Creek crossings on the John Muir Trail (JMT) and other hikes can vary significantly from year to year. In 2008, on the JMT, I only had to take my shoes off once on the whole hike. In 2009, only twice. In 2010, about 12 times. 2012 was two to three times for JMT creek crossings. 2013 should be similar to 2008 or 2009. In the months of July and August, the worse creek crossing should only be mid-thigh high and that will be rare, with mid-calf being more typical. The worst creeks and rivers on the John Muir Trail have very professionally made bridges.

The below is an update of what I have previously reviewed for Stream Crossing Shoes. It is partially taken from my Gear List which is available in our JohnMuirTrail@YahooGroups Library. It covers most of the known ultralight solutions for stream crossings aside from the Vibram Five Finger option. I tried them but could not get them to easily fit on my foot. I returned them. Anything I have to struggle with for a long time, I am not interested in using.

The new suggestions for 2016 are at the very end of this document.

My gear list is here in the Group Library:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/johnmuirtrail/files/Gear%20lists/

Hiking 2011 Gear List sorted.pdf
Raleigh Martin's Hiking 2011 Gear List (with pictures and commentary)

Hiking 2015 Gear List Checkoff.doc

I used these SprintAquatics sandals in 2009 and they did work but you will get teased as if you are a hospital patient. They do not dry out fast and its best if you have replacements available at your Muir Trail Ranch supply – they are not the sturdiest. You do have to walk slow with them on because if you step on something sharp, your feet will feel it. These are about .95 oz for the sandal (1.90 oz for the pair).

http://www.sprintaquatics.com/prodinfo.asp?number=901
I have tried these too, the Zinetic Pocket Slippers – from the web page: Features: Lightweight Compact (Stow and Go); Nylon Carrying pouch included; Breathable fabric; “Barefoot Feel” with rubber sole protection; Great traction on slippery surfaces; Stretchy fabric allows for comfort over a range of foot sizes” I use a very big heavy duty rubber band to prevent slipper from slipping off while wading a stream. This page lists the variety of online dealers. Medium size weigh 6.9 oz (for the pair) on my scale.

There is also the Vincere Grip/Boat Socks which are the blue items to the right and which weigh 3.0z for a pair (1.5 oz apiece), Medium’s man’s size. http://tinyurl.com/yk4qvz3

In 2010, I used these Vincere Socks and they were perfect for stream crossings. What I did not like about them is they did not dry completely by the time I got to camp and wanted to use them for camp sandals. At camp, I was jealous of those who had the hard plastic ones like Croc-knockoffs.

For 2016, Vincere has a sand grip sock with a strap to make crossings more safe. The model is called Grip Socks Strapped. One “shoe”, men’s size 9, weighs 1.65 oz (I got an email from the company attesting such.) They have other colors (and styles) shown here. Also new for 2016 are their lighter (but not as grippy), low cut sand socks. These would have to be the lightest thing they offer. One “shoe”, men’s size 9, weighs 1.45 oz (I got an email from the company attesting such.)

The low cost option is the Spring Aquatics (see next page) but if you want something sturdier, consider low cost Croc knock-offs are lighter, cheaper and more supportive of your feet for wading streams and being a
camp shoe, such as the right one from Big 5 Sporting stores in California in 2007 but not available online.

In the spring, Walgreen carries a similar sandal. These can be obtained for about $10 and the weight for a pair is 9-10 oz depending on the brand/size you buy. The info on the back of the Walgreen Sandals are “Caribbean Cartel By The Lost Pirates”, a trademark by Kong, Tian Kong, 20531 Belshaw Avenue, Carson, Ca 90746 and a size medium, man’s, is 9.2 oz for the pair. The photo above on the left shows this sandal.

Waldies used to carry Croc-like sandals at nearly half the weight of your ordinary Crocs (4.2 oz per shoe, size large, men). But due to a legal battle with Crocs, they stopped selling them. At a nearby “99 Cent Store” you can find Chinese knockoff sandals nearly identical to them that weigh about the same weight as the old Waldies. You won’t find anything online though. Just visit a local “Dollar Store” or “99 Cent Store” that sells items that cost up to $10 (or $9.99) and you might find something similar to them.

If you get them just right in size, they fit snug. If you can't get them to fit snug, you can make them snugger by two techniques:

1. Put your gaiter straps beneath the sandals while doing a stream. Another hiker did this with great success.

2. Use extra large/thick rubber bands, one or two per sandal. Amazon shows these for example, which I have and are the right size to wrap around the top of your foot and beneath the sandal, you could use two bands per foot so that one is behind your ankle and in front of the ankle. Made by Universal, Size 105. Part number 04105. ¼ pound for the whole box.
The Crocs brand sandals weigh more. The model, the Yukon and Yukon Sport both have an adjustable strap that clips/snaps on/off (like a pack belt). I bought these and although my hiking boot is a size 10, I had to get these in a men’s size 8. An individual sandal weighs 7.3 oz. One disadvantage of this sandal is that there is a leather “border” around the opening of the sandal where your foot slips in. I sprayed the leather with Scotchguard Fabric and Upholstery Protector to partially make it more waterproof. John Ladd on the JohnMuirTrail@YahooGroups forum reports that he used these sandals and they worked just great. They will fit snug as you want them.

