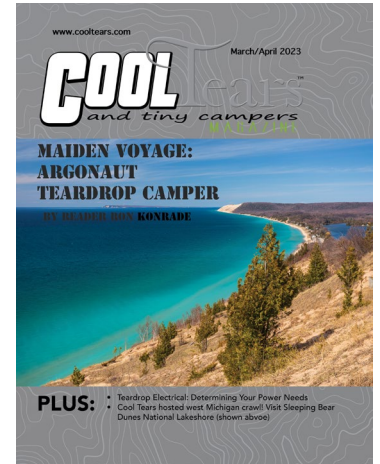
*With Autowbrake on your trailer,
just plug and tow.*

The only electric brake control with nothing installed in the tow vehicle, 100% trailer contained. Period.

www.getautowbrake.com · getautowbrake.com

COOL Tears™ and tiny campers MAGAZINE

Vol. 11 No. 3 May/June 2023



Editor
Lisa Adams

Contributing Authors
Anne Cox
Mike Sawyer

20 COVER STORY AMPHICAMPER: IS IT A TEARDROP OR A BOAT

Lisa Adams with Mike Sawyer

- 5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
Lisa Adams
- 8 KITCHEN ON WHEELS: SPICED BEAN PATTIES
WITH SLAW
Anne Cox
- 11 DEMYSTIFYING TEARDROP ELECTRICAL
SYSTEMS: A GUIDE TO WIRE FOR SHORE
POWER
Cool Tears Staff
- 16 TEARDROP GATHERINGS: MAY - JULY 2023
Cool Tears Staff
- 28 THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY: CHOOSING THE
RIGHT CAMPSITE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER
Lisa Adams
- 34 LEAVE NO TRACE: DISPOSE OF WASTE
PROPERLY
Lisa Adams
- 40 AWE-INSPIRING SYNCHRONOUS FIREFLIES:
CAMPING ADVENTURES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN
UNITED STATES
Cool Tears Staff

© Copyright 2023 Cool Tears Magazine™ All Rights Reserved
Cool Tears Magazine™ is a trademark. Written materials submitted to Cool Tears Magazine™ become the property of Cool Tears Magazine™ upon receipt and may not necessarily be returned. Cool Tears Magazine™ reserves the right to make any changes to materials submitted for publication that are deemed necessary for editorial purposes. The content of this publication may not be copied in any way, shape or form without the express permission of Cool Tears Magazine™. Views expressed in the articles and reviews printed within are not necessarily the views of the editor, publisher, or employees of Cool Tears Magazine™.

Mailing Address:
Cool Tears Magazine
51956 CR 215
Lawrence, MI 49064

Connect with us!



Letter from the Editor:



Hello Tiny Camper Enthusiasts!

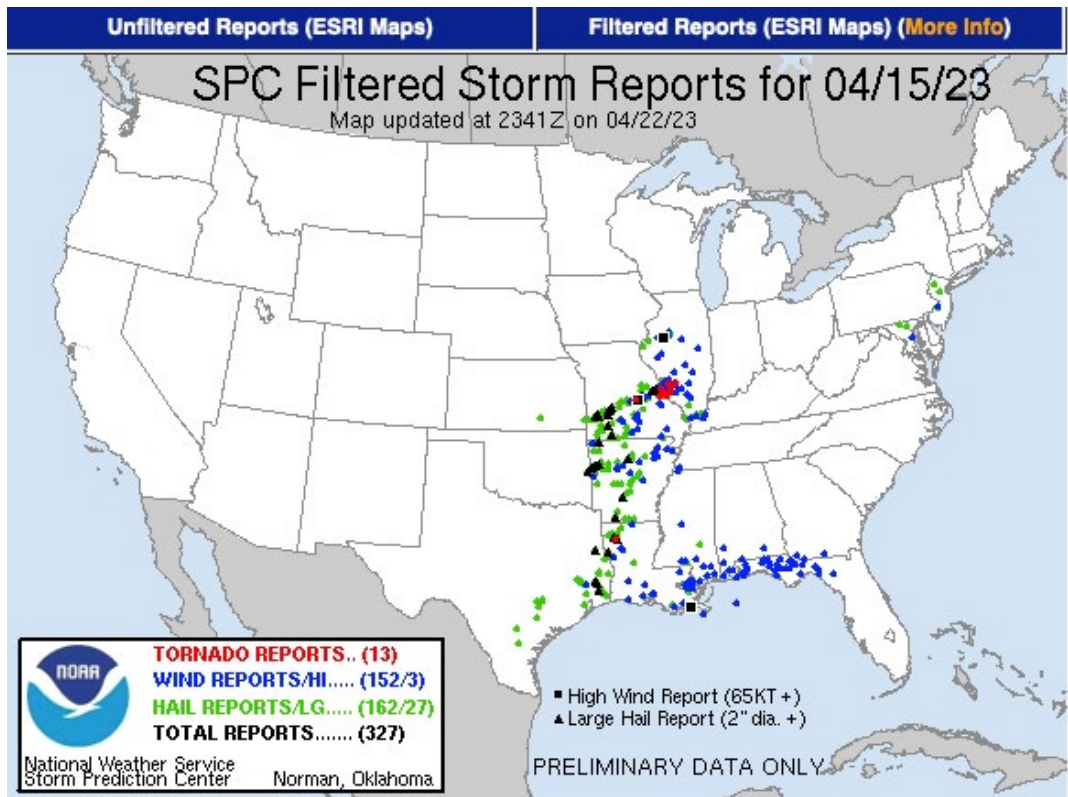
I hope you are doing well. I wanted to share with you about our recent camping experience with Sisters on the Fly in Kentucky. It was a blast! We had been eagerly waiting for spring to arrive, especially after a chilly winter and late season snow in Michigan. We were thrilled to see the trees blooming with colors in just two hours from our home. It was such a refreshing sight and lifted our spirits.

We camped at My Old Kentucky Home State Park in Bardstown, which is around 300 miles south of our home. The weather was perfect for travel - sunny, warm, and not too windy. We decided to break up our journey and spent the night at a Harvest Host location about an hour south of Indianapolis. We love Harvest Hosts and can't wait to share more about it in a future issue once we have more experiences under our belt.

Our first day at the campground was filled with meeting new and old friends, sharing stories, and enjoying the serene surroundings. On Saturday, we explored the area and did some bourbon tasting before returning to the campground in the late afternoon. As the evening approached, we noticed the weather changing, and we heard reports of storms and tornadoes approaching Tennessee and Kentucky. We knew that it was essential to stay alert and prepared, so we packed our belongings and made sure our phones were charged - so we wouldn't miss any weather warnings.

We kept an eye on the weather reports and listened carefully to updates. Luckily, we only experienced a few gusts of wind, distant lightning, and sprinkles. Even though it was not severe, it reminded us of the importance of being weather-aware and prepared for anything while camping. We realized that it's always better to be cautious and have a plan in place.

