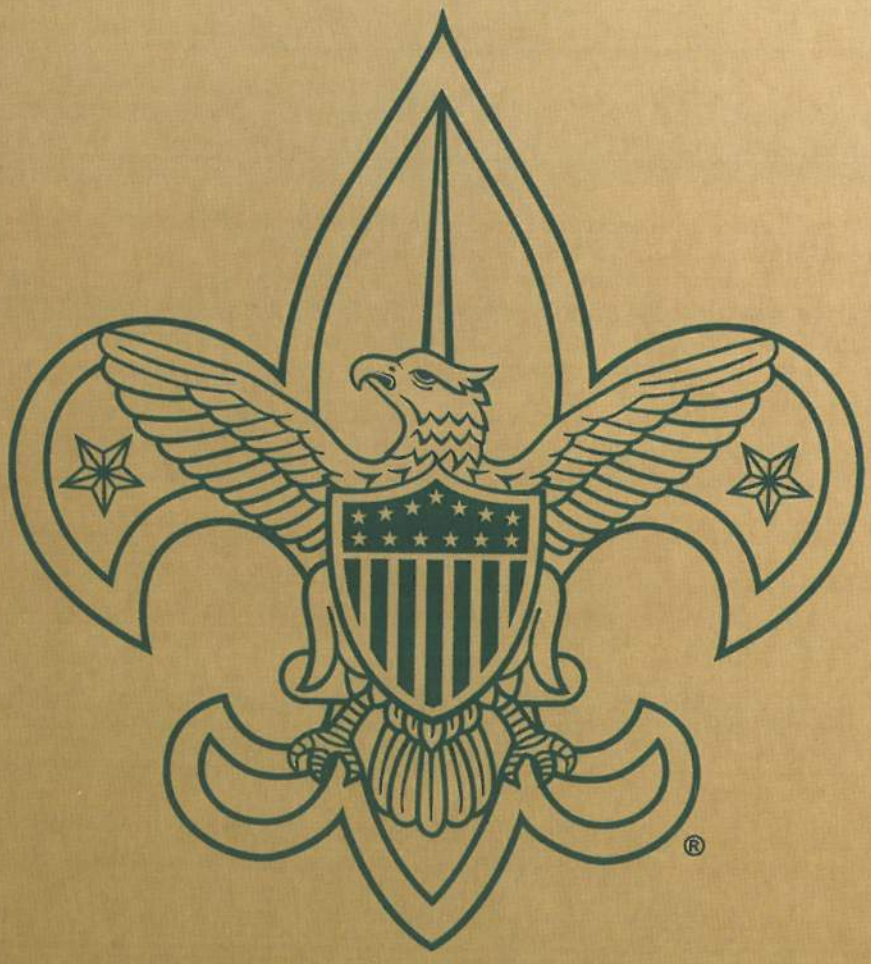
SCOUTS BSA

TROOP LEADER GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME 2



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

A Word About Youth Protection

Child abuse is a serious problem in our society. In fact, experts have deemed it a public health crisis. Sadly, it can occur anywhere, even in Scouting. Youth safety is our number one priority in Scouting. To maintain the most secure environment possible, the Boy Scouts of America works on an ongoing basis to develop policies, procedures, resources, and training to protect youth.

The BSA requires Youth Protection training for all registered volunteers.

The BSA requires all registered volunteers to take Youth Protection training every two years. If a volunteer does not meet the BSA's Youth Protection training requirement at the time of charter renewal, the volunteer will not be reregistered. Leaders and parents play a vital role in ensuring that Youth Protection and Health and Safety policies and procedures are understood and followed. Because of this, we encourage all adults, including parents, to take the BSA's Youth Protection training.

To take the training online, go to my.scouting.org and establish an account using the member number you receive when you register for BSA membership.

If you take the training online before you obtain a member number, be sure to return to my.scouting.org and enter your number for training record credit. Your BSA local council will also provide facilitator-led training if you cannot take the training online. For more information on training, refer to the BSA adult membership application, No. 524-501.

To find out more about the Youth Protection policies of the BSA and how to help Scouting keep your family safe, see the Parent's Guide in any of the Cub Scouting or Scouts BSA handbooks, or go to www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection.

If you have questions about Youth Protection training, please contact your local council or the BSA's National Service Center at 972-580-2489, or email myscouting@scouting.org.

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Contents

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The Ninth Method of Scouting

Back when you first attended Scout leader training, you learned that Scouting has eight methods: adult association, advancement, ideals, leadership development, outdoor program, patrol method, personal growth, and the uniform. Now that you're a seasoned leader, however, you realize that there's a ninth, unstated method: time.

The magic of Scouting doesn't happen in a moment. A weekend campout or a week at summer camp is not enough to transform a Scout into an adult. But when the weeks turn into months, and the months turn into years, incredible transformations happen.

As an experienced troop leader, you've watched those transformations firsthand. You've seen the perpetual-motion machines we call Webelos Scouts grow into responsible young adults. You've seen Scouts who couldn't get through a night of camping without a meltdown lead 12-day treks in the wilderness. You've been to your Scouts' high-school graduations, and you may have even danced at their weddings.

You've also discovered that your troop, like its members, always has room to grow. Perhaps the troop needs a unifying vision. Perhaps you're struggling to retain older Scouts or serve youth with special needs. Perhaps you want to do a better job with advancement or community service or high adventure.

This guidebook is for you. For the first time, the Boy Scouts of America has created a publication that focuses exclusively on the needs of leaders who've moved beyond the basics—who've been there, done that, and gotten the T-shirts and the patches. We trust you will find it valuable.

Support Resources

As an experienced troop leader, you know you have a wealth of resources at your fingertips, including roundtables and training courses; *Scouting* magazine; the BSA website, www.scouting.org; and this guidebook and its companion, volume 1, which offers an introduction to the Scouts BSA program and focuses on the needs of new or relatively inexperienced leaders.

The BSA also offers resources that are of particular interest to experienced leaders, including Wood Badge and Powder Horn training (described in chapter 18 of volume 1), conferences at Florida Sea Base and Northern Tier Training Center, and the conferences held each summer at the Philmont Training Center and the John D. Tickle National Training and Leadership Center (part of the Summit Bechtel Reserve). These conferences let you meet and share ideas with other seasoned leaders from across the country.

Of course, the longer you continue in Scouting, the more you become a resource yourself. Serving on roundtable staff or helping lead a training course is a great way to sharpen your skills and keep up with changes in the Scouting program. Your district executive, district commissioner, or district training chair can tell you more about these opportunities.

Thank you for your continuing service to Scouts BSA!

Troop Leader Essentials

These BSA publications are troop leader essentials that provide valuable information and insight:

- ***Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys and Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls***—The primary resource for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills)
- ***Fieldbook***—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills
- ***Troop Leader Guidebook*** **(Volumes 1 and 2)**—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters
- ***Troop Committee Guidebook***—The primary resource for troop committee members
- ***Program Features for Troops and Crews*** **(volumes 1, 2, and 3)**—Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources
- ***Scouts BSA Requirements*** **(Current year)**—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards; updated annually
- ***Guide to Awards and Insignia***—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly
- ***Guide to Advancement***—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases
- ***Guide to Safe Scouting***—The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner
- ***Patrol Leader Handbook***—The official guide for patrol leaders
- ***Senior Patrol Leader Handbook***—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders
- ***Scouting*** **magazine**—The official magazine for Scout leaders; published five times a year
- ***Scout Life*** **magazine**—The BSA's official youth magazine; published monthly
- ***Online resources***— www.troopleader.org; www.programresources.org

Overview of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*

Volume 1

Section 1: Scouts BSA Basics. An introduction to Scouts BSA, including mission, aims, methods, ideals, troop structure, and membership and leadership requirements.

Section 2: The Scouts BSA Program. An introduction to the elements of the troop program and program planning, including camping and other outings.

Section 3: All About Youth. Working with every Scout from the new recruit to the senior patrol leader.

Section 4: All About Adults. Working with every adult from the new parent to the troop committee chairperson.

Section 5: Advancement and Awards. An introduction to the youth advancement program and the array of awards Scouts, adults, and units can earn.

Section 6: Troop Administration. An introduction to troop administration from a Scoutmaster corps perspective, including financing the troop, chartered organization relationships, and communications.

Section 7: Health and Safety. A comprehensive overview of the BSA's safety and risk-management policies.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.

Volume 2

Section 1: Assessment and Improvement. Developing a vision of success, setting goals to realize that vision, and laying out the steps to reach each goal.

Section 2: Effective Leadership Today. Exploring Scouting's toolbox of leadership techniques and how they can help you make your troop better.

