

Small Firepans

A firepan perched on rocks or held up by legs is a metal tray or pan that suspends your campfire off the ground. Many firepans are on the market. Cast iron or steel firepans are durable, but may be quite heavy. Other products are used for small, lightweight firepans. Among the most popular firepans with backpackers and among the least expensive are metal pans used for changing oil. They work fine for small campfires. Placing 1 to 2 inches (25 to 50 mm) of soil in the bottom of the pan and setting the pan on rocks prevents heat transfer and fumes that may form if the galvanized coatings volatilize. A couple of holes drilled in the pan's rim where a cord can be attached makes it easier to pack. These pans are becoming more difficult to find as plastic oil pans become the norm. Metal garbage can lids are a good alternative for larger fires (Figure 7).



Figure 7—Metal garbage can lids or oil-changing pans are lightweight, inexpensive, and effective. Be sure to place soil in the bottom to reduce heat transfer.

Bobby Eco's Fire Pit (Figure 8) is a compact firepan designed for backpacking. It has triangular pieces of stainless steel that lock together, forming a shallow cone for the campfire. This firepan is 25 inches (635 mm) in diameter, but it collapses to 12½ by 5 by 3 inches (318 by 127 by 76 mm). It worked well when placed on rocks. It weighs 3½ pounds (1.6 kg).

Many portable barbecue grills will work just fine for small campfires. Some of these cost less than \$10.

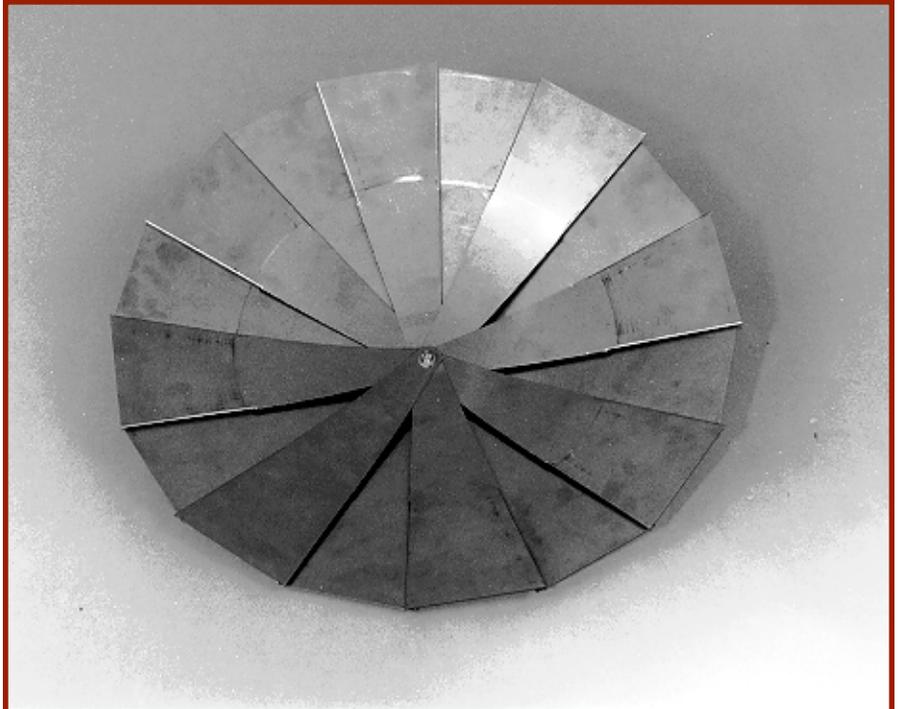


Figure 8—The triangular pieces of *Bobby Eco's Fire Pit* collapse into a compact package for carrying.

When a Small Campfire Just Won't Do

Larger campfires are common at cold-weather hunting camps and for larger social groups. The larger the fire, the harder it is to leave no trace.

MTDC was asked to fabricate a firepan that would hold up to heavy use, could contain a large campfire, and was compact and lightweight enough to be carried on packstock. We also wanted a design that was inexpensive and simple enough so people with basic metalworking skills could fabricate it.

We designed three prototypes (Figure 9). For one, we cut 6 inches (150 mm) from the top of a 55-gallon (209 L) drum. For another deeper firepan, we used part of the side and ends of the drum. For the third, we fabricated a rectangular steel pan. **Do not** use barrels that held pesticides or flammables. Weights ranged from 17 pounds (7.65 kg) for the barrel top firepan, to 25 pounds (11.25 kg) for the rectangular



Figure 9—All three prototype firepans hold large campfires and break down so they can be carried on packstock.

ular pan, and 26 pounds (11.7 kg) for the barrel side version.