We are sharing an article in this



issue about how to prepare for weather and choose a suitable campsite. It's essential to take precautions and ensure that we are safe and secure while enjoying the outdoors. Overall, our camping trip was a memorable experience, and we are looking forward to our next adventure!



Happy travels and stay safe
Live Tiny. Live Free.

Lisa Adams
Editor
Cool Tears Magazine™
Lisa@cooltears.com



custom adventure trips & itineraries / outdoor events / content creation / adventure magazine



The Best Buying Experience and the Best Accessories for your Teardrop!

Plus new arrivals, daily deals and live chat with our accessory experts!



10x10 Cottonwood Shelter



10x10 Cottonwood XLT



All Weather Cover



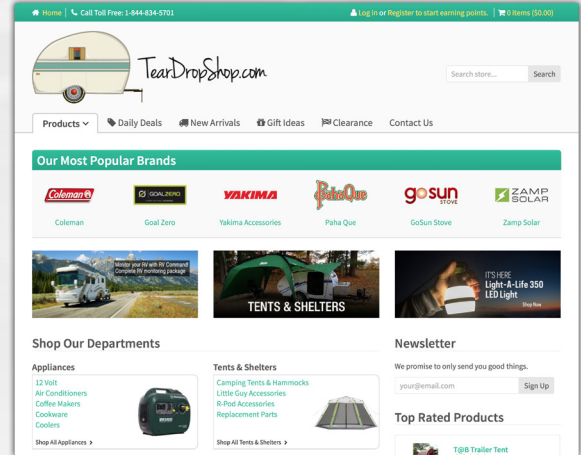
Side Mount Tent



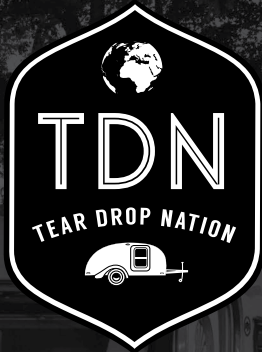
Teardrop Lock



T@B Tent



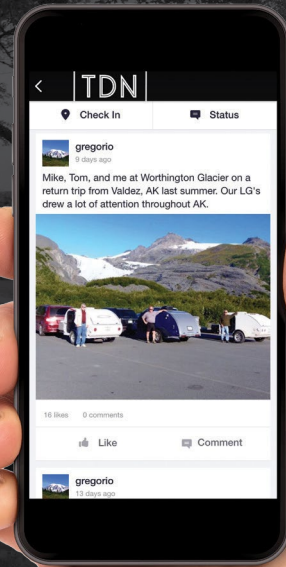
Visit www.teardropshop.com or call Toll Free: 1-844-834-5701



THE APP FOR TEARDROPPERS!

Connect with the Teardrop Community!

- ✓ Status Updates
- ✓ Share Photos
- ✓ Likes & Comments
- ✓ Campsite Check-Ins
- ✓ Review Campgrounds
- ✓ Connect With Campers



Now available on iOS and Android!
<http://teardropnation.com>



KITCHEN ON WHEELS

SPICED BEAN PATTIES WITH SLAW

When we camp with our friends who prefer plant-based foods, I whip these bean burgers up at home and take them for a quick meal everyone can enjoy. For me, hauling the food processor or blender out is a chore, so I like to double down and make salmon patties after the bean burgers are mixed. They are best cooked the next day or can be frozen and cooked at the campsite. Check website (soon) for my favorite fish-burger recipe, using chopped salmon, fresh dill, and panko. These are a far cry from the canned salmon burgers of my childhood! ~ Anne Cox

Bean Patties:

- 1 cup old fashioned rolled oats
- 1 shallot or 1/4 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 carrots, coarsely chopped
- 1 can chickpeas or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (if doubling, use one of each)
- 1 tablespoon spice - YOUR CHOICE! we recommend: BBQ seasoning, garam masala, chili powder, or cajun seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt (omit or reduce this if you use a spice blend containing salt)
- 4 tablespoons olive oil

Patty Instructions:

Place 1/2 cup oats in a bowl and cover with 1/2 up boiling water, let stand until the water is absorbed, which is about five minutes. In a food processor or blender, place chopped onion, carrots, chickpeas or beans, spice, soaked oats, remaining unsoaked oats, and salt if you're adding. Pulse until the mixture forms clumps and holds together.

Form the patties and let sit for five minutes before cooking or place on parchment paper and freeze them for future use. I make them fairly thin so they cook quickly.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet or cast iron pan over medium heat and cook patties until browned on each side, about four minutes per side depending on the thickness.

Serve on a bun and top with the slaw!

Slaw

- 4 cups cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 carrots, shredded
- slaw dressing - your preference, or try one of these.
 1. Vinegar based dressing: 2 tablespoons cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, 1/2 teaspoon celery salt, 1 teaspoon sugar
 2. Mayo based dressing: 3/4 cup mayo, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, 2 tablespoons dijon mustard (or substitute for my favorite, 1 teaspoon wasabi paste)

Slaw Directions:

Mix chopped cabbage, carrots, and dressing

Mix it Up Options:

- Slaw dressing - use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup bottled chutney or BBQ sauce, mix with 1 tablespoon cider vinegar. Dress cabbage and carrots for a quick slaw with lots of flavor
- Double the recipe and use one can of chickpeas and one can of cannellini beans

Let us know what you think and if you have any ideas for us to try! Reach out to Anne@cooltears.com



WE GO TO THE EXTREMES... *SO YOU CAN TOO!*

Camp-Inn Travel Trailers

*Extreme Luxury Teardropping
Over 30 Options Over 100 Features
Highest Quality Materials & Finishes
Building Luxury Teardrops for 20 Years*

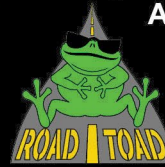


www.TinyCamper.com

Camp-Inn Travel Trailers and Road Toad Campers are built by Petenwell Ind. LLC

Road Toad Campers

Extreme Light Weight
Starting at \$6165 - Shipping Available
All Composite Construction
Pull with *almost* Any Vehicle
600 lbs Cargo Capacity
400 lbs Dry Weight
Extremely New - 2019



www.RoadToadCampers.com





Demystifying Teardrop Camper Electrical Systems:

A Guide to Wiring for Shore Power

By COOL TEARS STAFF

Teadrop electrical systems can seem tricky for some people. If you will only camp where there are electric hookups and want to save some money, you could consider wiring your trailer to only work with shore power. This will remove some working parts and can reduce your build cost. Of course, these components can be added later if time or money is a factor.

It's important to note that without a battery, your teardrop will not have any power when disconnected from the shore power. This means your lights, USB chargers, and other 12-volt appliances will not work unless you're plugged into shore power.