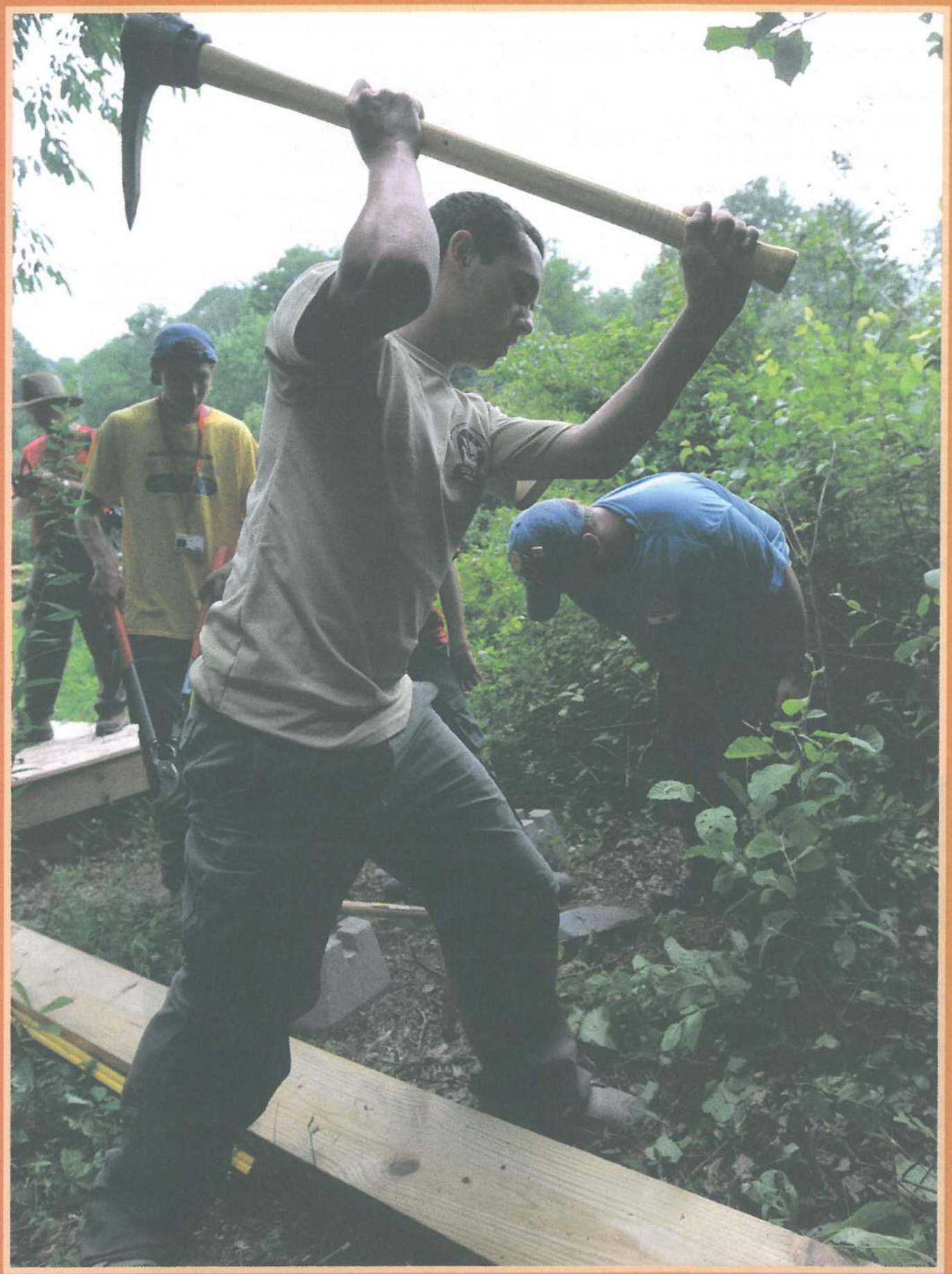
Section 3: The Power of Program and High Adventure. Adding excitement to every activity and making high adventure an integral part of your troop program.

Section 4: Service and Stewardship. Powerful tools for infusing direction, excitement, responsibility, and achievement into your troop's program.

Section 5: Keeping Scouts Involved and Interested. Ways to keep Scouts of all ages engaged in Scouting.

Section 6: Responding to Special Challenges. Tried-and-true approaches to understanding pressures your Scouts may be experiencing and what to do about them.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.



ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

When you are a new troop leader, everything can look fresh and exciting: Troop meetings abound with energy, troop outings take you to places you've never been, and veteran leaders seem to have all the answers. As you become more seasoned or move into positions of increased responsibility, you will probably discover that there's room for improvement.

Figuring out what should change—and how it should change—is the purpose of this section. If your troop is firing on all cylinders, don't skip over this part. In Scouting, as in life, the only constant is change. Today's great success may flop tomorrow. Keeping your troop humming means continually evaluating every aspect of troop operations.

CHAPTER 1
Troop Vision

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* introduced the mission statement of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA):

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The BSA also has a vision statement:

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Like all vision statements, this one is a picture of future success, an optimal future state the organization is trying to reach.

Vision statements are important because they define the destinations toward which organizations are moving. When your vision is top of mind, it's easier to see where to go at a crossroads and easier to avoid dead ends and rabbit trails that could lead you away from your goals. After all, if you don't know where you're headed, you won't know whether you're on the right path.

Criteria for a Meaningful Vision

A vision engages the heart and spirit.

A vision leads toward a worthwhile goal.

A vision gives meaning to an effort.

A vision is simple.

A vision is attainable.

A vision can change over time.

Crafting a troop vision is a good first step in assessing and improving your troop. It can also help unify the Scoutmaster corps, troop committee, and patrol leaders' council around a common set of priorities.

Here are some examples:

- Troop X will turn ordinary youth into adults of extraordinary character. The troop welcomes Scouts at any stage of development and moves them systematically toward adulthood, providing along the way the training and support they and their families need.
- Troop X will build character, instill values, and prepare our Scouts for success with lifelong skills in leadership, teamwork, service to others, a love for the outdoors and our environment, and respect for themselves and others in the world.
- Troop X will develop tomorrow's leaders through a fun, exciting program with many opportunities for Scouts to learn life skills and excel in a team-based environment.
- Troop X will produce youth and adult leaders with strong personal character in family and community service by daily living the values of Scouting.
- Troop X will develop outstanding youth leaders who seek to serve and who will forever hold their Scouting experience as a significant part of their success in life. Fun and adventure will be the backdrop of this development, and the outcome will be Scouts who have become adults of extraordinary character. In turn, our future will be much brighter because of this development.
- Troop X will be a fun, active troop where Scouts explore new places and activities, advance in rank, and achieve the aims of the Boy Scouts of America through teamwork.
- Troop X will instill servant leadership and living by ethical values while offering fun and adventure.

As you can see, these examples share many things in common but also differ in what they emphasize. If all these troops were achieving their visions, you might well be able to visit their meetings and guess which statements apply to which troops.

Crafting a Troop Vision

So what is your troop's vision? If you don't have one, it may be time to craft one. Scouts who have been to National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) and adults who have been to Wood Badge will be familiar with the concept, so enlist them to lead the visioning process. Here's a process you could follow at a PLC or troop committee meeting.

Step 1: Review basic concepts.

Some leaders may be unfamiliar with the concepts of mission, vision, and values. Others may have learned about these concepts in their professional lives but may not understand how they apply to Scouting. Take a few minutes to review the basic concepts from NYLT and Wood Badge and from volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*. The *Patrol Leader Handbook* and *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook* also include discussions on vision that you should share with your youth leaders, to help them create personal visions that help achieve the troop's vision.

Also review the mission, vision, and values of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the aims and methods of Scouts BSA. It would obviously be counterproductive to develop a troop vision that goes counter to what the BSA is trying to accomplish.

Step 2: Decide on the timeframe.

Talk as a group about exactly when the future you're envisioning should arrive. Although not all visions include a timeframe, establishing one gives you a deadline to work toward. If you also set checkpoints along the way—annual progress-update meetings, for example—you'll apply some valuable deadline pressure on yourselves.

Five years is a good timeframe to start with, but you could go shorter or longer. For example, you could look seven years out, when today's brand-new Scouts will be aging out of the troop.

Step 3: List your strengths.

Ask participants what makes the troop successful today. Do you have a strong high-adventure program? Do you generate a large number of Eagle Scouts? Do you have a core group of trained and experienced adult leaders? Is community service a hallmark of your program? Capture those strengths, because they are elements of your future success. What's more, discussing them will put participants in a positive frame of mind and encourage them to dream bigger.

Spend 10 minutes or so on this step. Record the responses on a flip chart or whiteboard.

Step 4: Define elements of future success.

Next, brainstorm what the troop might ideally look like in a few years, again recording responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. This step should take another 10 minutes or so.

Here the focus shifts a bit to changes or enhancements. What's missing from the troop program? How could you improve on things you already do well? Which age groups need more attention? Do you have adequate financial resources to reach your goals? And, perhaps most importantly, how will you know when you've been successful?

Step 5: Draft your vision.

Between the lists you created in steps 3 and 4, you should have the raw materials to draft a vision statement like those listed above. Spend 20 to 30 minutes discussing possible visions. Don't reject any ideas out of hand, but work toward a vision that falls somewhere between easily attainable and seemingly impossible.

"All our dreams can come true—if we have the courage to pursue them."—Walt Disney

At this point, you can conclude the visioning meeting. You don't have a final vision, however. Instead, you have a draft that needs to be reviewed and revised.

Step 6: Review and revise your vision.

Set the vision aside until the group comes back together. You'll be able to look at your draft with fresh eyes and change it as needed. Make sure it really outlines what you want the troop to become and is understandable, specific, and inspiring.

Next, share the revised draft with other leaders and parents who weren't part of the visioning process. You need their input to make sure the vision is strong, and you need their buy-in to make the vision a reality.

