The Great Olivier Newsletter

Vol 5:
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Knock Knock. Who's there? It's the fifth edition of the newsletter! It's that time of year when we all start thinking of transitioning from the warm dry summer months to the cold, short winter days. The Yukon has seen an unbelievably weird and warm fall but we are finally going to see some sub zero days over the weekend. The mountain tops are starting to get little dustings of snow and I think I'm going to have to pull out the winter boots next week

This months' newsletter includes a delicious lentil soup recipe, instructions on how to predict the weather, and a back page with some fun music stuff. Hopefully it helps you continue to adventure outside as long as possible!

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Emergency Lemony Lentil Soup

One of the things I always bring with me when I'm backpacking is some extra soup. Having an extra warm, soupy meal can make a huge difference if you have to spend an extra night outside, if you get caught in some cold wet weather and need to warm up, or if you just didn't pack enough food for dinner. Nothing sucks more than being hungry and I can't count the number of times I've pulled out an emergency soup mix to make things better.

This easy recipe is great on its own and dehydrates into a fine powder. It also rehydrates quickly and is super easy to cook in the field.

Ingredients

- 2 cups of red lentils
- 2 TBSP olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 large or two small carrots, diced
- 2 tsp salt
- 6 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1/4 tsp red chili flakes
- 1 TBSP oregano
- 1 TBSP fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 2 tsp lemon zest

Cooking

1. Rinse the lentils in a colander and set aside to drain.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large pot; add onions and sauté until translucent.
3. Add carrots, garlic, salt, pepper, chili flakes, rosemary, oregano, and bay leaves.
4. Stir well and sauté until the carrots are tender.
5. Add the stock and the lentils and bring to a boil.
6. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 25 minutes or until the lentils are soft.
7. Remove the bay leaves. Puree soup with an immersion or countertop blender.
8. Add the lemon juice
9. If not dehydrating, serve with feta and fresh dill.

Dehydrating

1. Spread thinly over dehydrator trays lined with parchment paper.
2. Dehydrate 8-12 hours or until the soup turns into a brittle leather.
3. Put the dehydrated soup leather into a blender or food processor and blend until it turns into a fine powder.

Preparing in the field:

In a pot, mix the soup mix with cold water and bring the mixture to a simmer. Simmer for 5-10 minutes. It can be a little hard to judge how much water to add to your soup mixture. Start with less than you think and keep adding water until you get the desired consistency. It's good to have some extra drinking water on hand to add water if needed. As an emergency soup, I'll bring 80-100g per person. For a planned meal, I'll bring 150g per person with cheese and crackers.

A note about storage:

We stored our last batch of emergency soup in our freezer for almost a year and brought it with us on countless trips. We cooked it up a few weeks ago and it tasted great! Just throw it back in the freezer between trips.

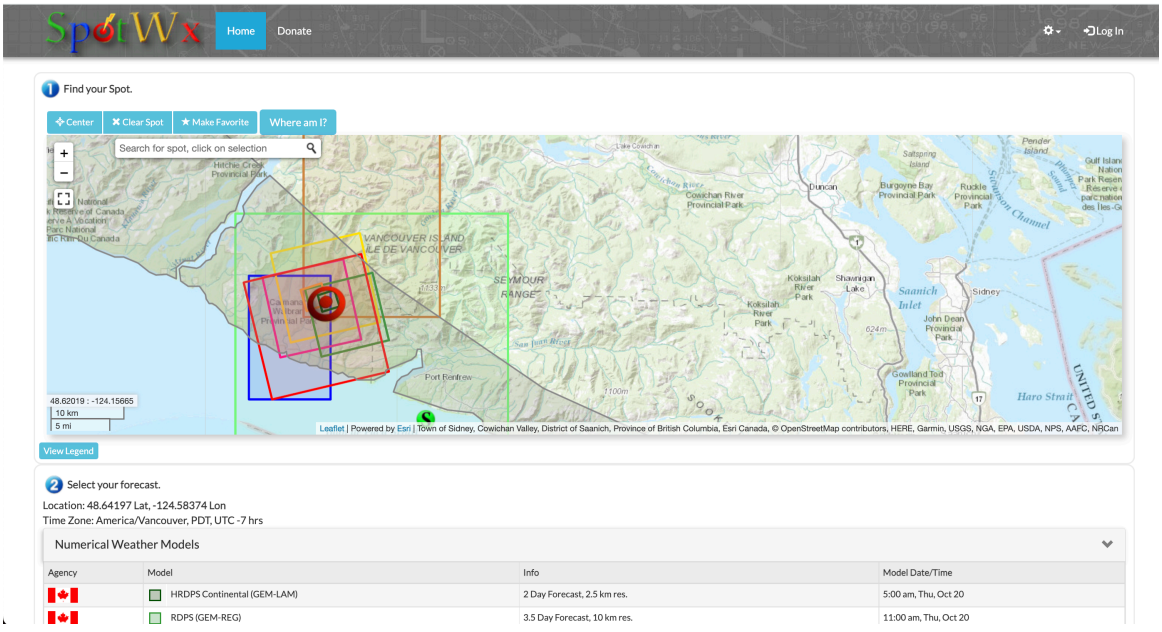
Weather Forecasting Basics

Taking the time to get a sense of what kind of weather you might face on a trip can mean the difference between a good and a bad time. With a bit of basic forecasting, it's easier to pick the best weekends for adventures and helps ensure you don't pack too little or too much. It can also help avoid potentially dangerous situations. The scariest trip of my life and one that almost killed me was a result of bad forecasting. If I had paid attention to the weather forecast I would have canceled the trip and planned something else. Instead, I almost drowned and had to be evacuated by helicopter.