Figures 10, 11, and 12 further describe the three firepans. To field test, we placed about 1 to 2 inches (25 to 50 mm) of mineral soil in the firepans

before building large campfires in them. All three firepans worked well, with very little heat transferred to the ground. Any of the three, or one of the larger *Fire Blankets*, effectively reduce the lasting effects of large campfires.

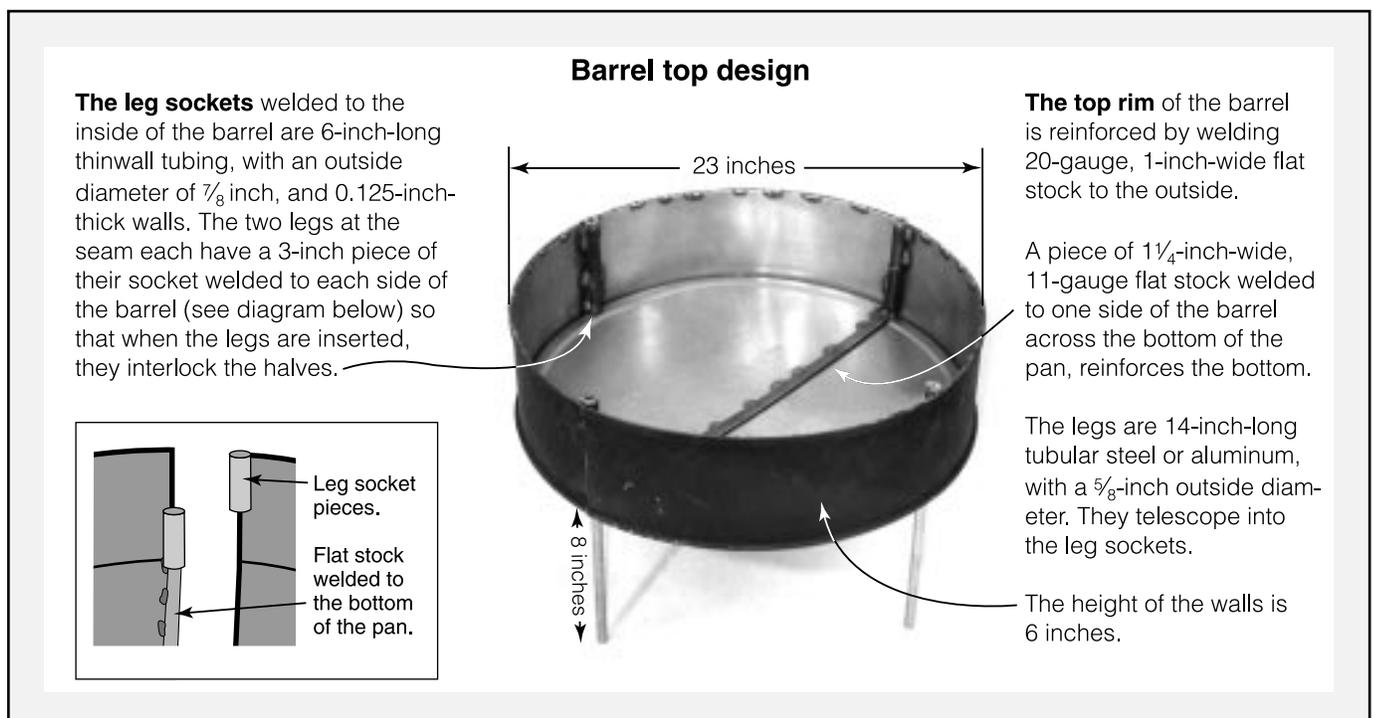


Figure 10—The barrel top design breaks into halves and the legs come out of the sockets. It weighs 17 pounds.