Note, as of May 2013, Crocs no longer sells the Crostrail sandal but do sell the Yukon and Yukon Sport sandal that is similar to the above.

As of February 2016, Crocs now sell something that looks lighter and interesting but I do not know the weight of them. Called the Swiftwater Sandal. Shown is the men’s model.

Then there are the Water Trekking Sandals. On the JohnMuirTrail@YahooGroups, a Robert Shattuck favors the Teva Fi 3 or the Teva Hurricane XLT. Looking at the Teva web site, I see a newer, lighter water trekking sandal that looks very promising, the Teva Zilch (shown below). Some web sites call the Zilch only a woman’s sandal, Teva shows them for both sexes (individually), nor does one of their retailers, Austin Canoe and Kayak who has a listing for these as a man’s sandal. They give a weight of 7 ounces, so this looks to be very competitive (lighter in
fact) than the Crocs Cross Trail sandal. A review here.

Last, there is the new movement of minimalist running footwear and perhaps the best review of them for backpacking/crossing streams is over here at BackPackingLight.com. "Minimalist Footwear for Summer Backpacking," by Damien and Renee Tougas. BackPackingLight.com (ISSN 1537-0364). http://backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/minimalist_footwear_summer_backpacking.html, 2011-03-29 00:10:00-06.

This is a very good article to read as not only do they review many minimalist footwear items but they ascribe numeric scores to each of several attributes – at the article they explain this chart they present.

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Going beyond these choices you’ll get into more weight but some members of the forum argue that these heavier ones can be backup hiking shoes if your boot falls apart on the trail. Those heavier choices are not reviewed in this document.

If you have any foot item you want to propose, please email me at roleigh [at] pobox [dot] com.

### 2013-2016 Sandals of Interest

For 2013, I am torn between a dual purpose sandal and a triple purpose sandal. I am no longer interested in super ultralight sandals that are not good enough for safe walking around camp. Robert Shattuck recommends sandals that can server a triple purpose: camp sandals, water sandals, and for hiking in when your boots have failed you.

If you think of those fallback hiking sandals as an analogy to a spare tire that is not a full size ordinary tire on a car, then the below triple purpose sandals are interesting to consider.

GearJunkie did a review of trail running sandals that are fully waterproof good for trailrunning a 50 mile race. The ones they reviewed are the Luna Sandal Venado but the
The Luna Sandal website recommends the Leadville sandal for solely rugged trail use. A size 9 men’s sandal weighs 5 oz (10 oz for the pair). Pictured below is the Leadville sandal. One appeal of these sandals is that they would take up minimal space in your pack as they’d almost fit in flat. At first I was hesitant to consider trying these sandals because the review said the one downside to these is that you could stub your toe. However some of the comments about these said to order a slightly larger size. I ordered one full size larger sandal and should get mine in 2 to 2.5 weeks.

Be sure when you order these to print out the sizing template for the size you think you need. Their sizing instructions are the best on the web.

The next triple purpose hiking/camp/water sandal I have seen in person are the Keen Cascade CNX sandal. They weigh, size 9.5 men, 9.75 oz per sandal. While this is heavier than I want for a JMT hike, it is acceptable for a break-in new boot hike when you’re going to be out for a couple of days of hiking in new boots. My first multi-day hike is always a 4 day Memorial Weekend hike, and this year I wanted to break in a pair of new boots, which are the same model and brand I’ve worn before, but in 2013, the left boot tore into my left ankle so bad I had to bail out of the hike day 2 and hitchhike to the finish camp site and await the other hikers in the group (who knew that I had
bailed out). Had I had these Keen Cascade CNX sandals, I’d have tried to finish the hike in them.

I’m not a 100% convinced though of just how long I could hike in either the Luna or Keen sandals though on the JMT. I think one would be safe enough to bail out which in some cases takes 2.5 days from some locations on the trail (at the pace I hike).

The latest dual purpose (camp/water) sandal is the Vivobarefoot Ultra Pure sandals which I have a pair of. They weigh 3.8 oz apiece, size 10 (one sandal). They are great for dual purpose sandals. I would not recommend prolonged trail use in them though.

Available (confirmed in 2016) are also the New Balance Minimus 20v4 Trainer shoes which weigh only 6.5 oz per shoe (average men’s size). These are about 1.5 oz per shoe lighter than the average brand-labeled Crocs. They are more comfortable for walking on rocks and trail or in town too. I wore a pair similar to these for two JMT hikes and I like that they pack up easy and are great for the trip to the trail, as well as from the trail, as well at resupply stops, in addition to working
as camp and stream shoes. The ones I got weigh only 5 oz per shoe. Unfortunately, New Balance does not make them (the Minimus Zero) anymore. For a half ounce more for men, they have the trail version of the depicted shoe below. It looks more rugged.

For women, they do have the New Balance Minimus Zero V2, which only weighs 4.5 oz a shoe.

Merrell currently has lighter minimalist shoes than New Balance for men. Check out their Vapor Glove 2 which only weighs (average men size, one shoe) 5.5 oz.