Step 7: Share your vision.

Once you've finalized your vision, share it far and wide. Put it on your website and letterhead, post it at your meeting place, and share it with your chartered organization and troop families.

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."—Japanese proverb

Most importantly, use it as a compass to guide future decisions. If "high adventure" is a big part of your vision, why does buying a troop trailer make sense? If "develop youth leaders" is important, are you budgeting funds to subsidize training costs? If "community service" is central to your vision, does your troop calendar include plenty of service opportunities?

Finally, review your vision regularly to make sure you're on track to achieve it.

CHAPTER 2
Evaluating Your Troop

Having a vision of future success is not enough, of course. Consider, for example, how many high school basketball players have a vision of playing professional basketball and yet end up in other careers. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), only 3.0 percent of male players and 3.3 percent of female players in high school basketball end up playing in the NCAA. Of those who do play in college, just 1.0 percent of males and 1.2 percent of females make it to the pros. That means, at most, a tiny 0.03 percent of high school players will ever shoot a basket professionally.

Many factors separate the 0.03 percent from the 99.97 percent, including height, natural talent, and sheer luck. But perhaps the biggest factor is the willingness to do what it takes to become successful. Players make it to the pros by playing up their strengths but also identifying and overcoming their weaknesses. One player might work on jump shots; another might focus on free throws; a third might hit the weight room day after day after day.

Scouting is no different. To achieve your troop vision, you need to identify your weaknesses and develop a plan to overcome them. In this chapter, we'll discuss three important ways you can assess your troop: Journey to Excellence, troop self-assessment, and outside input.

Journey to Excellence

A great way to start evaluating and improving your troop's performance is by using the Journey to Excellence (JTE) program. The successor to tools such as the Quality Unit Award program, JTE uses a balanced-scorecard approach to assess the performance of units, districts, and councils. That's a fancy way of saying that JTE focuses on a small number of performance areas that are measurable and contribute to overall success. When used effectively, JTE can assess past performance and, more importantly, improve future results.

For troops, JTE tracks performance in these 11 areas:

- Planning and budget
- Increasing Youth Membership
- Retention
- Webelos-to-Scout transition
- Advancement
- Short-term camping
- Long-term camping
- Service projects
- Patrol method
- Leadership and family engagement
- Trained leadership

Each year, a group of volunteers and professionals from across the country meets to look at actual data from the past three years in each area. The group then sets benchmarks, such as this one for short-term camping: "Conduct short-term or weekend campouts throughout the year."

The group also sets three performance goals related to each benchmark. For example, here are the goals for short-term camping:

- Bronze: Conduct four short-term overnight campouts.
- Silver: Conduct seven short-term overnight campouts.
- Gold: Conduct nine short-term overnight campouts.

Based on your troop's performance across the 11 measures, you can achieve bronze-, silver-, or gold-level JTE status for the year by doing the following:

- Bronze: Earn at least 525 points by earning points in at least 7 objectives.
- Silver: Earn at least 750 points by earning points in at least 8 objectives.
- Gold: Earn at least 1,000 points by earning points in at least 8 objectives.

Bronze level indicates satisfactory Scouting, silver indicates excellent Scouting, and gold indicates outstanding Scouting. Not every troop can achieve gold status, but every troop should aspire to reach at least bronze status.

JTE benchmarks are subject to change each year. As achievement improves across the BSA, the benchmarks will become more challenging. You can find the current troop scorecard at www.scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence.

Using Journey to Excellence in Your Unit

If you look at Journey to Excellence as nothing but extra paperwork at charter renewal time, or an easy way to get a new ribbon for your troop flag, you're missing out on the program's potential to strengthen your troop. Yes, you should complete your JTE scorecard at charter renewal time, but you should do more. Here's what JTE can bring to your troop.

A Method for Evaluating Your Troop

Because JTE provides tangible measurements that are based on things you likely are tracking already, such as advancement, it offers a simple way to gauge your troop's

performance. You also end up with an objective score rather than a subjective opinion.

Actually, it might be more accurate to say that you end up with a set of objective *scores*. Because JTE tracks 11 benchmarks, you can quickly identify areas of strength that you should celebrate, as well as any areas of weakness that you should work to improve.

In some cases, JTE can provide early warning of trouble to come. The benchmarks for increasing youth membership and Webelos-to-Scout transition are a good example. Without new Scouts coming in each year, your troop will gradually wither, even though the current group of Scouts is active and engaged. But in the midst of a very active troop program, it can be easy to overlook such future problems.

In other cases, JTE can highlight weaknesses masquerading as strengths. Let's say, for example, that your troop regularly reaches gold level on the short-term camping and long-term camping measures yet fails to reach bronze level for advancement and retention. That could indicate that you're planning activities that don't interest members or that those activities don't provide opportunities to advance in rank. It could also mean that you need to enhance your efforts to help new Scouts reach First Class rank in the first 12 to 18 months or to help Life Scouts reach the Eagle Scout rank.

Exactly what your JTE results mean depends on your individual troop. Once you've completed your JTE scorecard each year, share the results with the patrol leaders' council, the troop committee, and the Scoutmaster corps. Within each group, discuss the results and their meaning. Then make plans to do better next year.

Getting Help With Shortcomings

If your JTE scorecard reveals weaknesses, it's important to find resources in those areas. Here are some starting points:

- Talk with your unit commissioner.
- Talk with the leaders of troops in your district or council that excel in the areas where you struggle.
- Seek out training specific to the problem area; for example, Powder Horn can help you strengthen your outdoor program, while the Philmont Training Center offers conferences on specific topics like advancement and membership.
- Research available online and supplemental training courses at www.scouting.org/training/adult.

A Framework for Planning the Year

Achieving success in JTE requires short-term camping, long-term camping, courts of honor, new Scout recruiting events other than Webelos transition, service projects, and other activities. It also requires activities that foster advancement and use the patrol method. If your troop calendar doesn't include these sorts of activities, you won't qualify for JTE recognition and, more importantly, won't make progress toward achieving your troop vision.

At the same time, success in JTE depends on achieving goals that don't directly relate to the calendar, such as advancement. Those goals should be part of your annual plan, too.

Here are some ways to use JTE as a framework for planning:

- Review the troop scorecard with your patrol leaders' council and troop committee. Decide as a troop what your goal for the next year will be, such as achieving silver status.
- At the annual planning conference, ensure that the PLC schedules the number of outings, courts of honor, and other events you need to achieve your goal. As part of its approval of the troop calendar, the troop committee should double-check that the calendar is aligned with the troop's JTE goal.
- Set numerical goals for benchmarks that aren't related to activities, such as advancement and trained leadership. If possible, break down the goals by month or season.
- Assign an adult leader to track progress on each benchmark throughout the year.

A Tool for Continuous Evaluation

It's meaningless to set goals and not revisit them until the following year. To gauge progress throughout the year, try these techniques:

- Make JTE an agenda item at PLC and troop committee meetings.
- Create posters for your meeting place that show progress toward your goals. For example, if your goal is to have 50 members at charter renewal time, create a "thermometer" poster showing that goal and your current membership status.
- Add a JTE page to your troop website and update your progress monthly.
- Celebrate the achievement of each goal, several of which can be reached long before the end of the year.

A movie night or miniature-golf outing for the patrol leaders' council might be a good way to celebrate achievement of a JTE goal.

A Cause for Celebration

When you reach bronze, silver, or gold status, celebrate! Here are some ideas:

- Make a big deal of adding the JTE ribbon to your troop flag.
- Distribute JTE patches to Scouts and leaders.
- Add the appropriate JTE logo to your website.
- Share your achievement with everyone from your chartered organization to visiting Webelos Scout dens.

Remember, however, that reaching bronze, silver, or gold JTE status is about more than achieving a score. It's about creating a troop program that truly accomplishes the aims of Scouting. And that's definitely cause for celebration.

Troop Self-Assessment

Journey to Excellence necessarily focuses on a handful of measurable aspects of troop operations. As a result, it doesn't directly address other important factors (or things that contribute to JTE results).

Take the short-term camping benchmark, for example. JTE measures the number of outings your troop takes, but not their quality, how well they're attended, whether they support the patrol method, and whether they meet the needs of Scouts of various ages and ranks.

To dig deeper, complete the form on the next few pages. Once it is completed, the commissioner will send the data to the unit Key 3 via My.Scouting.org. Then the unit commissioner will sit down and review the commissioner's observations (detailed assessment) about the troop. Once a consensus is reached, it will be time to concentrate on areas of improvement and develop a unit service plan in which the district committee can step in to assist.

What if your unit doesn't have an active unit commissioner? Ask your district commissioner to recruit one for you.