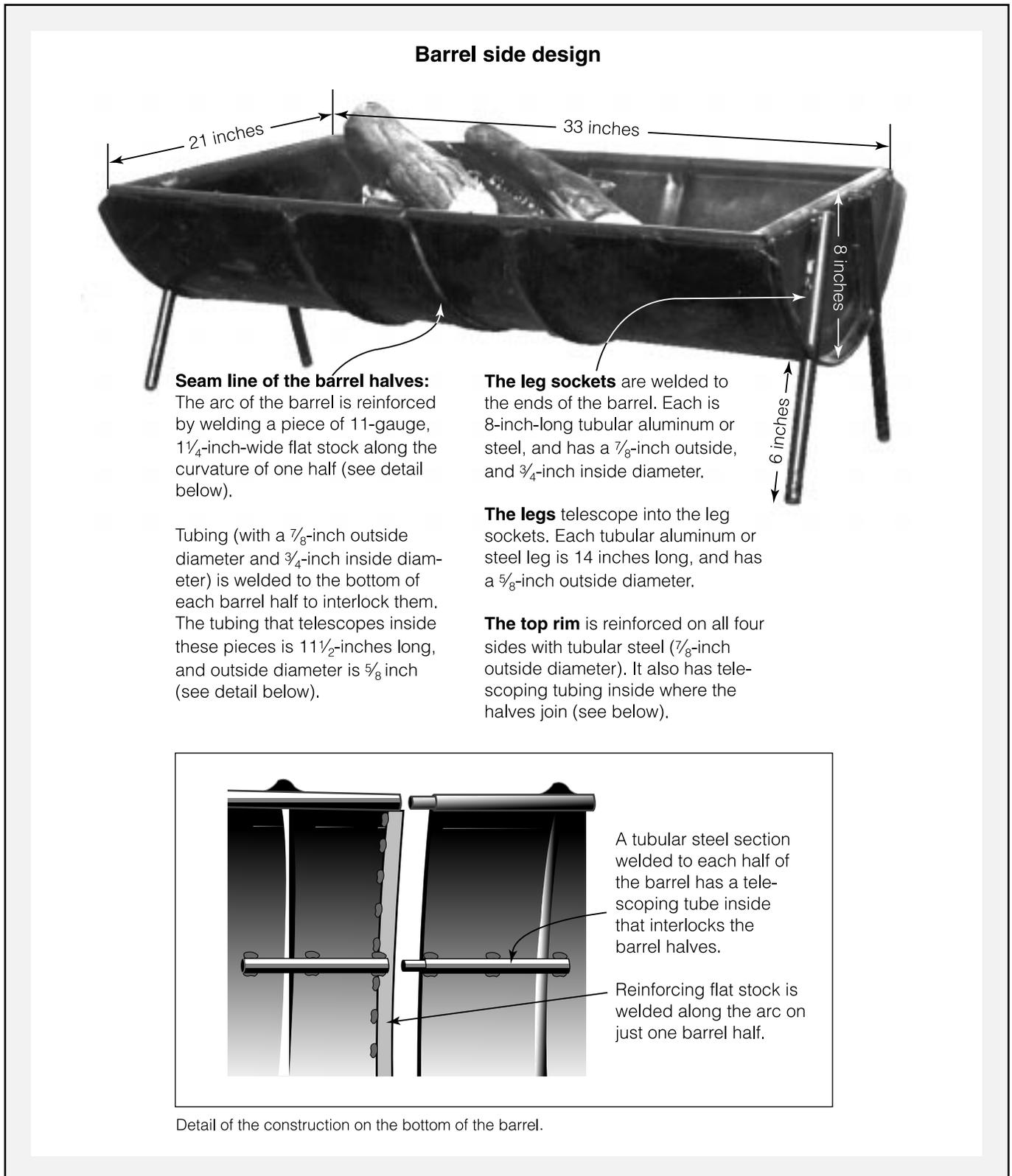


Figure 11—The barrel side design can hold a large fire; it weighs 26 pounds.

