Rigging the Dining Fly

The dining fly is also called the crew tarp. Rigging a tarp Philmont style is much different than how a patrol tarp is normally set up back home. Philmont issues a 12' by 12' nylon crew tarp with lines and poles. We use crewmembers' walking sticks instead of Philmont issued poles. Philmont provides no pegs for your tarp, so your crew will have to bring them from home. Some folks use 8”hardened aluminum gutter nails that weigh next to nothing and can easily be hammered in the hardest ground. These gutter nails may be ordered from Gutter Suppliers, Inc., 600 W. 6th Street, Houston, TX, 77007, 713-861-2727 and cost about $0.15 apiece. They will take a credit card and ship them UPS, so you don’t even have to drive into town. A 40' length of parachute cord is placed under the ridgeline of the tarp. The cord is pushed through the grommets at each end of the ridgeline and tied to a small stick with a lark's head knot. The cord is then tied to the top of the poles using a clove hitch at a height of 4 feet off the ground. See Figure #2 on the next page for a graphical depiction of the above written description. This set up reduces the shock on the ridge grommets since the small stick should break first in the event of high wind. If the tarp is placed directly over the pole tips, the grommets can be ripped out of the tarp under the stress of a high wind or storm. A 25' length of parachute cord is laced through the grommets along each side of the tarp and tied to both ends using a tautline hitch. This is well illustrated by Figure #1 below. This provides several places where the side edges can be staked down using only one rope per side. These side ropes should be left in place when the dining fly is taken down and then they will already be in place when the dining fly needs to be raised.

Be sure and set up your tarp 15'-20' away from your fire ring and inside the “Bear-muda” triangle. Also position your tarp so that the corner of the tarp faces the prevailing winds. The technique described here will keep a tarp from becoming damaged or going down in a storm. A final note on the crew tarp. Do not tie the ridgeline to trees. If every crew tied their tarp to a tree, the tree bark could be damaged ultimately causing the tree to die. Figure #3 shows a dining fly set up at Philmont Scout Ranch (PSR) with Philmont Backpacker tents in the background.



Figure #1

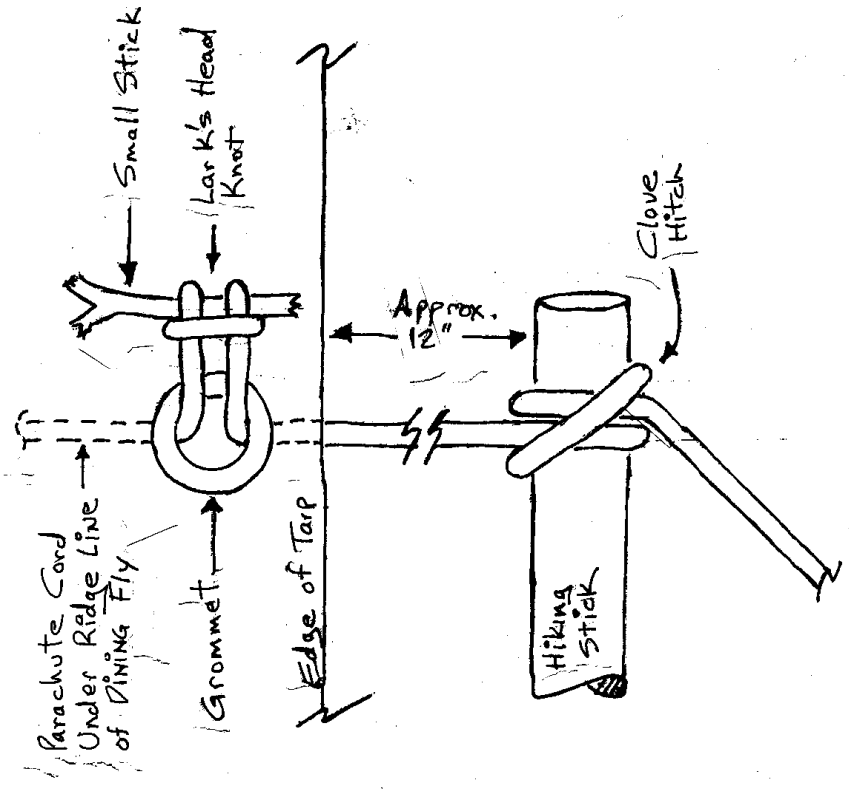

Figure #2



Figure #3