

SOUTHERN OHIO BLACK BEAR SAFETY

Black bears are have been sighted in Southern Ohio with increasing frequency since 1993. In 2006, it is estimated that 50 -100 bears live in Ohio year-round. They are an endangered species in the Ohio, so consider yourself lucky if you see even a sign of a bear. Ohio does have coyotes, ferrel dogs, and other pests that can tear up a campsite, so setting up a pest-proof site is important.

Note that the bear bag techniques presented here are simple, and work well in Ohio where the bears have few encounters with campers. Bears in other areas, in particular areas frequented by campers are "better trained" and will know how to defeat these simple bear bags. The counter-balance system or the Pacific Coast Trail bagging system are alternate bear bag systems you should consider in other areas. You can find information on these systems on the Web.

Bear safety on the trail:

Black bears are most often active in the early morning and early evening. They will emerge from hibernation from mid-March to mid-April. Sows will have cubs with them in the Spring and early Summer months.

- Hike in a group.
- Make some noise as you hike. Talk, sing or clap your hands so you don't startle a bear. Some people wear bells to alert bears they are in the area.
- Use caution on windy days and in areas where a bear may not see or hear you coming. It is important to warn a bear of your presence.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR...

Learn to care, be **A.W.A.R.E.**

Act calm. Do not run. Bears, like dogs have a natural chase instinct.

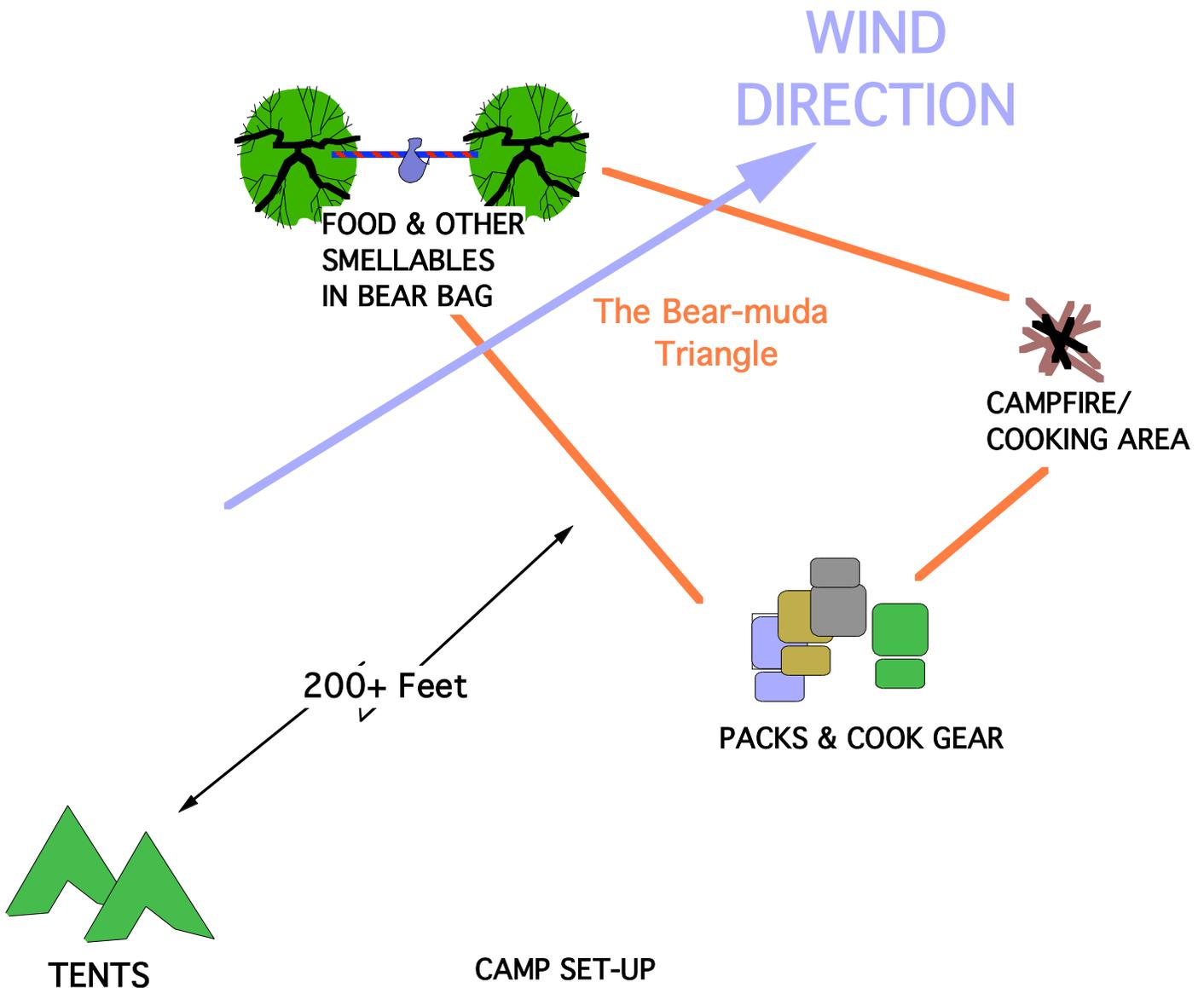
Warn the bear you are there. Talk in a firm, but calm voice to let the bear know you are there and that you are human.