Tools and Materials Needed

- Shore power cord - a 20 or 30AMP cord should suffice for most tiny campers. Purchase the appropriate shore power cord (20 or 30 amp) based on your intended electrical system. This cord will connect your teardrop to the shore power source.
- Shore power inlet (sized to work with your power cord) - [this is a good option if using a 15AMP connection.](#)
- [AC/DC Distribution Panel](#) - this is assuming you will have a mix of 120 and 12-volt outlets.
- Power Converter - To step down the 120-volt AC power from the shore to the 12-volt DC power needed for lights, USB chargers, and other 12-volt appliances
- Appropriate wiring (wire gauge should be based on the amperage of your shore power and intended outlet usage)
- Desired outlets, lights, fans, etc. (can be a mix of 120-volt and 12-volt)
- Wire stripper
- Screwdriver
- Multimeter
- Electrical tape

Step-by-step guide

Turn Off Power: As always, start by disconnecting the shore power to prevent accidental shocks (if your trailer already has some electrical wiring installed.)

Determine Best Location: Find the location in your trailer where it makes sense to have the electrical hardware items mounted. Many people use the inside of a galley cabinet or at the foot of the bed.

Determine Outlet, Light, and Fan Locations:

This is solely based on personal preference. Here are a few things to consider for a teardrop or squaredrop camper:

- To keep condensation to a minimum, an installed fan is recommended.
- Where does charging a phone or tablet in your camper makes sense?
- Will you want a 120-volt microwave or mini fridge in the galley?
- Do you want a 12-volt fridge in the galley?
- Do you want reading lights at the head of the bed or just one overhead light?
- Will you have galley lights or "porch" lights over the doors?

Mount the shore power inlet: This usually involves cutting a hole in the side of your teardrop or squaredrop, so remember the old adage: Measure twice and cut once.

Mount the AC/DC distribution panel: The shore power cord, which is 120V AC, needs to be connected to your AC distribution panel. Mount this near the shore power inlet and make the necessary connections. Strip the wires and connect them from the shore power inlet to the appropriate terminals on the distribution panel, following the standard color coding (or per the unit instructions):

- Green - ground - connects to the grounding bus bar
- White - neutral - connects to the neutral bus bar
- Black or Red - hot - connects to the

main breaker

- **Wire the AC Outlets or Fixtures:** From your AC distribution panel, you will run wires to your 120V AC outlets. Each outlet should have a hot wire (black) connected to a circuit breaker on the panel, a neutral wire (white) connected to the neutral bus bar, and a ground wire (green) connected to the grounding bus bar.

Connect the converter to the AC/DC Panel: You'll need a converter to step down the 120V AC power to 12V DC power for your DC outlets and devices. Connect the converter's AC input wires to the AC distribution panel like you did for the AC outlets.

Wire the DC Outlets and Devices: From the DC output side of the converter, run wires to your 12V DC outlets and devices. The positive wire (usually red) should connect to the positive terminal of the outlet or device, and the negative wire (usually black) should connect to the negative terminal. If your teardrop has a DC distribution panel, you can connect the converter's output to the panel and then connect your outlets and devices to the panel.

- For 12-volt items, you need to consider the round trip distance for the electrical current. Adding a little extra length to account for slack, bends, or other obstacles is always a good idea, so you might consider cutting the wire slightly longer than needed to ensure a comfortable fit. To keep things tidy, loosely twist the out and back wires for 12-volt items.
- When choosing the wire gauge, ensure it is suitable for the current draw of your 12-volt device and the length of

the wire to prevent voltage drop and overheating. For example, to charge an iPad using a USB, the recommended wire gauge depends on the length of the wire and the charging current. To charge efficiently, iPads typically require a charging current of 2.1 to 2.4 amps (2,100-2,400 milliamps). For shorter cable lengths, a higher gauge (thinner) wire may suffice, but for longer cable lengths, a lower gauge (thicker) wire will be required to minimize voltage drop and maintain charging efficiency. Remember that using a wire with an insufficient gauge may result in slower charging times and potential overheating. Always use high-quality cables and connectors to ensure a safe and efficient charging experience.

- If my iPad requires a 12-watt charger and the outlet will be ten feet from the distribution panel, I'll need a minimum of twenty feet of wire. I'll need to calculate the wire gauge based on the charging current and the voltage drop of the distance. A 12-watt charger for an iPad usually operates at 5 volts with a 2.4-amp charging current (12 watts / 5 volts = 2.4 amps). Considering a round-trip distance of 20 feet (10 feet to the outlet + 10 feet back), you can use a wire gauge that minimizes voltage drop while delivering the required current. Using a 16-gauge (AWG) wire would be appropriate for this scenario. A 16-gauge wire has a low enough resistance to minimize voltage drop over the 20-foot round-trip distance, ensuring efficient charging for your iPad. Remember that this wire gauge is for the 12V circuit

that powers the USB charger.

Test the connections: Once everything is wired, connect the shore power and test your connections with a multimeter. Your 120V AC and 12V DC outlets and devices should work when the shore power is connected.

Secure the wiring: Ensure all exposed wiring is covered with electrical tape or wire nuts and safely secured.

Remember that working with electricity can be dangerous, especially if you're unfamiliar with it. Always prioritize safety, and if you're unsure about anything, it's best to consult with a professional electrician.

In our next issue, we will continue our discussion on electrical systems for teardrop trailers. We'll review the types of solar panels and charge controllers, and we'll cover the pros and cons of each type. ■



2023 Calendars are still available for purchase! Order yours today and show your love of tiny campers in your office, on your fridge, or on your wall.

Click the image to the right to order.





**Merchandise available
from Bonfire**

NOTE: One of the great things about having a digital magazine is the ability to link you directly to the products or services that you want to hear more about. Some of the links on our website or in the magazine are affiliate links where we earn a small commission on goods that you purchase. These commissions help us to continue to defray the costs of publishing this magazine. You may notice as you read through the magazine that if you put your mouse over any ad or hyperlink, the screen may flash briefly. You can click on that picture or hyperlink and it will take you directly to more information. We are not affiliates for everything that we link to.

Cool Tears also participates in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate program designed to help small businesses like this to earn a small fee by linking products to Amazon that you may be interested in.

We appreciate your support. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact either of us at Lisa@cooltears.com or Anne@cooltears.com

Harvest Hosts is a membership program that provides access to a network of wineries, farms, breweries, museums and other unique attractions that invite RVers to visit and stay overnight. Harvest Hosts now allows clamshell and teardrop trailers, but you may NOT use your outdoor cooking facility. Click the logo below to get 15% off the regular yearly price. We've stayed at breweries, wineries, farms, and art studios in our local area as well as across the country.



May - July 2023 TearJerker Gatherings



By **COOL TEARS STAFF**

Cool Tears and Tiny Campers is hosting its first-ever tiny camper camping crawl along the beautiful west coast of lower Michigan! If you are planning to attend, send us an email at Lisa@cooltears.com or Anne@cooltears.com. Click on our names to go directly to composing an email to us.

Camping is a popular pastime for many individuals, and teardrops and other tiny campers have grown in popularity in recent years due to their compact size and versatility.

