

Guidelines for River-Clearing Clothes

Logjam removal work is wet and dirty work, especially for those working in the river. As such, expect any gear to take a beating, especially due to getting snagged and poked by underwater hazards, so choose items that are tough, or cheap, or both. Here are some thoughts on gear that works.

PFDs

When working with NWIPA on river maintenance, you must wear a PFD/lifejacket if you are in a boat or in the water. NWIPA can supply these or you may use your own US Coast Guard approved PFD.

Wetsuits and dry suits

In colder weather conditions – generally defined as combined water and air temperature less than 120°F, thermal protection is highly recommended for in-water work. Dry suits are the gold standard but can be easily compromised by rips and tears. Wetsuits are not as comfortable (you get wet), but still function to keep you warm, and provide a cushioning layer between your body and the environment. Farmer John/Jane wetsuits are most applicable for the paddling environment.

In hot weather, thermal protection is not necessary.

Footwear

Full coverage footwear that can get wet and muddy must be worn. Workboot wetshoes are best, though most good wetshoes/neoprene booties are adequate, and old sneakers are an inexpensive alternative.

Pants

Wear long pants! Your legs will be poked, bumped and scraped by logs and sticks you cannot see underwater, and long pants will help protect you from poison ivy* and stinging nettle on land - so do not wear shorts. A synthetic material that is quick drying will be much more comfortable and easier to clean than cotton – though the thicker material of jeans provides a bit more cushioning – but at the expense of more wet weight.

Shirts

Long sleeve shirts are recommended to guard against ticks and poison ivy/oak*. As with pants, we recommend a quick drying material. Choose a material and style with the SPF protection you need. Bringing along a lightweight nylon jacket is also a good idea. In cooler weather, it can really help if work slows down and/or you get wet.

* Clothing exposed to poison ivy/oak should be washed after exposure to remove the irritant.



Gloves

Leather gloves or rubber-coated gloves with a mesh back are recommended, though leather will absorb more water than rubber-coated gloves. Rinse and dry gloves at the end of every day and get new ones when they tear or smell. In colder weather, full coverage neoprene gloves may be necessary.

Hats

A baseball cap or fisherman hat can keep the sun and woodchips off your head. Sprayed with insect repellent, they can discourage flying pests from buzzing around your face and neck.

Insect and sun protection

Insect protection is vital as we will encounter mosquitoes, spiders, bees, wasps, and perhaps most importantly ticks. Check out the [CDC](#) and [National Park](#) guidelines on ticks.

- Wear socks, long sleeves and long pants; tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks.
- Use an insect repellent you are comfortable with. A highly recommended tick repellent is treating clothes with 0.5% Permethrin (treat clothes only and allow to dry before use – not for application on skin).
- If you have been prescribed injectable epinephrine (EpiPen) for allergic reactions, bring it along in a rugged waterproof container, and let the team leader know where it is.
- Use a water-resistant sun block on exposed skin with an SPF rating consistent with your sensitivity to the sun.

Safety equipment

- People operating chainsaws must use recommended safety equipment and clothing.
- Chaps and safety glasses must be worn when operating the brush cutter.
- Helpers working near a chainsaw should wear safety glasses if they are facing a running saw.
- Every working trip should have two mobile phones, either water-resistant or in waterproof cases.

Waders

We do NOT recommend waders unless you also use a chest strap near the top of the waders that cinches the waders tight to your body to prevent/minimize the flow of water into the waders in very deep water. Waders can be deadly if they fill with water.