For each question, indicate whether you strongly disagree (0), strongly agree (2), or fall somewhere in the middle (1).		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree
Membership				
1.	The troop is growing in size.	0	1	2
2.	The troop retains at least 75 percent of its members each year, not counting those who age out or transfer.	0	1	2
3.	The troop has a membership growth plan that includes at least one annual recruiting event.	0	1	2
4.	The troop maintains a strong, year-round relationship with at least one Webelos Scout den.	0	1	2
5.	The troop has a designated, active Webelos-to-Scout coordinator.	0	1	2
6.	The troop has an established system for smoothly integrating new Scouts.	0	1	2
Category Score				
Troop Meetings				
7.	Each troop meeting is fun and has a purpose for Scouts of all ages.	0	1	2
8.	Meeting space is adequate for current and future needs.	0	1	2
9.	Troop meetings follow the plans laid out by the patrol leaders' council.	0	1	2
10.	Troop meetings build toward upcoming outings.	0	1	2
11.	Troop meetings include activities that encourage physical fitness.	0	1	2
12.	Youth leaders run troop meetings with minimal direct adult involvement.	0	1	2
13.	Attendance at troop meetings is good.	0	1	2
14.	Meetings start and end on time.	0	1	2
15.	The patrol leaders' council huddles before and after troop meetings.	0	1	2
Category Score				
Activities/Outings				
16.	The troop maintains a calendar of monthly outings, most of them overnight.	0	1	2
17.	The troop holds a variety of activities at a mix of familiar and new destinations.	0	1	2
18.	The troop attends a long-term summer camp each year.	0	1	2
19.	The troop plans high-adventure outings at least once every two years.	0	1	2
20.	Each outing offers something of interest to Scouts of all ages.	0	1	2
21.	Each outing provides opportunities for advancement, adult association, the patrol method, and youth leadership.	0	1	2
22.	Youth leaders play a key role in planning and leading all outings.	0	1	2
23.	The troop plans at least four service projects per year, including at least one that benefits the chartered organization.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Advancement				
24.	Most Scouts are advancing at least one rank per year.	0	1	2
25.	Scouts have opportunities to earn merit badges beyond troop meetings.	0	1	2
26.	Troop leaders make it easy for Scouts to find merit badge counselors.	0	1	2
27.	The troop regularly highlights both Eagle-required and elective merit badges.	0	1	2
28.	Scouts and their parents receive regular updates on their advancement status.	0	1	2
29.	Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review are scheduled promptly when requested.	0	1	2
30.	The troop schedules boards of review for Scouts who are not advancing.	0	1	2
31.	The troop tracks Scouts who are within a year of turning 18 and encourages them to work toward the Eagle Scout rank.	0	1	2
32.	Scouts receive immediate recognition of their achievements at troop meetings.	0	1	2
33.	Inspiring courts of honor are held regularly and are well attended by both Scouts and their families.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Patrols				
34.	The troop has functioning patrols with names, patrol patches, and other indicators of their identity.	0	1	2
35.	Patrols are large enough to function effectively even if one or two members are absent.	0	1	2
36.	Scouts have the opportunity to choose their own patrols.	0	1	2
37.	All Scouts know the patrol they are in and their patrol leader.	0	1	2
38.	Individual Scouts within each patrol have patrol-level positions of responsibility.	0	1	2
39.	Patrol leaders are in regular contact with their patrol members outside of troop activities.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Youth Leaders				
40.	The troop holds elections for patrol leaders and senior patrol leader at least twice a year.	0	1	2
41.	The senior patrol leader appoints other youth leaders in consultation with the Scoutmaster.	0	1	2
42.	Newly elected or appointed leaders complete Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops within a few weeks of taking office.	0	1	2
43.	Most troop-level youth leaders have attended National Youth Leadership Training.	0	1	2
44.	The troop holds monthly patrol leaders' council meetings.	0	1	2
45.	Patrol leaders' council meetings are run by the senior patrol leader with minimal direct adult involvement.			
46.	Attendance at patrol leaders' council meetings is good.			
47.	Patrol leaders' council meetings start and end on time.			
48.	Patrol leaders' council meetings include training components and opportunities to discuss issues facing the troop.			
49.	The troop scribe records and distributes minutes of patrol leaders' council meetings.			
Category Score				

Scoutmaster Corps				
50.	The troop regularly recruits new assistant Scoutmasters.	0	1	2
51.	Assistant Scoutmasters have assigned areas of responsibility.	0	1	2
52.	The Scoutmaster corps meets regularly to address issues and challenges.	0	1	2
53.	The Scoutmaster and all assistant Scoutmasters have completed basic training; some have completed Wood Badge.	0	1	2
54.	Enough leaders have completed specialized training (Safe Swim Defense, Climb On Safely, Powder Horn, etc.) so that the Scouts are not held back from pursuing high-adventure activities.	0	1	2
55.	The troop has sufficient leadership depth so that no adult leader is overextended or indispensable.	0	1	2
56.	The troop has enough adult leaders so that no troop activity is canceled due to a lack of sufficient adult leadership.	0	1	2
57.	The troop has a succession plan in place for the Scoutmaster and key assistant Scoutmasters.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Troop Committee				
58.	The troop committee provides the Scoutmaster with full support.	0	1	2
59.	The troop committee handles administrative details, freeing the Scoutmaster corps to focus on working directly with the Scouts.	0	1	2
60.	The troop committee meets monthly.	0	1	2
61.	Troop committee members have assigned areas of responsibility.	0	1	2
62.	Troop committee members have completed basic training; some have completed Wood Badge.	0	1	2
63.	The Scoutmaster attends monthly troop committee meetings and provides a report.	0	1	2
64.	The chartered organization representative attends troop committee meetings and serves as an active liaison with the chartered organization.	0	1	2
65.	The Scoutmaster meets with the committee chair weekly or monthly.	0	1	2
66.	The troop committee has sufficient leadership depth so that no member is overextended or indispensable.	0	1	2
67.	The troop committee has a succession plan in place for the committee chair, key committee members, and the Scoutmaster.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Miscellaneous				
68.	The troop has a written budget that is reviewed at troop committee meetings and that is sufficient for troop operations.	0	1	2
69.	The troop budget includes funds to provide financial support to needy Scouts and to defray leader training costs.	0	1	2
70.	The troop conducts at least one money-earning project per year to pay for activities, equipment, training, and other expenses.	0	1	2
71.	Money-earning projects are sufficiently brief as to not detract from troop programming.	0	1	2
72.	Both Scouts and adult leaders wear correct Scout uniforms to troop meetings, courts of honor, and other events as appropriate.			
73.	The troop has multiple points of contact with the chartered organization (participation in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath, overlap in members, joint service projects, etc.).			
74.	The troop completes the charter renewal process on time each year.			
75.	The troop regularly receives Journey to Excellence recognition.			
Category Score				
Total Score				

Scoring			
Category	**Possible Score**	**Your Score**	**Percentage Score**
Membership	12		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Troop Meetings	18		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Activities/Outings	18		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Advancement	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Patrols	12		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Youth Leaders	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Scoutmaster Corps	14		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Troop Committee	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Miscellaneous	16		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Total	150		% (Your Score/Possible Score)

Rank the categories, high to low, in order of your percentage scores:

Category	Percentage Score
1.	%
2.	%
3.	%
4.	%
5.	%
6.	%
7.	%
8.	%
9.	%

Outside Input

One challenge of the troop assessment is that it can be hard to evaluate your own troop honestly. Having multiple leaders complete the assessment helps, but what if everyone in the troop has a blind spot? As Robert Burns famously wrote, "And would some Power the small gift give us/To see ourselves as others see us!"

Your unit commissioner can give you the gift of unbiased feedback. The unit commissioner should be as willing to share feedback as you are willing to accept it. Remember that feedback is a gift.

Evaluating by Walking Around

The JTE scorecard, the troop self-assessment, and commissioner input are useful, but don't discount the value of evaluating by walking around. The Scoutmaster shouldn't be so busy that he or she can't spend some time observing troop meetings and activities to see how things are going. Similarly, Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review are great opportunities to get feedback from troop members.

Just be careful not to confuse anecdotes with evidence. The opinions of one or two Scouts or parents, whether positive or negative, don't necessarily reflect troop-wide reality.

The Troop Down the Street

Another useful, albeit indirect, way to evaluate your troop is to visit another troop in your district or council that you feel does a good job (especially in an area where you'd like to make improvements). There are quite a few Scouts BSA leaders who've never been to another troop's meetings except when they were Scouts themselves or were shopping for troops as Webelos Scout leaders.

By observing how another troop operates, you may pick up tips to improve your own troop operations. You may also discover that things aren't as bad as you think!

When in Doubt, STOP!

Perhaps you've had the experience of being momentarily lost during an outing. The landscape might have looked familiar, but you'd walked beyond where you'd been before and were no longer convinced of your location. That can happen with troop leadership, too. You look around and realize you're not quite sure where you should head next. As you conduct this exercise, use the troop vision as a guidepost.

The Scouts BSA handbooks encourage Scouts who are lost to STOP: Stop, think, observe, and plan. The same technique works for adults navigating their way through the challenges of being troop leaders.

S – Stop where you are.

T – Think. See if you can figure out how your travels have gotten you to the place where you are and what that can tell you about how to get to where you want to go.

O – Observe. Pay attention to what is all around you. Take advantage of the ideas of those who are with you; there can be strength in numbers.

P – Plan. Settle on a coherent plan of action to get you to the next place on your journey. Then, as you carry it out, stop again from time to time to think, observe, and adjust your plans according to new information and situations.

Even if you are certain you know where you are, there is great value in going through the STOP exercise. Figuring out where you are now is one of the keys to developing as a leader and improving your troop.

Between the JTE scorecard, the troop self-evaluation, and input from your unit commissioner or other Scouters, you should be able to gain a clear understanding of what your troop is doing well and exactly where it could improve. Of course, information is useless until it's put into action. We'll discuss action steps in chapter 5. First, however, we'll discuss ways to evaluate your troop's leadership team—including yourself.