For those who camp using teardrop campers, attending gatherings with like-minded individuals can provide a unique opportunity to share tips and tricks for camping in these specialized vehicles. These gatherings can also offer a sense of community and camaraderie with others who share the same passion for camping in a teardrop camper.

Attending gatherings with individuals who share a common interest can form lasting friendships and connections. These connections provide a support system and a source of encouragement for future camping trips and adventures. When I attended my first teardrop gathering, I was met with open arms (literally) and we shared a meal together that same night, learning about each other's families and teardrops.

Attending gatherings with like-minded individuals who camp in teardrop campers can provide an opportunity for personal growth, community building, and sharing knowledge and experiences. In an increasingly polarized world, attending gatherings with like-minded individuals can provide a space for open and respectful dialogue. By bringing people together, these gatherings can promote understanding and bridge divides, leading to a more inclusive and tolerant society.

We will highlight upcoming events as we become aware of them. Cool Tears is a staff of two people and we rely on people like you to lead us to stories or submit articles that may interest the broader community because

we can't attend every event, even though we would love to.

Check out these upcoming [TearJerker](#) events, and if you attend one, let us help you share your experience with our readers!

May 18 through May 21, 2023

Carolina Chapter's Spring Fling at Lake Hartwell State Park, South Carolina

Heartland Chapter at Pershing State Park, Missouri



Hoosier Chapter's Spring Gathering at Raccoon Lake State Recreation Area, Indiana

Land of Lincoln Chapter at Lake Le Aqua NA, State Recreation Area, Illinois

Liberty Bell Chapter's Chapman State Park Gathering, Pennsylvania

Chesapeake Bay Chapter at Westmoreland State Park, Virginia

Minnesota Lakes and Loons Chapter Spring Gathering at Highland Ridge Campground, Wisconsin

May 23 - 26

Badger State Chapter's Midweek at Wood County South State Park, Wisconsin



May 24 - 30

Pacific Northwest Chapter at Rainbow Falls, Washington

June 2-4

Heartland Chapter at Bennet Springs State Park, Missouri

Lone Star Chapter's June-Bug-Out at Lake Brownwood State Park, Texas

June 8-11

Land of Lincoln Chapter at Kankakee River State Park, Illinois

Liberty Bell Chapter at Raccoon Creek State Park, Pennsylvania

June 9-11

Chesapeake Bay Chapter at Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware

Southern Ontario Chapter at Port Burwell Provincial Park

June 15 - June 18

New England Chapter at Salt Rock State Park, Connecticut

June 20 -22

Badger State Chapter, Midweek at Calumet Park on Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin

June 22-25

Bluegrass Chapter at Nolin Lake, Wax Campground, Kentucky

June 30 - July 2

Hawkeye Chapter at Maquoketa Caves State Park, Iowa

July 13 - 17

Heartland Chapter at Royal Goreg/Canon City KOA, Colorado River Rafting, Colorado

July 13 - 16

Big Sky Chapter-Farm Gathering, Kalispell, Montana

Liberty Bell Chapter at Lower Lake Campground, Pennsylvania

July 20-23

Hoosier Chapter at Tippecanoe State Park, Indiana

July 21-25

Walk the Winds, Yellowstone Chapter at New Fork Group Campground, Wyoming

July 27-30

Pacific Northwest, Mount St Helens at Kid Valley RV Park, Washington

July 28 - July 30

2023 Can/Yak at Astico Park, Dodge County Wisconsin ■



All photos were taken at the TearJerkers last Crossroads of America gathering in Indiana.





Ampicamper: Is it a teardrop or a boat?

By **LISA ADAMS**
with
MIKE SAWYER

In the realm of recreational vehicles, innovative and unique creations continue to captivate outdoor enthusiasts worldwide. One such invention is the ampicamper, a camper boat that seamlessly combines the joys of camping with the freedom of being on the water.

We recently had the opportunity to interview Mike Sawyer, an avid DIY builder who successfully constructed his own ampicamper! Let's dive into his journey and discover the fascinating world of this teardrop-boat hybrid.

Mike, a skilled, classic VW mechanic residing in North Texas, revealed how his long-standing affinity for both boats and camping led him to embark on the ampicamper project. After watching a YouTube video showcasing these amphibious campers, he was immediately drawn to the idea of experiencing the best of both worlds. His love of the water and his partner's love for camping decided to build an ampicamper, an exciting adventure.



With his passion ignited, Mike embarked on his ampicamper project, investing a little over a month in its creation so far. While it's road and water worthy, the ampicamper is not completed yet. Surprisingly, he found the process to be relatively straightforward, with no significant challenges encountered along

the way. The camper's design was inspired by classic teardrop campers, featuring fore and aft hatches for easy access and a functional cabin area. Notably, the camper's plans emphasized the importance of keeping the fore hatch open when running the engine to prevent exhaust fumes.

Mike hasn't owned a traditional teardrop camper before, but he shared the distinctive features that set his ampicamper apart. The boat-camper hybrid boasted a bench for driving, which conveniently slid under the rear deck when transformed into a sleeping space. Two built-in shelves in the rear and a front bulkhead cabinet added storage options, enhancing functionality. Furthermore, he reinforced the transom and opted for a sturdier 1/2" plywood construction, ensuring the durability of his creation.

Mike and his partner recently took their ampicamper on a test run on the water, towing it over 100 miles from his hometown to Decatur, TX. Although they haven't yet embarked on a camping trip with it, he shared that the weight and size of the camper boat did not hinder the towing and launching capabilities. It towed smoothly and could quickly be launched, making it a versatile and user-friendly vessel. Remarkably, they haven't encountered any difficulties or limitations when using the ampicamper on land or water. Its combined design seamlessly integrated the best aspects of a teardrop camper and a boat, offering a unique experience without any significant drawbacks.

To tailor the ampicamper to his preferences, Mike made several modifications. He altered the window shape, added a front cabinet



within the bulkhead, and installed a bow eye for efficient trailer pulling. Opting for a stronger transom and utilizing ½" plywood also increased the camper boat's structural integrity. A pallet wood floor was added, which would be stained and sealed for aesthetic appeal.

For those interested in building their own amphicamper, Mike offered some valuable advice. He suggested ensuring all the necessary materials are readily available before starting the project, as having everything on hand can expedite the construction process. He also emphasized that dedicating focused time to the project can lead to quicker completion. Patience,

attention to detail, and a willingness to adapt and make modifications as needed are essential qualities for a successful build.

Most teardrop owners experience gawking while at gas stations, parking lots, or campgrounds. Can you imagine the attention this sparks? The amphicamper attracts significant attention, particularly from camping enthusiasts. The blending of camping and boating struck a chord with outdoor enthusiasts seeking a novel experience. While some boat enthusiasts questioned the purpose behind such a creation, Mike firmly stands by his decision, embracing the "why not" mentality! Mike expressed gratitude for the attention his

creation has received, particularly within the camping community. The fascination with the ampicamper has sparked conversations and piqued the curiosity of fellow outdoor enthusiasts. It serves as a testament to the allure of combining two beloved recreational



and boating experiences.

