

**Regarding poison oak.** If you are severely allergic I would recommend some practices to follow while you are at Big Creek.

- Be sure you can positively identify poison oak, *Toxicodendron diversilobum*. Recognizing it quickly will keep you away from it.
- Stay on the trails. We try hard to keep poison oak off the hiking trails. If you leave the trail, you are often at very high risk.
- Never hike with skin exposed. Wear long pants and a long shirt. Treat hiking clothes like contaminated material.
- Do not wear hiking clothes twice before washing them. The oil soaks through cloth and will reach your skin by the second time wearing it.
- Wear hiking-specific shoes that you can change so as not to get contaminated with handling shoelaces. Or wear gaiters over shoes so they get the oak oil rather than the shoes.
- Wash with Tecnu or dish soap (Dawn is good) immediately after returning to camp. Bring a small bottle with you hiking. There is a product called Ivy Block by EnviroDerm. Applied before exposure it apparently helps block the oils from your skin until you can wash it off.
- Avoid touching your face or other “sensitive” body parts with your hands after you may have been in contact with poison oak.
- Wear a bandana around your neck in case errant vines growing out over the trail brush you at face level.