Allow space between you and the bear. If you are on a path step aside, hopefully the bear will keep on its way. Back away slowly.

Raise your hands above your head to appear larger. If the bear is still following you clap your hands, shout at the bear, or throw something like a stick towards it to scare it off.

Exit the area. Detour your path around the area of black bear activity.

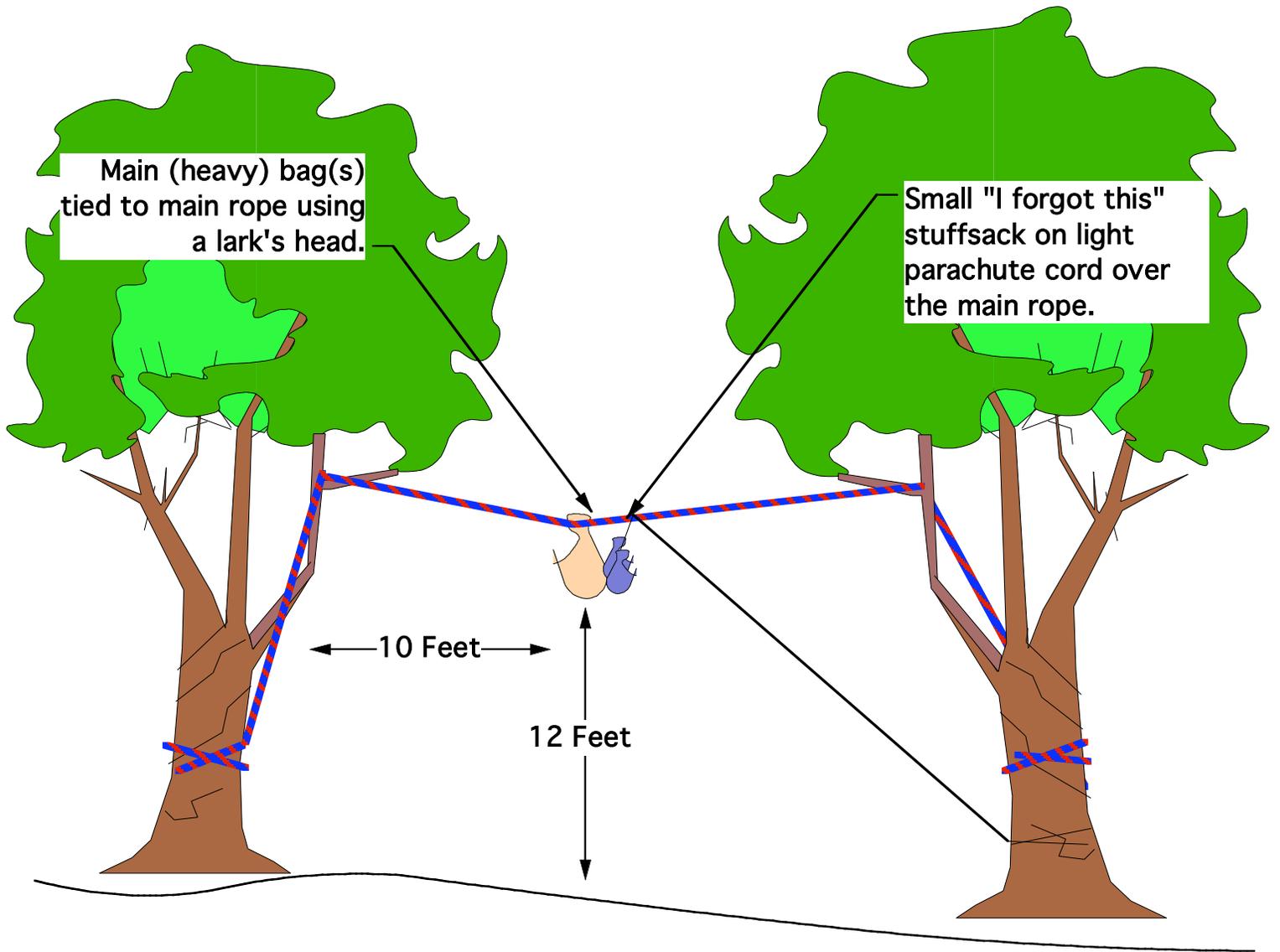
In the rare case you are being attacked by a black bear **FIGHT BACK**. Use any means possible to fend off the bear.



SIMPLE RULES

- 1) SLEEP AT LEAST 200' AWAY FROM ANYTHING THAT SMELLS OF FOOD.
- 2) SLEEP UPWIND OF ANYTHING THAT SMELLS OF FOOD.
- 3) MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING THAT SMELLS LIKE FOOD -- INCLUDING CLOTHES YOU MIGHT HAVE COOKED IN -- ARE NOT IN YOUR TENT!!!
- 4) MAKE SURE NO STRONGLY SCENTED ITEMS (CHAPSTICK, GUM, DEODERANT, TOOTHPASTE, ETC. ARE IN YOUR TENT.
- 5) NEVER CAMP IN THE BEAR-MUDA TRIANGLE.

(FOR SOUTHERN OHIO -- CHECK LOCAL RANGER ADVICE ELSEWHERE!!)



BASIC BEAR BAG
(Good luck finding such ideal trees....)

Only small trees & no good branches?
Use changes in terrain to add height.