Whether cruising along serene lakes, parking beside scenic campsites, or capturing the attention of intrigued onlookers, the ampicamper offers a world of possibilities. It exemplifies the spirit of exploration, creativity, and the joy of bringing dreams to life.

So, the next time you find yourself torn between the desire to camp and the longing to be on the water, remember the remarkable amphibious campers that blur the boundaries. The ampicamper might just be the perfect solution, combining the essence of both worlds and opening up a realm of endless adventures.

activities into one.

The world of camping and boating has witnessed the emergence of an exciting innovation—the ampicamper. The vision of one DIY enthusiast has materialized into a unique and functional teardrop-boat hybrid that seamlessly transitions from land to water. With its comfortable sleeping quarters, functional kitchenette, and the freedom to explore land and water, the ampicamper offers an unparalleled experience for adventure seekers.

As Mike shared his DIY build with me, he provided valuable insights for those inspired to build their own ampicamper. While attention to safety measures, appropriate material selection, and structural integrity are crucial during construction, the result promises an unforgettable blend of camping



Editor's note: I think the name your girlfriend suggested is perfect: "Surf and Turf"!



Second Wind Trailers

VINTAGE TEARDROP & OVERLAND TRAILERS

FOLLOW US ONLINE:



DESIGN • BUILD • EXPLORE

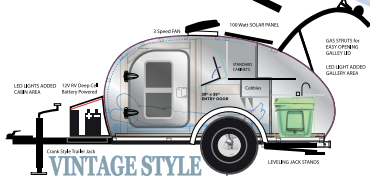
100% HAND MADE



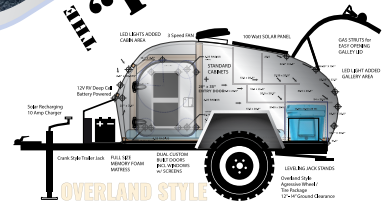
The Whisper 2

SPECIAL EDITION! US COAST GUARD
 ★★ ★★ FREEDOM ★★ ★★

THE "FREEDOM"



TWO UNIQUE FORMULAS



I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THIS TRAILER!

CUSTOMIZE YOUR FREEDOM



'GLAMPING' OVERLAND STYLE
 Every Single Trailer We Build Is A Work Of Art!

NATHAN GRACE ★★★★★

"I absolutely love this trailer, Nathan did such an amazing job delivering exactly what I asked for. He was really responsive and kind, and I left really happy with the work."



KORI ★★★★★

"Nathan at second wind trailers was a dream to work with! From the second I inquired about getting a freedom trailer made by him, he was very informative and friendly. He kept me in the loop every step of the way by sending pictures and videos of the build. It was such a cool experience seeing it being built from the ground up"



CHECK OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:

SCAN THIS TO SEE MORE

www.SecondWindTrailers.com

**OKLAHOMA'S BEST
CUSTOM BUILT TEARDROP TRAILERS**

**OK
SCHOONERS**



918.629.8311

**VETERAN
OWNED**

QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

— FROM THE FRAME UP —



FULL KITCHEN



THREE MODELS

Square Back, Wood Panel
or Aluminum Panel

OK SCHOONERS TEARDROP TRAILERS ARE INDIVIDUALLY HAND-CRAFTED, QUALITY CAMPERS. EACH IS BUILT WITH YOUR SPECIFIC OPTIONS IN AVAILABLE COLORS AND ACCESSORIES AT OUR SHOP LOCATED IN BROKEN ARROW, OK. WE DO NOT MASS PRODUCE OR USE ASSEMBLY LINES. OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE OUR CUSTOMERS WITH A QUALITY CUSTOM-BUILT TEARDROP AT A REASONABLE PRICE. COMPARE US TO THE COMPETITORS AND YOU WILL FIND THAT OUR VALUE, QUALITY, AND WORKMANSHIP ARE FAR SUPERIOR.

COLOR OPTIONS



Okschooners.com

TEMBO

TUSK

EXTREME DUTY GEAR

MADE IN USA



Skottle Grills
Camp Tables
Fridge Slides

TemboTusk.com
Info@TemboTusk.com

Made in America
Use Coupon Code: **CoolTears**



www.TemboTusk.com



The Importance of Safety: Choosing the Right Campsite for Inclement Weather

By **LISA ADAMS**

At the end of March/early April, tornadoes ripped across the midwest and southeast United States, leaving dozens of people dead across several states. One of these tornadoes went through McCormick Creek State Park in Indiana. Sadly, two campers died in their camper in the park that night.

When it comes to camping, being weather aware is crucial. The weather can change quickly, and being prepared for any conditions can make all the difference in keeping you and your camping companions safe. Choose your campsite wisely and know what to do when inclement weather is in your area.

My dad was a retired fireman and emergency management director. He constantly planned for the worst and prayed for the best in every situation. As a young kid, we did fire drills at home. We prepared for what to do if we couldn't go out the front or back door, what to do if the stairs were blocked, where to meet, etc.



Lisa and her dad, September 2019

As a result, I've always been safety conscious, but I've not always let it drive my actions. I typically scan a room to know where my exits are and pay attention to the pre-flight safety checks even though I've flown hundreds of

times. But there were times I didn't request a lower level hotel room and instead took one higher than the third floor, as my dad always suggested. And while camping, I have stayed in some places that posed risks.

We've stayed in locations where there was no cell signal to rely on for weather alerts. We stayed in an area that was prone to flooding. And we've set up the camper under dead or dying trees. It's time to focus on the safety outdoors like I always have indoors. As we prep for our first big camping trip of the season, I will add a piece of gear to our teardrop, a battery-powered weather radio.

What should you look out for when choosing a campsite

Many people utilize the 4 W's when looking for a suitable campsite if they are backpacking. Wind, Water, Widowmakers, and Wood; however, the first three W's



are great to remember when looking for a campsite when camping in your teardrop, squaredrop, or other tiny campers.

First, consider the location of your campsite and determine which way the wind is blowing. High winds can rock a teardrop or tiny camper. You may want to position your tow vehicle in such a way that it blocks the sustained winds, or you may want to leave your camper attached to your tow vehicle in case you want to leave the area immediately. If your camping location allows, it might be best to point your tow vehicle and teardrop into the wind so you're not getting blasted from the side.

Secondly, consider the terrain. If you're camping in a low-lying area, be aware that it may be prone to flooding during heavy rain. Look for low-lying areas and examine the ground for erosion. Leaves and dirt that look pushed in a specific direction are signs of water run-off.

Lastly, it's also essential to consider the vegetation around your campsite. Avoid camping near dead or dying trees, as they can pose a hazard during storms. Falling branches can be life-threatening so look for an area with healthy, sturdy trees to reduce the risk of a "widowmaker" falling into camp.