Consider meeting with other local troop leaders, perhaps in conjunction with district roundtable meetings, to share best practices.

For best results, take along a small group of key youth and adult leaders, including your senior patrol leader. (As always, the BSA's Youth Protection policies apply.)

CHAPTER 3
Evaluating Your Leadership Team

By definition, leading a Scout troop is a team effort. You can't charter a troop without a Scoutmaster, a troop committee chair, two troop committee members, and a chartered organization representative, and only the smallest of troops can get by with so few leaders.

A good time to evaluate the troop's leadership team is over the summer, in advance of the new program year.

Once a year, the troop Key 3—the Scoutmaster, committee chair, and chartered organization representative—should conduct a confidential, forward-looking evaluation of the troop's leadership team. One effective way to do that is to do a SWOT analysis. Popular in business circles, SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In terms of troop operations, you might make notes like these on various leaders:

- Strengths: Eagle Scout; Wood Badge–trained; excellent rapport with Scouts
- Weaknesses: swing-shift job makes regular attendance difficult; works better with adults than Scouts, yet is in an assistant Scoutmaster role; hasn't been trained
- Opportunities: plans to attend Powder Horn and could help build high-adventure program; would be a good candidate to move into Scoutmaster role; has a younger child in Cub Scouting so is likely in the troop for the long haul
- Threats: child is close to aging out, so may become less involved; health issues make participation on outings difficult; job situation is uncertain—may have to relocate

If you're not careful, your SWOT analysis can veer into personal considerations. Be discreet, stay positive, and focus on how each person can best contribute to the troop's success. And remember, every other leader (like you) is a volunteer with strengths, weaknesses, and responsibilities beyond Scouting.

Every troop is different, of course, but this evaluation is likely to reveal a few areas where you need to make changes—or where change is coming whether or not you like it. First, some adults may be in positions that don't match their interests, abilities, or current life situations. Second, you may be able to foresee changes you'll need to make in the near future, as leaders' children age out of the program. While some adults happily continue in troop roles long after their own Scouts have moved on to college and career, others prefer to reduce or change their involvement. Developing a plan now for replacing those leaders can prevent a crisis later. (We'll discuss succession planning in chapter 5.)

Terms of Service and Term Limits

When will your time in your current position end? In many troops, the only way to leave a position is to quit, die, or recruit your own replacement.

Other troops take a more thoughtful approach. Rather than assume that leaders will continue in their roles indefinitely, they recruit for one year at a time and reassess assignments annually. (Summer is a good time to do this.) While most leaders will continue in their current positions, this approach gives individuals—and the troop—an out.

Some troops go a step further and set term limits, at least on key positions like Scoutmaster, the logic being that someone can put all of his or her energy into the role for, say, three years, knowing that a less-demanding role awaits. If you go this route, consider naming a Scoutmaster-designate who can shadow the Scoutmaster and seamlessly move into that role when the current Scoutmaster moves to another position.

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Here are the leadership positions listed in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in the *Troop Committee Guidebook*. As a unit Key 3, complete the chart and discuss ways to use this information to improve troop operations. The chart shown here also appears in the appendix.

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Scoutmaster							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Program							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Administration							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the New-Scout Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the Older-Scout Patrol							
Other Assistant Scoutmasters							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Troop Committee Chair							
Secretary							
Treasurer							
Outdoor/Activities Coordinator							
Advancement Coordinator							
Chaplain							
Training Coordinator							
Equipment Coordinator							
Unit Religious Emblems Coordinator							
Other Troop Committee Members							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
Chartered Organization Representative							

CHAPTER 4
Evaluating Yourself

As an adult leader, you play a critical role in the success of your troop. If you are the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair, virtually every aspect of troop operations depends on your leadership. If you oversee a specific area like advancement or the new-Scout patrol, your impact is more focused but still quite meaningful.

It's important, then, to evaluate yourself and how you are contributing to the troop's success. Self-evaluation is a process worth revisiting from time to time as your circumstances change.

A Self-Assessment Exercise

Here are five questions to think about. Take plenty of time and write down your thoughts. Sharing your answers with other adults inside and beyond your troop can help you understand the importance of your answers.

Five Questions About You

1. Why did you become a troop leader?
2. Why do you want to be a leader now?
3. What does the BSA expect of you?
4. What do you expect of Scouting?
5. What do you expect of yourself?

1. Why did you become a troop leader?

To begin understanding where you are now, think back to the reasons you became a troop leader in the first place, whether that was six months ago or many years before your current Scouts were born. Here are some possible reasons:

- Perhaps you have a child who wanted to be a Scout, and you signed up so you could spend time together or to help your child have the best possible experience.
- You might have been a Scout when you were that age and were eager to see today's young people get to enjoy the same kind of experience.
- You may have wanted to take part in the adventure of Scouting, and becoming involved in a troop offered chances for you again to share campouts, hikes, and other activities. (Have you ever considered how few people get to do the things Scouts do on a monthly basis?)

Some people take positions as troop leaders because they were assigned that responsibility or were asked by a group of parents to fill in when a troop lacked enough adult leadership. Some are willing; others are reluctant.

For other people, leading a Scout unit can be a form of service to one's community, to the future of young people, and to the nation.

Still others, much like entrepreneurs in the business community, embrace the challenge of starting something new or fixing something that's broken.

2. Why do you want to be a leader now?

Now, think about whether your motivation has changed. Which reasons are still relevant? What other reasons keep you involved?

Consider these questions:

- If you became a troop leader because your child joined the troop, what will you do when their time with the troop is completed and they move on?
- Has your interest in the adventure of Scouting increased or waned?
- Are you still enjoying Scouting as much as you did when you accepted your first role as a troop leader? If not, what's different now and what might you do to improve the situation?
- What role does public acknowledgment of your achievements play in your willingness to continue as a troop leader?
- Do your fellow Scouters constitute a large part of your friendship circle or do you feel that Scouting pulls you away from activities that are important to you?
- Is your current position a good fit for your interests, abilities, and schedule?

Because no one will stay in the same position forever—even those Scoutmasters with 30 years' tenure—also think about these questions:

- Has your troop developed pathways so you can move upward to a position of greater responsibility and challenge or downward to a less demanding position?
- Is there a succession plan for the time when you will move out of your current leadership position or perhaps leave the troop altogether?

Scouting should be fun and rewarding for Scouts and adults alike. If you aren't getting something out of the program, it's probably time to think about finding a different role to play.

3. What does the BSA expect of you?

The basic responsibilities for each position in the troop are outlined in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in the *Troop Committee Guidebook*. How well are you carrying out those responsibilities? How well do those responsibilities align with your interests and capabilities?

In addition to revisiting your specific responsibilities, consider these questions:

- What is your training status? What is the next training course you should take? Do you need a refresher for a course you took years ago?
- Are you staying abreast of changes to BSA programs through self-study, attending roundtables, and reading *Scouting* magazine?
- Are you helping guide your troop and its members in achieving goals that are challenging, worthwhile, and enjoyable?
- Are you serving as the face of Scouting in your troop and community by being a worthy role model?

4. What do you expect of Scouting?

The BSA asks a great deal of adult troop leaders. You volunteer tremendous amounts of time and energy for the sake of Scouting. It's OK to assess whether you are receiving adequate support from the BSA in return.

Consider these members of your support team:

- The parents of your Scouts
- Your troop's other adult leaders
- Your chartered organization representative (and your chartered organization as a whole)
- Your unit commissioner
- Your roundtable commissioner
- Your district executive
- Your district or council training team
- Your local council service center staff

In many ways, your effectiveness depends on the support you receive from these individuals and groups. What support do you need that you aren't getting? If you have shortfalls, make people aware of your concerns; you might be surprised by how responsive they can be.

As an adult troop leader, you are an integral part of the BSA. Your role in your troop's meetings and activities gives you a front-row seat to the ways that BSA policies, training, materials, and assistance succeed or fall short. Don't be shy about sharing your thoughts, both as a way to improve your own leadership and your troop's opportunities and as a way to improve district, council, and national efforts to offer the best Scouting program possible.

5. What do you expect of yourself?

This is an essential question that only you can answer. If you don't expect much of yourself as a troop leader, you probably won't have many expectations for your Scouts, either. If, however, you are committed to strengthening your abilities as a leader, adding to your skills, helping your troop members advance, and finding plenty of fun and satisfaction along the way, then resources within and beyond the BSA are there for you.

In chapter 1, we discussed the concept of developing a troop vision, a concept that will be familiar to you if you've attended Wood Badge or sent Scouts to NYLT.

Developing a personal vision is also important. Consider these examples:

- My vision as Scoutmaster is to create a robust adult-leadership structure that includes trained leaders at every position and a clear succession plan.
- My vision is to see all eight members of the Sidewinder Patrol—including my child—become Eagle Scouts.
- My vision is a troop in which the adult leaders do nothing but unlock the Scout hut on Thursday nights and drive on weekend outings.
- My vision as outdoor/activities coordinator is for our troop to have enough equipment, financial resources, and trained leaders that we never have to say "no" to our youth leaders when they dream big.
- My vision is to create a troop environment that is welcoming to Scouts of all ages, races, abilities, and economic backgrounds. I want our troop to be a true team that values and encourages every member.