It's easy to get a weather forecast for a town or a city but it becomes a lot more difficult to get accurate forecasts for the middle of a forest or the top of a mountain. There's a handful of good forecasting apps and websites but my favourite is SpotWx. I'm a big fan of this made in Canada by one person in their basement website and I use it before any of my trips. It's simple, free and incredibly powerful.

Here's a step by step guide to getting the most out of this website.

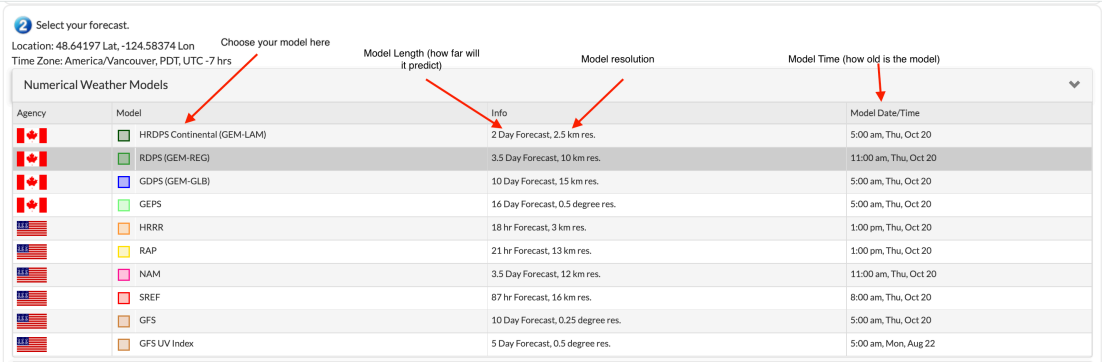
1) Go to SpotWx.com: You'll see a big map appear on the top of the page. Find where you'll be going and click on the map. If I'm doing a multi-day trip, I'll repeat the steps outlined below with a handful of spots where I'll be camping.



2) Select your forecast model: SpotWx works by accessing powerful forecasting computers that use magic to create a weather model that will try to predict what the weather will be. Different models will generate different predictions. It's important to compare a few different models to see if they line up with each other. If three models are all showing a lot of rain then it's pretty darn likely it's going to rain lots.

Info: This tells you how far the model predicts and what the resolution is. The resolution (abbreviated res.) is the forecast model area. The smaller the area, the more specific the forecast is to the spot you picked. The larger the resolution, the more generalized the model will be. For example, a 2.5km resolution will generate a forecast for an area that 2.5 square kilometers around your spot. In theory, this will generate a more precise model versus a 15km resolution, which will average out topographic features for a more generalized forecast model.

Time: The time at which the model was generated. The older the model, the less accurate it will be.

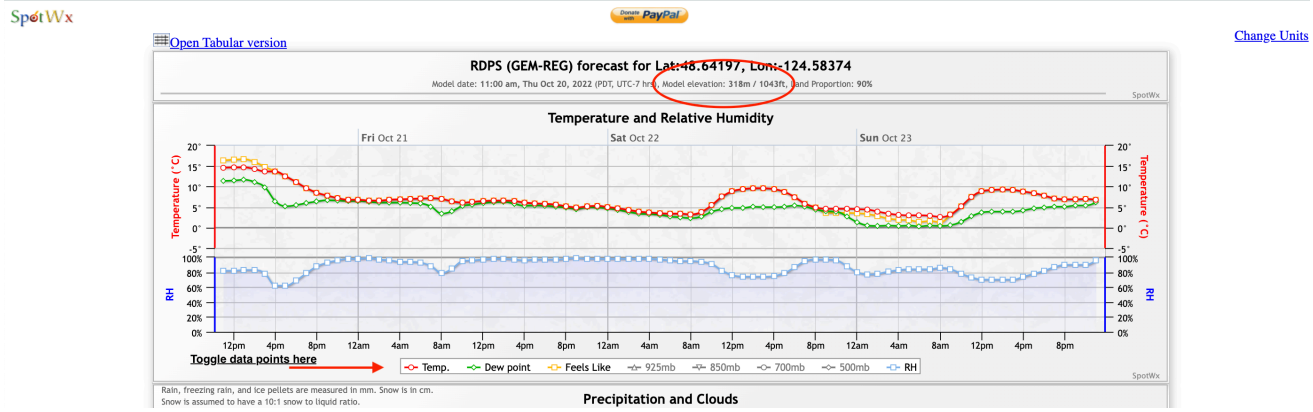


3) Deciphering the model: This part can seem daunting. There's a lot of graphs and lines and dots and stuff, but bear with me, it's worth figuring out. I won't be explaining all the data the models contain, but will instead focus on the important bits (rain, temperature, wind…).