Inclement Weather

Now, let's talk about how to be prepared for inclement weather while camping. First and foremost, make sure you have a reliable weather forecast. Check the forecast before you leave and monitor it throughout your trip. This will help you prepare for any conditions that may be headed your way.

Tornadoes can be especially dangerous at night when people may be less aware of the



weather conditions. To help prevent such tragedies from happening, it's vital to be proactive and prepared. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Keep an eye on the weather forecast: Check the weather forecast frequently, especially when planning to camp. Be aware of any watches or warnings issued by the National Weather Service, and take them seriously. If you are camping in an area with limited or no cell signal, have a battery-powered weather radio. [We recently purchased this NOAA Emergency Weather Radio that will sound an alarm for over 60 kinds of weather hazards and emergencies. Some of these can be disabled, some cannot.](#)
2. Have a plan in place: Before you go camping, make sure you have a plan for

severe weather. Identify the safest place to take shelter, such as a sturdy building or a designated tornado shelter. If you're unsure, ask the campground host or park ranger. Make sure everyone in your camping party knows where to go in case of severe weather.

3. Stay informed: If you hear thunder or see lightning, that's a sign that a thunderstorm may be approaching. Keep an eye on the sky for signs of severe weather, and be prepared to take action if necessary.
4. Know the signs of a tornado: Tornadoes can develop quickly, and it's essential to know the signs so you can take action. Look for a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud or a loud, roaring sound. Note that it may be impossible to see a funnel-shaped cloud at night, making night-time tornadoes so



dangerous.

5. Take shelter immediately: If you hear a warning or see signs of a tornado, take shelter immediately. Seek out the nearest sturdy building or designated tornado shelter. If you're in a campground and can't find shelter, lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area and cover your head with your hands.

Remember, the key to preventing tragedies is to be proactive and prepared. Identify the safest place to take shelter when you first arrive at your campsite and be prepared to use it. By staying aware of the weather conditions and having a plan, you can help keep yourself and your camping companions safe during severe weather events.

Stay safe out there! ■



DAMVID ADVENTURES

COOL Tears™ and tiny campers MAGAZINE





Leave No Trace - Dispose of Waste Properly:

How to Maintain Our Pristine Wilderness While Enjoying the Great Outdoors

By **LISA ADAMS**

As outdoor and tiny camper enthusiasts, we are morally obligated to protect the environment we explore and enjoy. Although camping in a teardrop or squaredrop differs from traditional tent camping, the Leave No Trace principles still apply. Leave No Trace, an organization that educates individuals on responsible outdoor ethics, has developed seven principles to guide us in our quest to minimize our impact on nature.

This article delves into the third principle, "Dispose of Waste Properly," to understand its importance, implications, and best practices for outdoor adventurers. All waste generated during our outdoor activities and camping adventures should be disposed of responsibly and sustainably.

The Importance of Disposing of Waste Properly

Black and Gray Water Disposal

Proper disposal of black water (sewage) and gray water (waste from sinks and showers) is critical for teardrop and squaredrop campers. Use designated dump stations to empty holding tanks, and never release wastewater onto the ground or into water sources. Ensure all connections are secure to prevent leaks or spills. If you're not in a large teardrop with an internal bathroom, then the same methodology applies to portable toilets, whether you use commercial waste bags, bags filled with pine shavings, or kitty litter.

Dumping black water onto the ground or into a water source is never acceptable. Gray water can be disposed of if more than 200 feet from any water source and if



food bits are removed. In this case, you can scatter the water across a large area, which can be done by splashing the water against a tree or bush so the water is not dumped in one location.

Trash disposal and recycling

Dispose of trash and recycling in designated receptacles. If no trash bins are available, store waste in sealed bags and dispose of it at an appropriate facility later. Separate recyclables and look for recycling centers near your camping location. Whenever



possible, recycle or repurpose items to minimize waste. Opt for reusable containers and utensils, and choose products with minimal packaging.

Minimizing Food Waste

Plan meals carefully to avoid

leftovers and waste. Repackage food items to reduce the amount of trash generated on the trail. It is essential to pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter generated during our trips.

This includes everything from food wrappers and plastic water bottles to biodegradable waste like banana peels and apple cores. Strain food particles from dishwater and pack them out in your trash bag.



dangerous behaviors. In addition, improperly disposed waste can contaminate water sources and harm the environment.

One of the critical reasons for this principle is to protect the wildlife in the area. Even small scraps of food or trash can attract animals to campsites and other areas, leading to them becoming habituated to humans and developing

Other Hidden Waste to Consider

Smart Energy Usage

Conserve energy by turning off lights,



MEMBER
OUTDOOR WRITERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

appliances, and electronics when not in use. Use LED lighting, which is more energy-efficient and longer-lasting than traditional bulbs. Consider installing solar panels or using portable solar chargers to reduce reliance on generators and the electrical grid.

Heating and Cooling

Practice efficient climate control using proper insulation, window



Outdoorsy

GO WHERE HOTELS CAN'T

Book now

A white Roadtrek 170 motorhome parked in a grassy field with a man and a woman sitting in chairs outside.

shades, and ventilation. When possible, park your tiny camper in shaded areas during hot weather and sunny spots during cold weather to minimize the need for air conditioning and heating.

Noise Pollution

Keep noise levels to a minimum, especially during quiet hours. Use headphones for music or other entertainment, and be considerate of other campers and wildlife. Many campgrounds now offer “radio-free” zones if you want to ensure you’re staying in a quiet location.

Environmental Preservation

Disposing of waste properly is crucial to preserving the delicate balance of ecosystems. By following this LNT principle, we prevent pollution of water sources, protect wildlife from ingesting harmful substances, and maintain the aesthetics of natural landscapes.

Improper waste disposal can lead to long-lasting, sometimes irreversible, environmental damage. Trash and human waste can take years to decompose, introducing harmful chemicals and toxins to the soil and water systems. As responsible outdoor and camping enthusiasts, we must avoid these negative consequences.