A personal vision can bring meaning and focus to the time you devote to Scouting. It can also clarify what short-term goals you need to set and what you should be doing aside from your week-to-week routine.

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it, you will land among the stars."
—Les Brown

The Highest Standards of Self-Assessment: The Scout Oath and Law

We ask Scouts to repeat the Scout Oath and Scout Law at every troop meeting and to pledge on their honor to use the Oath and the Scout Law as guidelines for life. A troop's adult leaders should be willing to do no less, both in their personal lives and in their interactions with others within Scouting. Be the Scout you want your Scouts to be. Show by your example that you fully subscribe to the meaning of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and that your pledge guides your leadership of the troop and the way you conduct your life. That is, by far, the most effective form of leadership you can provide.

Getting Assessed by Others

Share your assessment of yourself with others who are familiar with your role and responsibilities in Scouting and ask them for feedback. Encourage them to discuss with you what they see as your strengths and areas where you can improve. Pay attention to what they are telling you, but don't become overwhelmed by what may seem to be criticism. Your goal should be to discover ways to make the troop's program as strong as it can be. Thinking through what others tell you is an important way to improve.

Be willing to serve in the same role when the troop's other adult leaders conduct their own self-assessments and ask for input. Each of you will have more credibility to suggest steps for improvement if you've already self-assessed and had those individuals assess you. Nothing creates openness to change more than saying, "We have some things to fix in the troop and some of the changes begin with me. Here's what I'm going to do to work on them."

Tips on Giving Feedback

1. Consider your motives. Feedback should always be helpful; otherwise, there is no reason to offer it.
2. Find out if the other people involved are open to receiving feedback. Listen carefully, then rephrase what they say to be sure you understand them.
3. Deal only with behavior that can be changed.
4. Deal with specifics, not generalities.
5. Describe the behavior; do not evaluate it.
6. Let the other person know the impact the behavior has on you.
7. Use an "I" statement to accept responsibility for your own perceptions and emotions.
8. To make sure the recipients of feedback have understood your message in the way you intended it, ask them to rephrase what they heard you say.

You can give caring feedback without a good technique, but the slickest technique in the world will not hide a lack of caring.

Tips on Receiving Feedback

1. Seek out feedback. It will nearly always provide you with information that, in some way, will help you improve your performance.
2. Listen carefully. Receiving feedback requires a heightened awareness of yourself and the person offering the feedback.
3. Listen actively. Restate the feedback in your own words so the speaker knows that the message you are receiving is the same as the one the speaker intended to send.
4. Listen empathetically. Put feedback in its proper context by observing the speaker's body language, tone of voice, and emotions. Consider the speaker's reasons for offering feedback.
5. Notice how you are feeling when someone offers you feedback. Becoming angry or defensive can cloud your ability to listen effectively.

Consider feedback to be a gift. It truly is.

360-Degree Assessment

Aside from informal evaluations, consider asking for a 360-degree assessment in which feedback comes from all directions. In a business setting, such feedback comes from peers, from those you work for, and from those who work for you. These are all "stakeholders"—people who have an interest in your success and who are in positions to offer productive opinions about your progress. In Scouting, your stakeholders may be fellow unit leaders, parents of Scouts, your district executive, unit and roundtable commissioners, representatives of your chartered organization, and other Scouters who have direct knowledge of your leadership.

Based on information gathered from the assessment, you can develop a course of action that will more effectively move you toward your goals.

Here are step-by-step instructions for developing and using a 360-degree assessment.

1. Determine the goals for which you wish to be assessed. Ideally, the goals need to be SMART—specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based.
2. Join with a facilitator to help with the assessment process. This person should understand how a 360-degree assessment works.
3. Develop an assessment survey that will provide the kind of feedback that will help you more effectively move toward your goals.
4. Identify five to 10 of your stakeholders who can offer a wide range of perceptions about your progress. Provide each with a copy of the survey and a stamped envelope addressed to your facilitator. Assure each stakeholder that only the facilitator will see the surveys.
5. Upon receiving the completed surveys, your facilitator will compile the results, then meet with you to discuss the assessment and identify ways in which you can use the results to progress more effectively toward your goals.
6. Finally, make assessment an ongoing part of your Scouting responsibilities and, where appropriate, in other areas of your life. Self-assessment should not be a one-time event but, rather, a constant tool for gaining a clearer perception of your strengths and the areas where you can improve.

Pointers on Developing a 360-Degree Assessment Survey

1. Instructions to the stakeholders should be clear and unambiguous. Stakeholders should understand why they are taking part in the assessment, how it will be used, and that only the facilitator will see their answers.
2. Questions must be developed based on the goals you are striving to reach. Feedback resulting from the questions should lead to real changes that will bring you closer to your goals.
3. Feedback comes from what those completing the form actually have observed and can measure. There is nothing to be gained in asking them to assess what they've not seen or cannot quantify in some way.
4. Answers to the questions can be simple and straightforward. Offer stakeholders two or three options such as the following.

- Green Light (This is good. Keep going.); Yellow Light (This could be better.); Red Light (Some serious concerns here.)
- Way to Go; Ways to Grow
- Start; Stop; Continue

The survey should also encourage stakeholders to add any comments and suggestions they feel would be helpful. This kind of feedback can be extremely helpful.

Sample 360-Degree Assessment Survey

(Provide one copy to each participant.)

I am seeking productive feedback on my progress toward reaching these five goals that have to do with my leadership in Scouting:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

With those goals in mind, please provide an assessment of how I am doing. Of the following questions, answer those for which you have personal knowledge. Your answers may be either "Way to Go!" or "Ways to Grow." If an answer is "Ways to Grow," please feel free to suggest how I can do better in that area.

When you have finished the survey, please mail it in the enclosed envelope to my assessment facilitator. The facilitator will provide me with a summary of all the surveys. No one but the facilitator will see your answers.

	Way to Go!	Ways to Grow
1. Produces work on time		
2. Communicates well with others		
3. Encourages diversity in Scouting		
4. Develops creative solutions to problems		
5. Demonstrates a good knowledge of Scouting		
6. Treats Scouts and Scouters in a respectful, considerate manner		
7. Creates an environment that makes progress possible for everyone		
8. Serves as a good role model		
9. Shares knowledge with others		
10. Takes active steps to ensure lifelong learning		

CHAPTER 5
Charting a Course

Once you've evaluated your troop, your leadership team, and yourself, you may be able to identify dozens of things you'd like to change all at once. But trying to do too much too soon is a recipe for chaos, something like remodeling every room of your house while you're still living there.

Rather than disrupt your current program, select the five to 10 issues that are the most pressing or would have the most positive impact on troop operations. For example, filling a vacant Scoutmaster position would be a top priority, while planning a money-earning project so you could buy a troop trailer would fall farther down the list. Call this list your troop-improvement list.

Setting Priorities

If you're overwhelmed by the number of issues you need to address, try this technique:

Divide your list of issues into A, B, and C categories.

A priorities are things you must do.

B priorities are things you should do.

C priorities are things that would be nice to do.

Sort your A priorities by importance: A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.

Consider your A priorities to be your troop-improvement list.

Priorities	A	B	C
1	Fill vacant Scoutmaster position.	Plan money-earning project to fund trailer purchase.	
2			
3			

Keep in mind that priorities can change over time. If your Scoutmaster is stepping down in two years, replacing him or her might be a C priority at the moment. If you haven't identified a replacement by the time he or she leaves, you'll have an A priority on your hands. Ideally, a new Scoutmaster will be recruited long before the current Scoutmaster steps down, allowing for a smooth transition.

For each issue, identify a leader to oversee the improvement process and establish a timeline for addressing it. In some cases, you and your fellow leaders may be able to work on two or more issues at the same time; in other cases, you may need to handle issues one at a time. To use a house analogy, it would make little sense to paint your kitchen if you're planning to tear out walls soon for a major expansion.

Next, use the team-based project planning process described below to set and work toward goals in each area. The result should be improved troop operations, increased leader satisfaction, and, most importantly, an enhanced ability to achieve the aims of Scouting.

Five Stages of Team-Based Project Planning

Wood Badge is a great place to learn more about and practice project planning.

A good way to tackle your troop-improvement list is to have a team of leaders work each item as a discrete project using a five-stage approach. These stages are:

1. Prepare a project overview that summarizes the specific goals and objectives of the project.
2. Develop a work breakdown structure that identifies the tasks to be completed and the order in which they should be done.
3. Assign responsibilities for specific activities or tasks to each project team member.
4. Put the plan into action and track its progress.
5. Prepare a closeout report that compares the original goals and objectives to the final outcome.

If this process seems overwhelming, look among your leaders or troop parents for someone who works as a project manager or process engineer. Recruit that person—not to do the actual work but to oversee and track progress.

Stage One: Project Overview

The team's initial planning should be summarized on a one-page document called the project overview. The overview is just that—an overview of the project in broad, general terms. It should be clearly written—so much so that someone not involved in the team will understand what the project is all about. The team leader completes the project overview with the help of the project team.

The project overview should state the scope of the project. What is the team trying to accomplish? How big will the project be? It should also include one or two clearly stated goals and a limited number (three or four) of high-level objectives. These goals and objectives will drive the planning process.