Start by looking at the model elevation and compare it to where you'll be camping (see image below). The model sometimes generates data that is higher or lower than where you'll be. Without getting too fancy, if you're higher up it's going to be a little colder, and if you're lower down you'll probably be a little warmer.

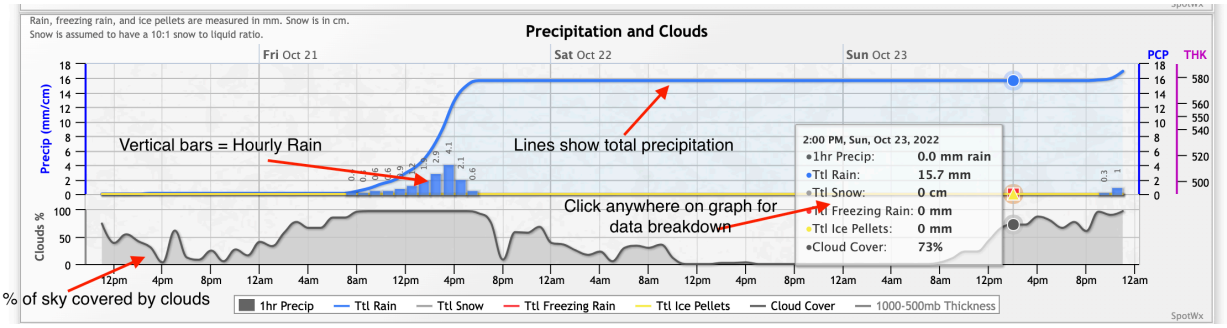
Pro Tip: At the bottom of each graph, you can toggle on or off certain data points. I suggest turning off the ones you don't need to keep the graphs from becoming too cluttered.

Graph #1 - Temperature and Relative Humidity: I just look at the red temperature line.



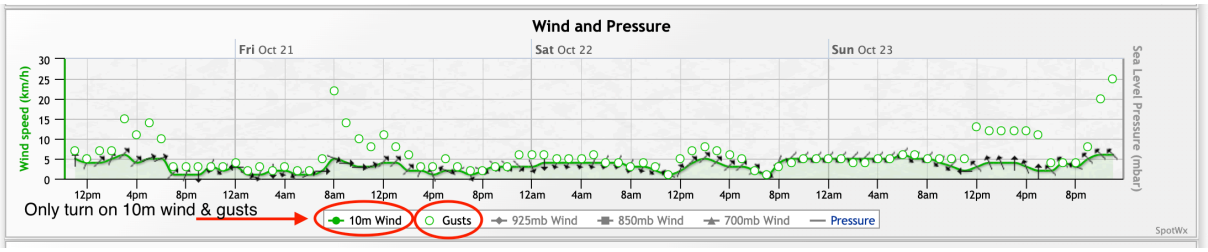
Graph #2 - Precipitation and Clouds

This graph holds a ton of really useful data. I'll toggle all the data points on except for the 1000-500mb cloud thickness. The upper half of the graph will predict hourly rain and snow amounts and the lower half will predict cloud cover as a percentage of the sky. A handy trick is to click or tap anywhere on the graph to get a breakdown of the precipitation data.



Graph #3 - Wind and Pressure

I recommend only toggling the "10m Wind" and "Gusts" data points. The 10m wind will give you a prediction for the wind at ground level (aka 10 meters above the ground). If you're planning on climbing a mountain, the "925mb Wind" and "850mb Wind" might be worth checking out. The 925mb corresponds approximately to 750m in elevation and the 850mb to 1450m in elevation.



Graph #4 - Lifted Showalter Indices & Graph #5 - Cape and Helicity

I usually skip these ones. I think they help predict thunderstorms and tornadoes but I found it doesn't help with my planning.

Graph #6 - Low Level Wind

This graph is another wind prediction graph. I recommend sticking to the "10m Wind" data points.

Pro Tip: Always check multiple models and look for any trends you might find.

The Back Page

Things that I'm stoked about, in no particular order…

Get the F*nk out of here: Major Funk is a Whitehorse institution. The band has been bringing the party and killer funk vibes to every great event I've been to since moving to Whitehorse. So good, so fun, so awesome! They'll be playing at the Local bar Saturday October 29th at 10pm. I'm a huge fan and I might try to crash the concert and sneak on stage…

Closed Radiohead Bird: Open Mike Eagle just released a new album called "a tape called component system with the auto reverse". I've only recently started listening to Open Mike Eagle's hiphop album and they are fantastic. I'm no good at describing music so go check it out for yourself.

Jazz Not Jazz: Drummer and producer Makaya McCraven released a gem of an album called "In These Times". It's super groovy, has crazy time signatures and beautiful orchestral arrangements. Listen to the album here.