Getting Your Summer Gear Ready for Hibernation

- Store your tents in an airtight bin or in its compression sack but instead store it unfolded, loosely rolled, or stuffed in an old pillowcase. This will allow the tent fabrics to relax and breathe as well as prevent hard creases that can degrade, especially if you use a quilt and sleep directly on it. If it is an air pad you inflate by mouth, moisture can accumulate inside the pad and reduce its efficiency. You can buy a small, lightweight air pump to inflate your pad or blow it up by hand and let it sit overnight to release any trapped moisture.

- Keep it out of the sun for a day or two after using it to let it return to its original shape and size. Do not let your pads sit in the sun for more than a day as it will cause them to degrade over time.

- Store your sleeping bags in an airtight container or compression sack, but do not use them for keeping your sleeping bag dry. It is better to store your sleeping bag in a pillowcase. If left in a compression sack too long, its fill will not be able to loft up as well, making for colder nights. Fold your sleeping bags in half or roll them up tightly to prevent the fill from shifting and losing loft.

- Inflate your sleeping bag and let it sit overnight to release any trapped moisture. Then hang it up draped over a hanger or loosely folded to avoid creases and leave it in a dry place. Don't wash it if you don't have to since this can cause your bag to wear out faster as well. If you do wash it, use a gentle cycle and cold water. Never use a dryer to dry your sleeping bag as it can melt the fill. Instead, hang it up to dry in a warm room. If your bag is wet and you need to use it, you can stuff it in a pillowcase and blow it up to help it dry more quickly.

- Clean and lubricate your tent's zippers with Gear Aid Zipper Cleaner and Lubricant. CMC connects Coloradans with more than 3,000 trips, hikes and activities annually.

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