

Why It's Mandatory To Recon Your Area Before SHTF

The chances are that when the proverbial brown stuff hits the fan most of us will find ourselves in our home region.

This will be for the best in most cases since you have the advantage of dealing with all of it in your own "backyard." To put it simply, you have better chances of surviving an SHTF event if you know your region well-enough before disaster strikes.

As serious preppers, we know by now that it's difficult to predict the outcome of a crisis, and you can't actually prepare for the **unknown factor**. I've talked about this factor on various occasions, and it's the thing or things that may influence all your prepping plans, the one you have no control over and you can only mitigate the risks once it occurs.

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On the other hand, there are some factors such as your location, environment, and population density that should have

no secrets for you. As you've already established your prepping priorities, one of the main tasks you need to handle is to organize the best course of action for you and your family before the SHTF event occurs.

As a quick example, here are some questions you can answer that will further help you to make an action plan:

- Is bugging in an option and/or priority for your family?
- Are there any chances you will be forced to move to a safer location?
- If so, do you know the safest route to follow?
- Do you have all the needed supplies to make the journey?
- Are there any delays you should consider?

All of the above can be easily answered if you know your region, and I guarantee that you will greatly reduce the chances of the unknown factor to catch you off guard. It becomes mandatory for all of us to know every detail about our home region and use them to our advantage.

Here is what you should know about your home region before SHTF:

Vegetation

If you are familiar with my work, you've probably noticed that I'm encouraging foraging as a survival skill. This has become a lost art, and few people are aware that many plants have the ability to save their lives in an emergency situation.



Even if the surrounding vegetation can save your life, caution is recommended when

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disregard the valuable uses of plants due to the bad reputation of their position on our

You need to take time and practice plant identification to avoid confusing the plants that can save your life with the ones that may have an adverse effect. Start by learning which plants are the most widespread in your region and if some of those plants can help you in an emergency situation.

Your bug out bag or hiking backpack should have a plant identification guide to cover the following:

Edible plants

When food is scarce, or you don't have enough supplies in your bag, some plants can supplement your diet and provide you with valuable vitamins and overall, proper nourishment. There could be edible roots, flowers, berries, and even grass that grows only in your part of the country. You should take the time to discover such plants and learn how to prepare and eat them safely.

Medicinal plants

Not everyone has extensive medical training, and most of us depend on the knowledge we gained from the first aid classes we attended over the years. Since drugstores and professional medical aid will be hard to find when SHTF, you will need to use the bio-pharmacy from your region to obtain all sorts of cures.

From headaches to sore throats, and even blood clotting,

nature has you covered. There are plants that can heal all sorts of ailments and injuries and you just need to learn how to identify and use them.

Poisonous plants

When I talk to people about foraging and plant identification, I encourage them to start first by identifying the plants they should stay away from. Touching the wrong plant or eating the wrong berries can easily seal your fate in the wilderness.

While most plants will make you ill and incapacitate you for a long time, some plants will leave you cold for good. Making a positive identification before usage is the number one rule of every forager. If you are in doubt, leave it be!

Natural water sources

For a serious prepper, water may not seem a primary concern when SHTF, however, it can turn into a real problem if the disaster is not a short-term one. Most of us have a good supply of water and various means to purify the water we are able to find.

To be able to find water in a bug-out scenario when you can't carry all the supplies in your vehicle, you may want to learn how to find the available water sources from your region. Knowing about the water holes will not only help you restock your supplies, but it will also provide you with a clear picture of the disaster's gravity.

For example, if there is one major water source in your region, chances are there will be a lot of competition for it. You need to make sure you and your loved ones understand the implications of this and if you are able to deal with the "competition."

The smart thing to do would be to figure out if there are

multiple water sources and target the smaller ones to stay out of sight. When dealing with one source, just wait your turn and replenish your stock when there's less activity.

Animals

When hunger becomes your main enemy, finding an animal in the wilderness can be a true blessing. However, as most hunters know, there's a long step from spotting dinner to bagging it. One of the main things you should learn about your region is which animal can be eaten and which will eat you.

Every region in our country has a good selection of walking meals, but there's an equal competition for them (from both animals and humans). The trick is to learn which ones in your area are the easiest to find.

In some cases, you may not have a hunting rifle to use, or you may want to avoid using one due to various circumstances. This is why it becomes critical to learn various hunting techniques. Additionally, you will also need to learn how to butcher the animal you catch and how to cook it because the meat you just obtained is totally different from the one nicely packaged you get from your grocery store.



As a general rule, your food menu will include mammals, reptiles, insects, and everything in between when your food supplies run low. Since there could also be predators in your home region, you might want to learn what deadly beasts are tracking you.

Every region has its dangerous animals, and a sudden encounter with a bear or a mountain lion will not end well if you don't know how to act. Not to mention that there are also sneaky, stealthier ones like spiders and snakes that will go unnoticed to untrained eye. You should educate yourself about how to handle the dangerous animals, reptiles, and insects that can be found in your region.