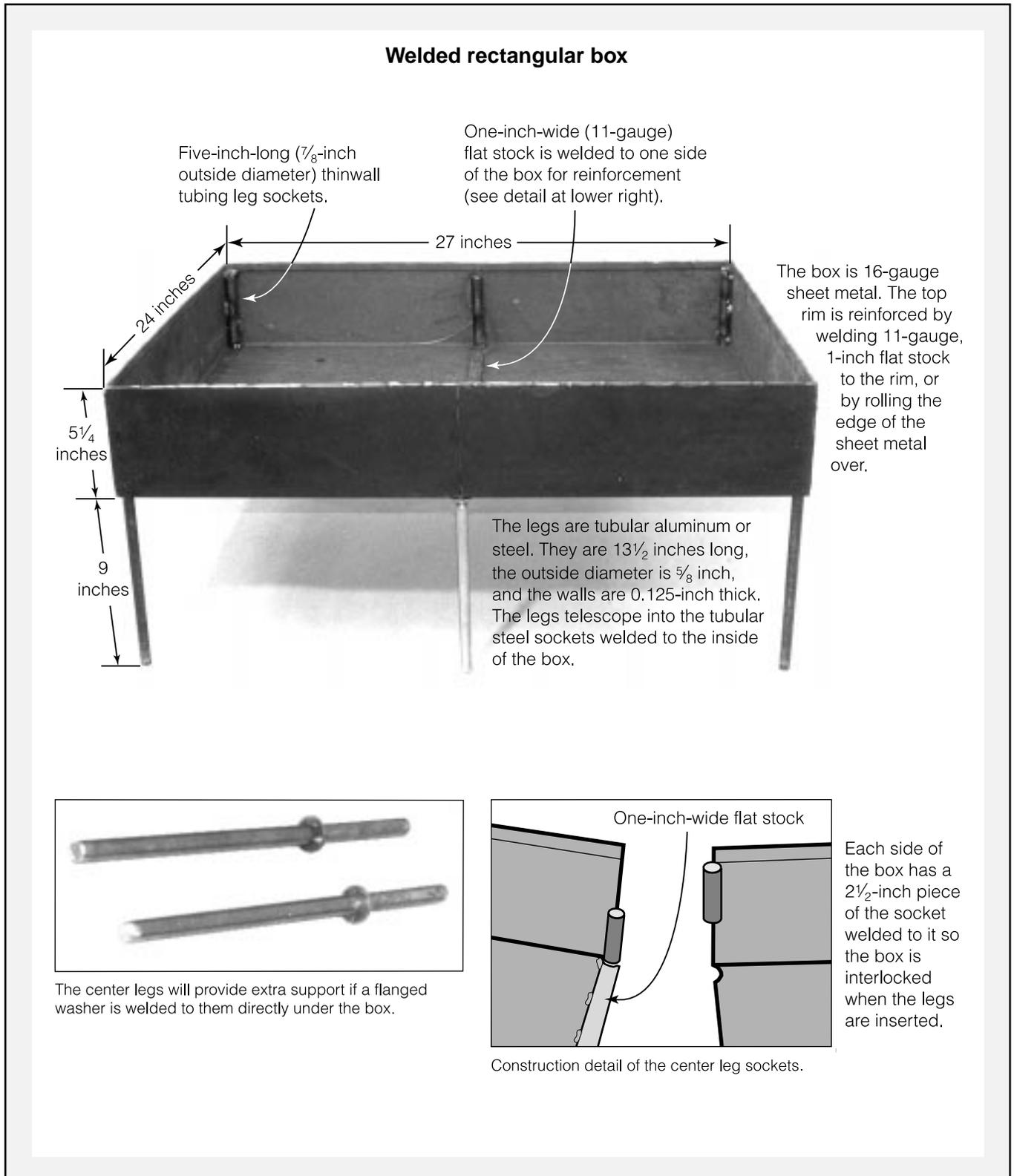


Figure 12—This welded rectangular box breaks into two pieces, and the legs slide out of their sockets. It weighs 25 pounds.

Leave No Trace

You can learn more about the **Leave No Trace** program and order educational materials by contacting:



Leave No Trace, Inc.
Attn: Dana Watts
P.O. Box 997
Boulder, CO 80306
Phone: 800-332-4100

Product Sources

Many other firepan products are available besides those illustrated. Other products may be equally suitable.

Bobby Eco's Fire Pit

Red Wing Services Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 445
Indian Hills, CO 80454
Phone: (303) 697-8118

Fire Blanket

4-K Outdoor Supply, Inc.
12325 South Sherman Road
Spokane, WA 99224
Phone: (509) 448-4755

Pyromid Outdoor Cooking Systems

Pyromid, Inc.
3292 South Highway 97
Redmond, OR 97756
Phone: (541) 548-1041

Library Card

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12 electronic p.

Describes ways to build campfires without damaging vegetation or leaving unsightly rings of rocks. The designs for three heavy-duty metal firepans are included. Mound fires—fires built on a 2-inch base of dirt with fire-resistant fabric beneath—are another alternative for building campfires that leave no trace. Sources of firepans and fire-resistant cloths are included.

Keywords: camping, forest recreation.

Additional single copies of this document may be ordered from:

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An electronic copy of this document is available on the Forest Service's FSWeb intranet at:

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