I pulled off a great experiment with my Pathfinders, and I thought it would make a third great addition to the Bare Essentials article.

Do you have a rule about jeans at camp?  Do you know why there is a rule about jeans at camp?  Did you know there was a rule about jeans at camp?  When I give a hiking or camping kit list to Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers, I am typically met with some resistance about my "no jeans at camp/hike" rule.  I tell them everytime that jeans get wet, they get heavy, and they take a long time to dry.  Insert rolling eyes and moving on discussions.

I had heard about an experiment, a rumour that I cannot place, about scientifically examining jeans versus other pants.  I thought this would be the perfect test for my unit to try, and see for themselves why there is a jean rule.

You will need:
Selection of pants made of various materials - one pair for each group
A large bowl or bucket for each group.
A scale - kitchen scales are great because they weight ozes in decimal.
A measuring cup for water - 4 cups
Paper and pen for each group to record the results.
A ruler for each group.
Water.

Directions:  Each group writes down the hypothisis, or the question.  Record the type of pant and the material from which they were made.  Weigh the pants dry and record the result.  Measure 4 cups of water into the large bowl/bucket.  Stick the pant legs into the water, about 4 inches deep.  Do not press down or squeeze water into the pants.  Record the time.  Let the pants sit for 30 minutes.  Record the new time.  Remove the pant legs from the water.  Weigh the pants wet.  Record the weight.  Measure how much water was soaked from the cuff of the pant leg upwards with a ruler.  Record the results.

Spoiler Alert!!!  If you want to try the experiment without knowing the result - note that this is a spoiler!!!

Which pants will collect the most weight in water when soaked for a half hour?

Group 1: Jeans (99% cotton/1% spandex)
Dry weight:  1lb 4.9oz
Start time:  6:45pm
Finish time:  7:15 pm
Wet weight:  2lb 19oz
1ft 4 inches of water soaked up from the cuff up the leg of the pants.

Yoga pants from Costco (86% Nylon/14% Spandex)
Dry weight:  1lb 0.4 oz
Start time:  6:40pm
Finish time:  7:10pm
Wet weight:  1lb 1.4 oz
4.5 inches of water soaked from the cuff up the leg of the pants.

Group 2:  Pants with removal legs from Mark's Work Warehouse (95% Nylon/5% spandex)
Dry weight:  14 oz
Start time:  6:50 pm
Finish time:  7:20 pm
Wet weight:  14.4 oz
1 mm of water soaked from the cuff up the leg of the pants.

Some of the questions that we asked the groups when they had presented their findings:
1.  If you took 5 pairs of pants on a month long backpacking trip to Europe and your bag got wet, how much extra weight would you be carrying?  What are the answers for each type of pant?
2.  You were out in the rain all day in your jeans setting up camp.  Now it's bedtime.  After changing into your dry night clothes you throw your jeans ontop of your other clothes.  How quickly will they make other cotton clothes wet?  What would happen if you did this with the nylon pants?
3.  Why would hypothermia be a greater risk if you were in damp clothes, than in dry?

The last thing we did was talk about where you can buy economical camping clothing.  Our purpose was not to encourage girls to go out and spend a ton of money on new outfits for camp.  The girls brainstormed some great places to go shopping:  Local thrift store or used clothing store, mom's closet, friend's closet, older sister's closet and garage sales.  I aslo noted to the girls, that my $50 Mark's Workwarehouse pants with the removable legs were less expensive than my $80 Warehouse One jeans.

Darlene Clark
Dalvale Pathfinders
South Thompson District
Thompson Nicola Area