

Hawk Rescue!

The Scenario: You're one of a group of eight intrepid girl scouts, all 11 or 12 years old, who are off on their own for a hike in a mountain forest to prepare for a future overnighter. Suddenly you're all stopped by the sharp, plaintive peeping of baby birds. Searching for the source, you come upon a large tree beside a rocky mountain stream, at the base of which you find a mother hawk struggling with a broken wing, helpless to feed or defend her brood in the nest perched high above. It's clear that if you don't intervene, both the mother and chicks will soon fall prey to predators — and, given the location, hiking back out for help is not an option.

The Challenge: The nest is a good 25 feet off the ground, among a circle of sturdy branches, below which the tree is an almost perfect cylinder about 3 feet in diameter with no obvious way to climb. Still, all of you are determined to rescue this family and get them to the wildlife center near your base camp some five miles back down the mountain. Yet how can you possibly do that without endangering the birds or yourselves? Well, you are *scouts*, after all, no?

What You've Got: All of you are physically fit and range in height from 4 to 5 feet tall. You each have a backpack, hiking boots, a water bottle, and a 3-foot-square bandana. You also have among you a Leatherman tool, a Swiss Army knife, a basic first-aid kit, a roll of duct tape, and two four-man tents of ripstop nylon with the bungee cords and metal tent pegs that go with them. In addition, you have an emergency whistle and several pounds of trail mix. But all your cellphones were left back at the base camp (lest you spend the entire hike texting one another), and alas, *you have no cookies*. So now what?

Send a detailed description of your MakeShift solution with sketches and/or photos to makeshift@makezine.com by Feb. 25, 2011. If duplicate solutions are submitted, the winner will be determined by the quality of the explanation and presentation. The most plausible and most creative solutions will each win a MAKE T-shirt and a MAKE Pocket Ref. Think positive and include your shirt size and contact information with your solution. Good luck! For readers' solutions to previous MakeShift challenges, visit makezine.com/makeshift.

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Photograph by Jen Siska