Summary

Teardrop camping offers us a unique way to experience the great outdoors, but it also comes with a responsibility to protect and preserve the environments we visit. Disposing of waste properly is a critical aspect of the Leave No Trace principles. Remember, if you see a camping spot that is not pristine, grab your garbage bag and leave



the site better than when you found it. Our November/December 2022 issue featured an article called “Cleaning Up Camp.” [Here is a link to that back issue.](#)

By adhering to the Leave No Trace principles, teardrop campers can minimize our impact, safeguarding our natural landscapes for future generations. We are all stewards of nature, and it is our shared duty to leave it better than we found it. So, embark on your next camping adventure with these guidelines in mind, and let's all contribute to the sustainability of our beautiful planet! ■

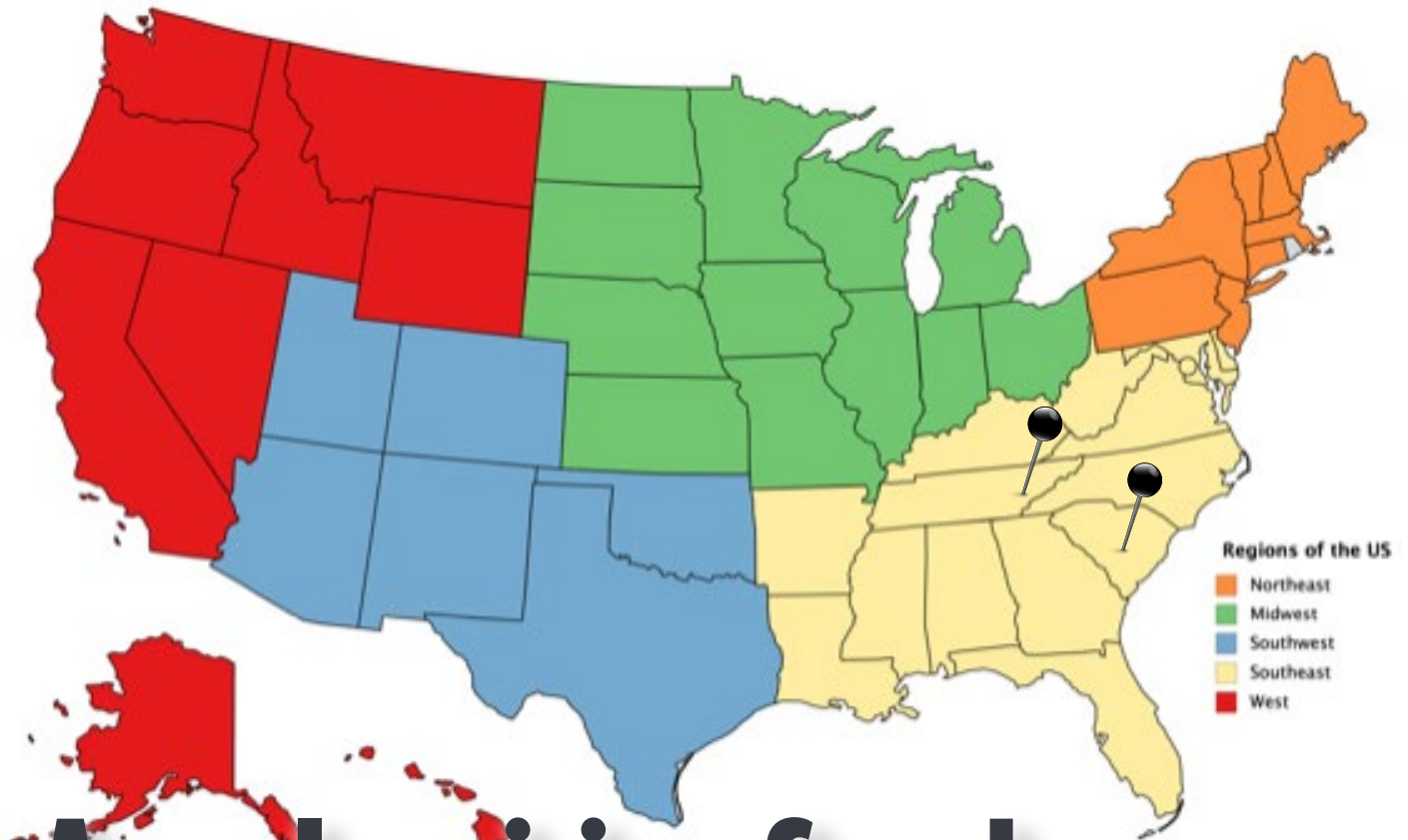


Photo submitted by Elizabeth Collins and Jay Hays of their homebuilt trailer named Crowswing.

[Check out their YouTube Channel by clicking this link.](#)



**LEAVE
NO TRACE**
Proud Partner



Awe-Inspiring Synchronous Fireflies:

Camping Adventures in the Southeastern United States

By COOL TEARS STAFF

As the sun sets and the night sky's darkness settles in, a phenomenon occurs in a few areas of North America that is truly mesmerizing. In the quiet of the woods, thousands of fireflies begin to light up in unison, creating a magical display that seems almost otherworldly. This is the phenomenon of synchronous fireflies, and for those who have witnessed it, it is an experience that is truly unforgettable.

There is something about the natural beauty and wonder of synchronous fireflies that captures our imaginations and draws us in. Perhaps it is the sense of awe and wonder that we feel when we witness such a beautiful and complex natural display. Or it is how the fireflies communicate with each other through their synchronized flashes, creating a sense of harmony and unity in the natural world.

Whatever the reason, there is no denying the allure of synchronous fireflies, and for those who are lucky enough to witness them, it is an experience that they will treasure for a lifetime. In our regional camping spotlight,

appreciates the beauty of the natural world, you won't want to miss the spectacle of synchronous fireflies.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee

Every year from late May to mid-June, the Elkmont area of Great Smoky Mountains National Park is home to the largest gathering of synchronous fireflies in North America. Viewing the synchronous fireflies has become so popular that the National Park holds a lottery each year to determine who can enter the park after 4PM. The lottery winners will



we will explore some of the best places in the southeastern United States to see synchronous fireflies. Whether you are a nature lover, a camping enthusiast, or simply someone who

be one of 960 vehicles allowed to park at the Elkmont viewing location on one of the eight nights open for viewing. To protect

the *Photinus carolinus*, the firefly species that flashes synchronously, the park only has eight viewing nights per year.

While it's too late to enter the lottery if you haven't already, there are still campsites available in May and early June (as of the writing of this article on May 10, 2023) in the Elkmont Campground, which is the largest and busiest campground in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. So it may be possible to still see the fireflies near the campground.

Congaree National Park, South Carolina

Congaree National Park is home to a unique population of synchronous fireflies that usually appear from late May to mid-June. The park offers several camping options, including backcountry camping and front-country camping, with facilities that allow for a more immersive experience of these amazing insects. However, the camping locations inside the National Park are walk-in sites only, so no teardrops or tiny campers are allowed.



There are private campgrounds just under an hour's drive from the National Park that you could check out. Elliott's Landing and Campground is on Lake Marion, the largest lake in South Carolina. This campground also has boat rentals, a large fishing pier, and a boat ramp. Sweetwater Lake Campground is a first-come, first-serve campground open year-round to out-of-state campers only. All sites have a water view, and fishing is encouraged in their spring-fed lake.