Resources such as building

materials

If you are forced to evacuate and your prepping plans are not designed for long-term living, you will have to build a shelter to last. Something sturdy that can provide you with both comfort and protection.

Building a proper shelter is not easy without the proper tools and materials. Also, time might not be on your side, and you need to know beforehand which materials are available, how to plan a shelter (location, living space, etc.), and which one is recommended for your region. The resources from your area will have to be exploited to create shelters, tools, and even weapons or traps if the crisis event extends over a few weeks/months.

Weather patterns

Weather patterns affect our daily living when we already have all the luxury and accommodation we built for ourselves. Imagine what a pain in the behind it will be to handle bad weather when you are living in almost primitive conditions.

Knowing the weather patterns from your region will help you plan better for a bug out location. Flooding, extreme temperatures, or high winds, are natural disasters that can prove deadly for your family if you are forced to extend your stay in the wild.

Start by pinpointing the most dangerous weather risks from your region and the time period when they occur. Research and discover solutions for each weather event identified as a possible risk for your loved ones. Even learning how to make a fire in harsh conditions can become a lifesaver when preparing for various weather scenarios.

Population

Population density when prepping for a SHTF event is not covered as much as other survival topics. This is a major factor that can screw up all your prepping plans and you need to know a thing or two about your neighbors.

Chances are most of them will head for the woods just like you, while others will try to settle an old score. Not to mention that most of them will wait for the government to come and save them. You can imagine how quickly things will go south if that doesn't happen.

Having means to defend yourself and your bug out location is critical, especially when there is a high population density in your area. Since it is recommended to stay out of sight and keep a low profile during a long-term disaster scenario, that might not always be an option. Before you let fate decide who makes it and who perishes, you might want to make sure you are able to protect what's yours.

You should learn about traveling without leaving a trace and keeping your perimeter secure. These are skills that you should acquire if there are a lot of people in your region. One usually figures it out how safe or rough the neighborhood is on a daily basis. All this knowledge will help him prepare better for when SHTF.

Let's say you live in a bad neighborhood, do you think that people will behave nicely and go to church when it hits the fan, or will they do anything they can to survive? The same logic applies to any region regardless of how much population there is. The only difference is that survival will be much more difficult if you live in an area that is prone to criminal activities.

Bug-out routes

If you are forced to evacuate your home, you will need to learn about the escape routes you have and how to use them. Since most people will just use a vehicle for the main part of their journey, eventually, they will have to continue on foot. Regardless if they are in the city or in a rural environment, they will have to flee on foot at some point in time.

Do you know everything about your area in order to make sure you make it to your safe haven on foot? If you have a long journey ahead, you will need to plan a bug out timeline and stick to it. Consider if you need to cache some supplies along the way. You will also need a meeting spot for your family members and other local friendlies.

Mapping the secluded routes, you feel no others are aware of should be a priority. Also, make sure you map the areas with an abundance of natural resources.

There are a few things that are basic factors when bugging out on foot. Ask yourself this:

- What are you carrying with you?
- Where are you going?
- How are you going there?

Just by figuring out the answer to the above questions will give you a great advantage over the others fleeing from your region.

Also, there are two other things I need to stress

1. Proper footwear is a must for every journey. Don't cheap out on a pair of walking boots because, in the long run, the lower the quality of your footwear, the smaller the chances of completing your journey.

2. Being in good physical condition will make sure you are able to carry your bug out bag without too many resting stops. If you never tried carrying your bug out bag in the field for a few miles, you're going to have a bad time when SHTF.

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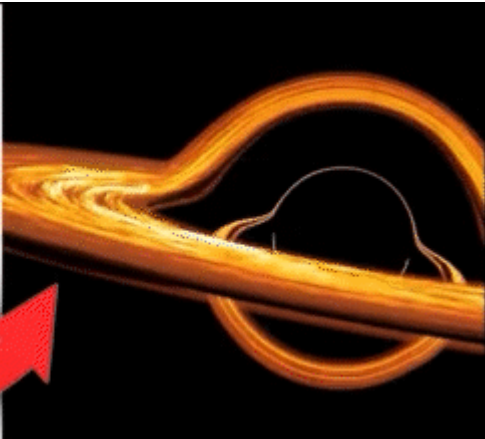
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A red arrow points from the text to a book and a tablet. Both display the cover of 'The Ultimate Guide to Preparing Your Home for a Sudden Loss of Power on the Grid', titled 'BLAST PROOF'. The cover features the Statue of Liberty.

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Concluding

Preparing for the worst and helping for the best is not enough if you are unfamiliar with your home region. Planning and

prioritization are the pillars of prepping, but everything else should not become a gambling game. Studying the details of your home region will give you a better chance of surviving a crisis event. It provides you an advantage that cannot be quantified in words and it will allow you to live and tell the tale.