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Tech Tidbits

Genie in the Bottle

The Lightcap combines a lantern with a water bottle

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Sollight's Lightcap is the ingenious marriage of a 32-oz. (1-liter) though robust, is not intended to function as flashlight; rather, it serves to illuminate a general area, like a lantern.

A 2" solar panel embedded in the Lightcap's lid provides the juice for up to 12 hours of white light. An initial charge of 24 hours in direct sunlight fully charges two AA Ni-Cad batteries (included). (When charging, it's critical to ensure the tiny light sensor in the cap isn't covered.)

The combo stands 8 inches tall and weighs 11 oz., only slightly heavier than a comparably sized water bottle. The bottle displays measurements in ounces and milligrams on its side, and the cap features a plastic carrying loop.

Although not its intended function, the Lightcap is a handy repository for small, miscellaneous gear that often gets swallowed up and disappears in the bottom of large packs or vehicles, such as cell phones and digital cameras. The clear bottle allows users to see the contents during the day and the light obviates the need for a flashlight when accessing the contents at night.

A three-position rocker switch imbedded in the cap activates a white LED light and a red LED light that both shine down into the bottle.

Charging in bright sunlight for 2 hours will yield around 1 hour of light, although the red LED will last about 30 percent longer than the white. Charging in shady or overcast conditions is 50-80 percent slower, and battery performance decreases in cold temperatures. The unit can also be charged in artificial light and the rechargeable Ni-Cads feature a minimum 300-cycle life span.

Although the unit isn't waterproof, it is water-repellent: It will float and survive a quick dunking or brief exposure to rain, and the solar panel is completely sealed. The unit's not shatterproof either, but the manufacturer claims it will likely survive a 2-3' drop. The seals in the electronic portion of the cap are designed to withstand pressures of up to 40,000 feet.

The Lightcap costs \$24.95 and a standard 1-year warranty against manufacturer defects applies. For more information and special discounts, contact sales@sollight.com or 888/557-6464 and mention Wildland Firefighter. ▲

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