Both of these campgrounds have electric hookups, water available, and bathhouses.

with showers. The expansive Manchester State Forest is nestled alongside Mill Creek



Sumter County - Mill Creek Park

Mill Creek Park is a county-owned park with 126 sites roughly a 45-minute drive from Congaree National Park. It is important to note that while the sites are still inexpensive, they have doubled since last summer. The current pricing is \$30 for 50 Amp, and \$20 for 30 Amp sites—newly renovated bathhouses

Park, and it offers outdoor activities for adventurers seeking to immerse themselves in the beauty of nature. With its dense forests, serene lakes, and winding trails, this state forest provides a haven for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Embark on an exhilarating hike through the forest's picturesque paths, where you can discover hidden waterfalls, observe diverse wildlife, and marvel at the vibrant colors of the changing seasons. If mountain biking is more your style, saddle up and traverse the forest's rugged

terrain, encountering thrilling descents and challenging ascents that will put your skills to the test. And for those who prefer a more leisurely pace, the tranquil lakes and ponds within Manchester State Forest offer excellent opportunities for fishing, boating, and simply enjoying the soothing sounds of nature. With its diverse array of activities, Manchester State Forest guarantees an unforgettable adventure for every nature enthusiast camping in the vicinity of Mill Creek Park.

Santee State Park

Santee State Park offers a perfect blend of natural beauty and recreational opportunities for camping enthusiasts. Set on the shores of Lake Marion, South Carolina's largest lake, this picturesque state park invites visitors to indulge in many outdoor activities. Cast your line into the tranquil waters to reel in prized catches like catfish and bass, or embark on a peaceful canoe or kayak adventure, exploring the serene coves and inlets that dot the 110,600 acres (44750+ hectare) lake's shoreline. Hiking enthusiasts will find solace in the park's scenic trails, meandering through ancient forests and providing glimpses of local wildlife. Pack your clubs! If you're seeking a break from the water and trails, Santee State Park boasts a championship golf course, inviting golfers of all levels to perfect their swing amidst stunning natural surroundings. Lastly, Santee State Park is an excellent base camp for those interested in witnessing the mesmerizing display of synchronous fireflies at nearby Congaree National Park. Just a short drive away, Congaree National Park presents a unique opportunity to see this natural phenomenon firsthand, adding enchantment to your camping experience. Whether you're an angler, a hiker, a golfer, or an admirer of

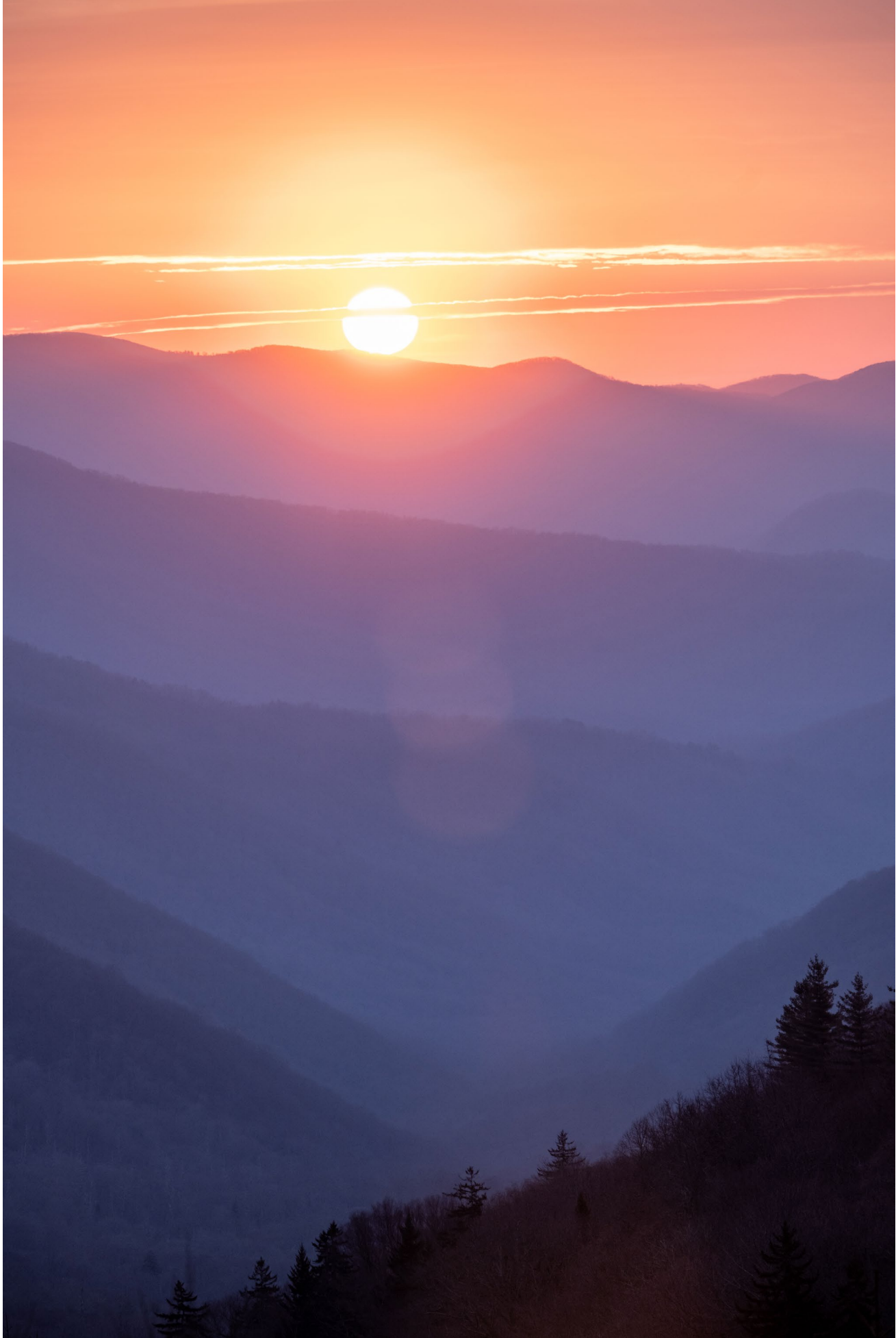
synchronized fireflies, Santee State Park offers a delightful range of activities for outdoor enthusiasts of all interests.

Santee State Park has 158 standard campsites in two campgrounds, two boat ramps, a park store with a wifi lounge, and over ten miles of trails for hiking and biking. ■

Did you know that we have a teardrop for rent? There are still dates available for the summer and fall season. [Click here to go directly to our rental link.](#)

Note: We are located in southwest Michigan. Michigan was recently named one of the premier camping destinations in the country!





Uncompromising quality.



CLASSIC TEARDROP STYLE, MODERN AMENITIES

QUALITY DESIGN & CRAFTSMANSHIP
KESTREL STARTS AT \$8,500

PIKA STARTS AT \$14,500

CLASSIC STARTS AT \$23,400



www.timberleaftrailers.com



Cool Tears
wants to hear
from YOU!

Send us your story and
if we use it, we'll give
you \$50!

Anne@cooltears.com



#cooltearsmag



<https://www.facebook.com/CoolTearsMagazine/>



@cooltearsmag

Tag your 'grams with #cooltearsmag for a chance to be featured on our Instagram feed and in the magazine.



Time for a new adventure. Videos of our adventures, reader builds, tips and tricks. Live tiny - Live free.