



YOSEMITE  
CONSERVANCY

## Retreat Supply List

Participants are responsible for supplying their own art materials, camping gear, and food for the duration of the retreat! Below are some lists to help you prepare. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us at [art@yosemite.org](mailto:art@yosemite.org)!

### ART SUPPLIES:

**PENCIL & ERASER:** Mechanical pencils make plein air work simple and efficient - you can refresh your lead instantly and keep sketching without breaking your flow. For artists who draw directly on watercolor paper, a [kneadable eraser](#) is a must. Its soft texture lifts graphite cleanly without scuffing or harming the surface of the paper.

**SKETCHBOOK/PAPER:** For this workshop, a dependable 140lb cold press watercolor paper will serve you well. Zach personally uses [Arches Watercolor Paper](#) (white, cold press, 100% cotton, 140lb) because it handles multiple layers of washes with ease.

A 7"x10" or 9"x12" block is ideal - large enough to give you room to compose, but still manageable when painting outside. While smaller formats like watercolor journals or sketchbooks are great for warming up and making quick studies, Zach encourages participants to bring a slightly larger block as well. It will give you more space to explore composition and paint more intentionally during the workshop.

Any comparable brand is perfectly fine. The goal is simply to have a sturdy, reliable surface that supports you as you work outdoors in the elements.

**BRUSHES:** At this scale, you'll want a brush that can comfortably tackle both broad washes and more technical shaping and rendering - something in the medium-to-large round range works perfectly. Zach recommends having at least one reliable No. 10 round, though a small range from sizes 4-10 is great to have on hand. Synthetic, sable,

or hybrid brushes all work well—choose what feels good without feeling pressured to invest in something expensive.

Zach also likes to carry a high-quality mop brush. Good squirrel mops can behave surprisingly similar to sable rounds - they hold a solid charge of water, come to a fine point, and even offer a satisfying snap - while being relatively more affordable. A size 3/0 or 2 mop (roughly equivalent to size 6 and 12 rounds) carries plenty of water and is great for laying in soft, expressive washes. While squirrel hair is the classic choice, synthetic mops can perform beautifully as well.

For broader shapes and larger washes, a soft-bristled flat brush or hake in the  $\frac{3}{4}$ "–1" range can be helpful, though it's by no means essential. Much of the work we'll do in the workshop won't rely heavily on this tool, but having one on hand can make it easier to quickly block in shapes or create clean, chiseled edges when the moment calls for it. Overall, aim for a small, versatile set that lets you cover both big early washes and more refined details as the painting develops.

**PAINTS:** For plein air work, paints that have dried into pans or wells make setup and breakdown quick and easy. Both student and professional-grade paints are fine; professional-grade pigments tend to be more vibrant and lightfast, but student-grade paints work well for this retreat too. Reliable brands include Winsor & Newton, Daniel Smith, Sennelier, Schmincke, or Holbein, though any brand you're comfortable with is fine.

At a minimum, a functional palette includes two sets of three primary colors—a warm set and a cool set—plus a few earth tones for natural mixes. Greens and other colors are optional, since most can be mixed from your primaries and earths. Pre-made palettes are convenient, but if you'd like to craft your own, here's a simple starter palette of versatile pigments:

- **Blues:** Ultramarine Blue, Manganese Blue and Cerulean Blue.
- **Yellows:** Hansa Yellow Medium and Quinacridone Gold.
- **Reds:** Quinacridone Rose, Pyrrol Scarlet, and Alizarin Crimson.
- **Earth Tones:** Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre, and Jane's or Payne's Grey.
- **Greens:** Phthalo Green and Sap Green

**WATER CONTAINERS:** You'll need two small cups to hold water while painting and two containers to carry water. Collapsible cups are terrific for saving space, but not necessary for the workshop. Nalgene bottles or soft water bottles are great for carrying water — you'll need one to refill your water cup and one to carry out dirty paint water.

**PAPER TOWELS**, sponge, or a cloth will help to clean your brushes and lift pigment from washes.

**PRE-CUT MAT BOARD FRAME:** It's helpful to have a pre-cut mat board with the internal dimensions already set for framing - especially in the field. This makes measuring your final artwork quick and simple: just lay the mat over your watercolor paper, trace the internal window lightly with pencil, and just like that your artwork dimensions are determined. Zach likes to keep mats in common frame sizes like 5x7 or 8x10, matching the size he plans to work in and potentially frame later. If you finish a piece you love, all you have to do is place the mat and frame it—no extra measuring or trimming needed!

**SMALL WATER MISTER** to rehydrate dried pigments. Helpful when painting in harsh sunlit areas.

**OPTIONAL, EXTRA SUPPLIES:**

- Small ruler or straight-edge.
- Scissors and/or pocketknife.
- Binder clips.
- Painters tape.
- Camera/phone.

**GENERAL DAY SUPPLIES:**

- **Backpack** to hold your supplies and keep your hands free as you walk around.
- **Clipboard or piece of foam board** for support under your paper or sketchbook.
- **Portable stool, camping chair**, sitting pad, or towel to sit on.
- **Weather-appropriate attire** (waterproof jacket for unexpected rainstorms).
- **Sturdy, water-resistant hiking shoes or boots.**
- **Sunscreen, sunhat, and sunglasses.**
- **Personal first aid kit.**
- **Bug repellent.**
- **Lunch, snacks, and drinking water** (reusable bottle is handy for refills!).
- **Bicycle** (optional, but can be helpful to get around Yosemite Valley).

Remember that you want to be able to carry your supplies efficiently. Come prepared with a setup that is compact enough to carry around and move from location to location. Striking a balance between comfort and efficiency is the key.

## **CAMPING GEAR & FOOD:**

All camping gear and supplies are the responsibility of participants. Yosemite Conservancy does not provide camping gear to participants. We recommend using this [REI Camping Checklist](#) as you pack for your visit!

Participants must bring their own food for the duration of their visit. Need ideas? Check out this [REI Camp Kitchen Checklist](#) for a list of common food basics and cookware for camping.

If you're craving a meal without wanting to cook, Yosemite has a small variety of [restaurants](#) as well as [gift shops](#) that sell groceries, toiletries, and souvenirs!