In addition, the overview should state how the team will measure project success. If the team is successful, what will success look like? How can it be measured? The overview should include the method or approach the team will take in the project. Lastly, the overview should consider any risks or assumptions in place that might prevent the success of the project.

Project Overview

Problem, opportunity, or situation to be changed

Project goals

Objectives

Measure of success

Approach or method

Assumptions and risks

Project Goals and Objectives

Before focusing on the details of a project, it is important to establish straightforward goals and relatable objectives. These define the project and influence how you measure success. To be sure that the goals and objectives are clearly written and appropriate, it is important to subject them to the "SMART" test:

S—Specific: Is it specific in targeting an objective?

M—Measurable: What are the measurable indicators of progress or success?

A—Attainable: Is it attainable by someone on the team?

R—Relevant: Does the goal support the troop's project and overall vision? Is it an appropriate goal within the current context of the troop?

T—Time-based: When will the project be completed?

Measure of Success

The goals and objectives should be measured to help determine success. The team must choose some measurable criteria. It might be the number of participants, a change in the frequency of a given activity, or a change in behavior. Remember, it is difficult to measure intangibles like attitude or knowledge without some formal assessment or test. Goals that use qualifying words like "all" or "never" also are difficult to achieve.

Approach or Method

How will you tackle the project? It is important to consider the assumptions and risks to success before making this decision. Often, the approach or method chosen is a direct result of what the team thinks is the best way to overcome those roadblocks to success. In addition, the team needs to consider whether the usual way of doing this type of project is the most effective.

You may sometimes work on a project that has never been done before. This situation may cause the team to consider several approaches or methods. Use this opportunity to "think outside the box" and come up with novel approaches to the situation.

When people work on something they have done before, they tend to use the same methods that worked in the past. But there is an old saying: "If you keep on doing what you have always done, you will keep on getting what you've always got." Clearly "what we've always got" is not what you want if a project is on your troop-improvement list.

The selection of the best possible approach or method may well be the most important decision you make during the early stages of project planning. The approach or method influences everything that follows; therefore, special consideration should always be given to this decision.

Here are some guidelines to consider when choosing an approach or method:

- Focus on project goals and high-level objectives.
- Challenge assumptions regarding previously employed approaches and methods.
- Explore out-of-the-box solutions.
- Do not hesitate to invent new methods when appropriate.

Assumptions or Risks

The team should identify assumptions and risks associated with the objectives and the chosen approach or method of the project so members can understand the project's implications and facilitate planning and completion. Assumptions are attitudes that are widely held concerning the project. Some of them may be true and valid. Others may not be true, causing the team to select a wrong plan of action.

Risks are those things that could undermine the success of the project. To help the team identify assumptions or risks, answer the following questions for each objective.

1. What resources are required—realistically—to complete this objective?
2. What risks are associated with obtaining these resources in a timely manner?
3. What problems or delays are likely to occur in completing this objective?
4. What effect will delays have on the overall project plan and schedule?

A project overview is important for many reasons. Perhaps the most significant one is that it helps ensure success. In project planning, there are two big traps you seek to avoid by using a project overview. The first trap is the "activity trap." This is where the team jumps into action and assumes that it can figure out what it needs to do after the first task. Such activity often wastes time and resources, to say nothing of the frustration and disappointment team members feel. The second trap is called "scope creep." This is where the original scope of the project is not clearly defined and someone says, "Oh, while you're at it, do this, too." Such add-ons can escalate the investment of time and other resources or distract you from achieving your stated goals and objectives. A clearly defined project helps the team determine when add-ons are not a part of the project.

Stage Two: Work Breakdown Structure

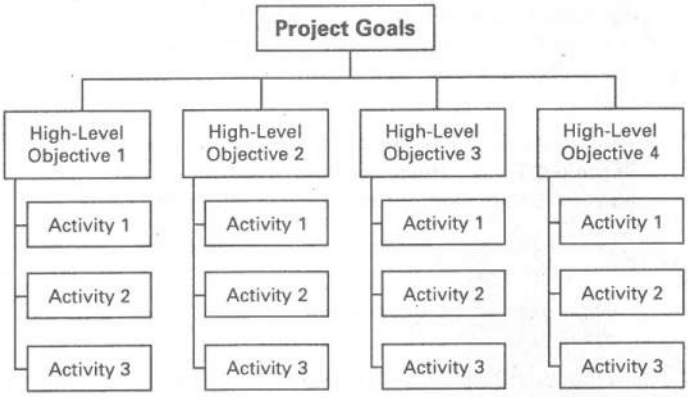
The work breakdown structure is just what it says it is. Teams use this tool to identify, define, and distribute the workload of the project. Break down each objective into separate activities that will be necessary to accomplish the objective. Then, put the activities in order—what must be done and when.

The activities should pass the "SMART" test. Each activity should have a definite start and stop time. The activities may be linked to one another, but they should not overlap. The time and cost of each activity should be easy to define. Every activity should be assignable to a team member and easily accomplished by that team member. If not, the activity probably should be broken down further.

Giving careful thought to the order of project activities can be critical to the success of the project. Putting all the activities in random order often makes the project last too long and doesn't utilize the power of the team. While some things cannot be started until another part of the project has been completed, it often is possible for several activities to be accomplished simultaneously. Ordering the activities helps facilitate linking.

Any project usually has one or more sets of linked activities. The longest one of these is sometimes called the "critical path." This is a set of linked activities the leader wants to watch closely since a holdup along the critical path most likely will result in delaying the overall project.

Network of High-Level Objectives



Stage Three: Activity Assignments

We are now on familiar territory—this is the old "You do this, and I'll do that." When assigning activities to team members, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Each team member must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the project.
- Each member must understand exactly what his or her assignment is, the details of each assigned activity, and the availability of resources (including how much time the activity is expected to take).
- It is important to match each team member's skills and resources to the activities—be sure you have the right team member for the task.
- Establish milestones or specific activities to be accomplished, as well as regular reporting times, so that the team leader stays informed on the project's progress.

Stage Four: Putting the Plan Into Action

This is the project kickoff. Once the project is in the hands of the team members, it is vital for the team leader to perform his or her primary role: provide team leadership. There may be times when it is important for the team leader to share information about resources or further clarify the assignments or project. He or she may need to offer support and encouragement at one time or another, and it may be necessary to help with decision making or problem solving when asked.

Note the characteristics of a high-performance team as well as the stages of development (as described in chapter 6). With each new project, the team—even if it has been together before—may change its position on the development scale. To remain on schedule, the team leader should focus on those activities on the critical path and provide additional resources when needed to help ensure timely completion.

Stage Five: Project Closeout

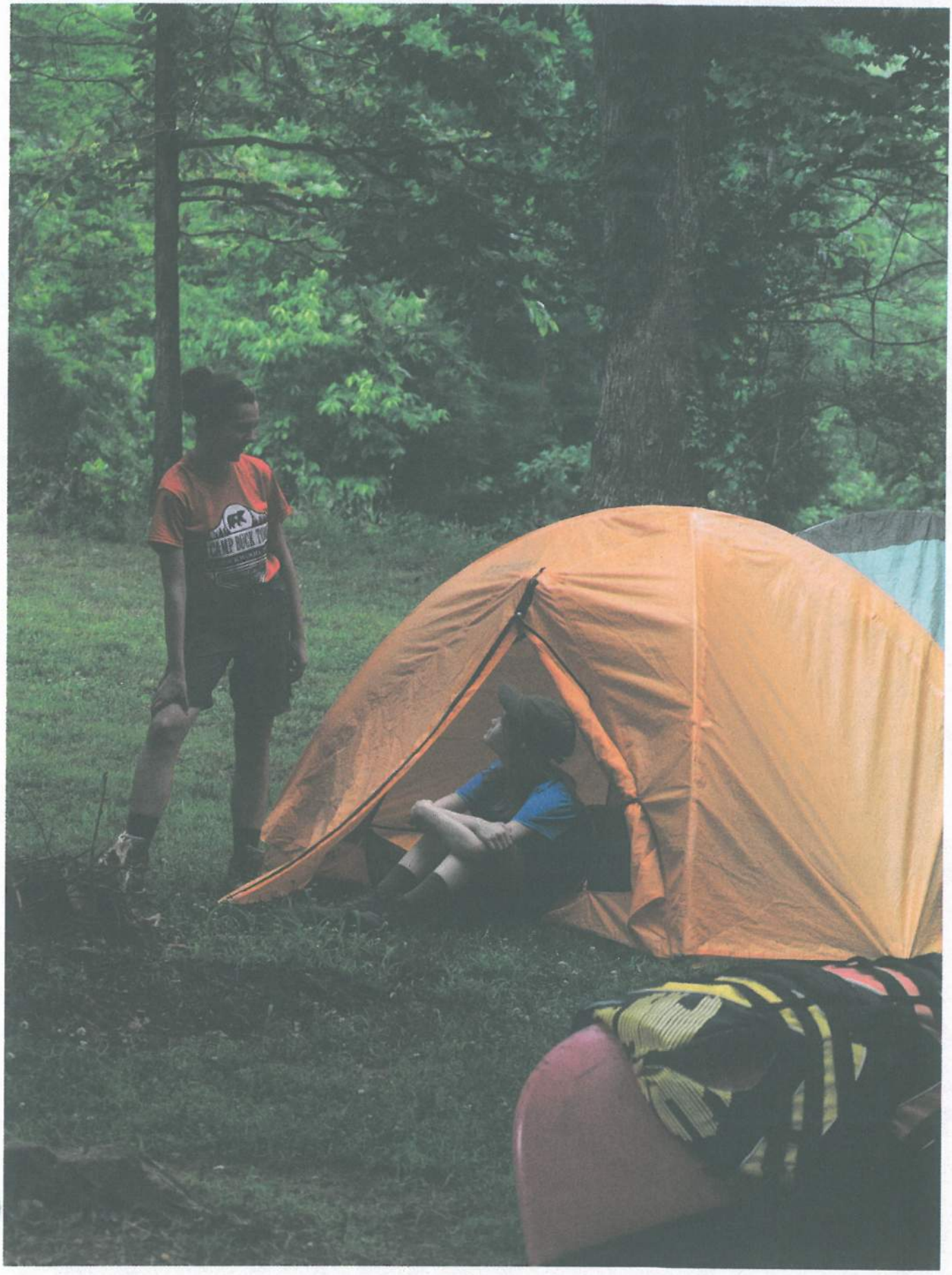
Once the project is complete, there still are two important things to do. One is to recognize your team members. Remember, celebration is an important part of a high-performance team. The second is to produce a postmortem report. This evaluation should be written and include an analysis of several things:

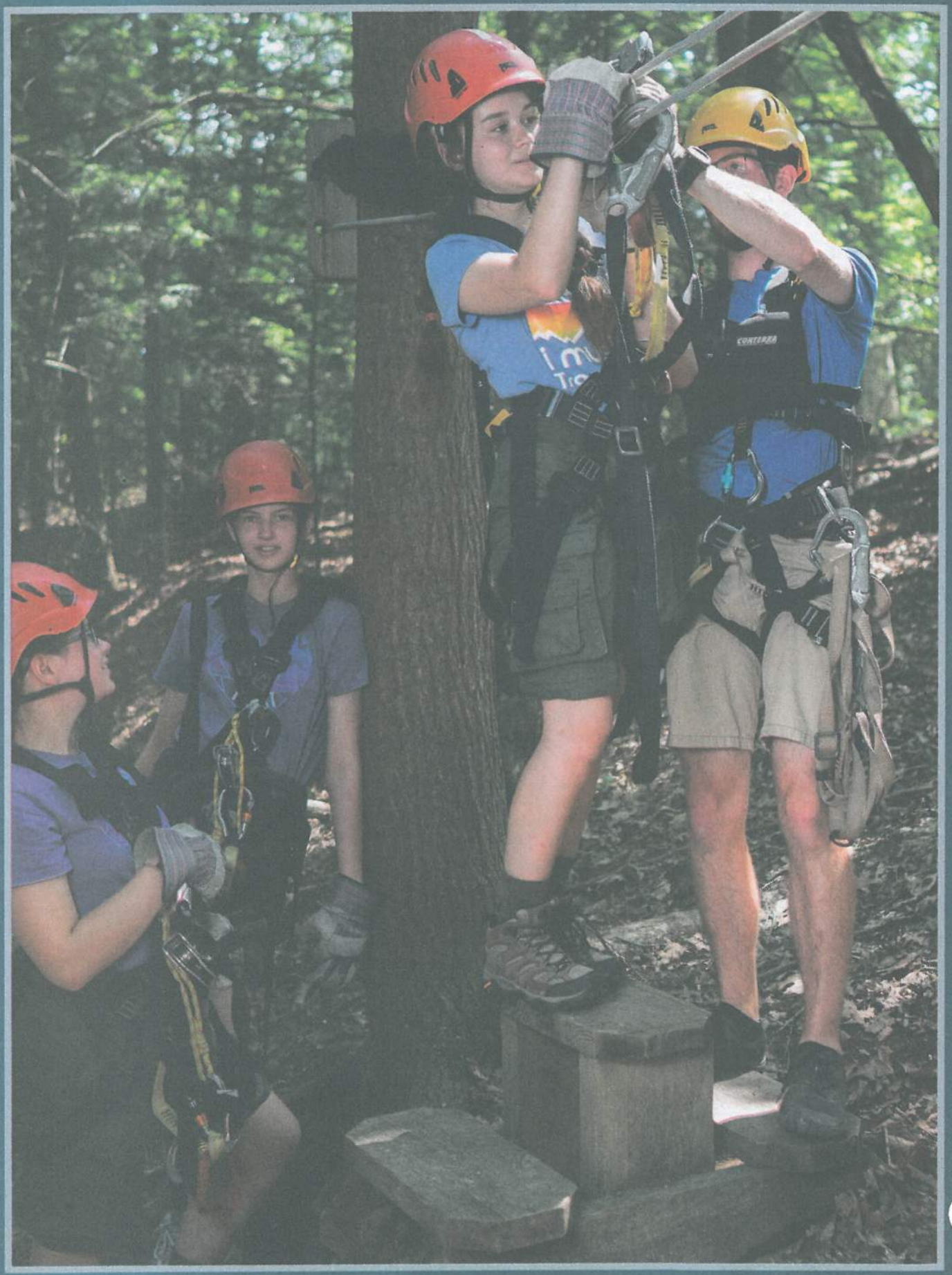
- Were the goals and objectives met?
- Was the project completed on time?
- How might we make things run better next time?

This written report will enable you or your successor to remember what happened and how to avoid some of the pitfalls you may have encountered.

A Better Future

If all this sounds like a lot of work, that's because it is. Even so, it's a proven, efficient process to address and resolve the serious issues you identified within the troop. Remember, the end result should be a better-organized, better-functioning troop that is better able to deliver on the promise of Scouting.





EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TODAY

Adult leaders in Scouting teach skills, supervise activities, serve as role models, maintain equipment, and drive Scouts to campouts. Their most important contribution, however, is leadership. But, unlike the leaders in youth activities like sports, Scouters lead through their Scouts. When their work is done, their Scouts will say, "We did this ourselves."

And they'll be right.

Anyone can become an effective leader provided he or she masters basic leadership skills. In this section, we'll introduce some of those techniques. We'll also explore the youth leadership method and introduce advanced skills for making the patrol method work more effectively.

CHAPTER 6
Stages of Team Development

A Scout troop is a group of teams, including the patrols, the patrol leaders' council, the Scoutmaster corps, and the troop committee. Depending on your role as an adult leader, you're probably a member of or an advisor to at least a couple of these teams. That makes it important for you to understand the stages of team development and how you can help your teams move from one stage to the next.

How Teams Develop

Wood Badge and National Youth Leadership Training both introduce the stages of team development that were formulated by psychologist Bruce W. Tuckman in 1965. In his landmark article "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," Tuckman concluded that every small group goes through four distinct phases: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.

Before we look at the characteristics of each stage, a few general points are important:

- Different teams will move through the stages at different speeds.
- The stages are not linear. Much as kids can regress as they move toward adulthood, groups can backslide, especially when they face challenges.
- Significant changes to the group's membership can send it back to an earlier stage. This can happen, for example, when your Scoutmaster corps is performing well but then takes on several new members as former Webelos Scout leaders join.
- A group can be at different stages based on the task it faces. For example, a patrol might be at the Performing stage when cooking a gourmet Dutch-oven feast but then revert to the Storming stage when it tries to plan an ambitious service project.
- Progress is not automatic. Without intentional effort, a team can get stuck at one stage or even disband without making progress.

Now, let's look at the four stages and what they mean for the teams in your troop.

Forming

The first stage in a team's development is the Forming stage. On a newly formed team, members often exhibit a mix of enthusiasm and anxiety; they're eager to get to work but are unsure about their own role on the team.

This is the time for setting goals, establishing roles, and developing a formal or informal vision. At the Forming stage, team members are often strangers to each other, so they need to spend time getting to know one another. That means learning names, of course, but it also means learning strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes.

At the Forming stage, enthusiasm is high but group function is low. There's high dependence on the group leader for purpose and direction. In a new-Scout patrol, this might be the troop guide or the assigned assistant Scoutmaster; on an adult team, this might be the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair.

The major issues at this stage are personal well-being, acceptance, and trust.

The most common example of this stage in a troop is probably the new-Scout patrol. You'll also see this stage if you form an ad-hoc crew to attend one of the BSA's high-adventure bases or if you are starting a new troop.

Storming

The second stage, Storming, is perhaps the most difficult. Enthusiasm drops as the team begins the hard task of working toward a goal and as members experience a discrepancy between their initial expectations and reality. For example, the senior patrol leader's high hopes for effective patrol leaders' council meetings can be dashed when Scouts show up late or discussions get sidetracked.

At the Storming stage, conflict can develop as subgroups form with different goals or different approaches to the goals the team has set. The leader's authority sometimes becomes threatened as other team members assert their independence or pull the team in different directions. Confusion, frustration, dissatisfaction, and lowered trust all lead to dysfunction—and can even lead to team members leaving the group altogether.

The major issues at this stage are power, control, and conflict.

Many patrols stay at this stage indefinitely. At the adult level, the Storming stage is evident when different adults have different visions for the troop. (If some adults are all about advancement, others are all about high adventure, and still others are all about the Scout-led troop, you have a recipe for stormy weather.)

Norming

At the third stage, Norming, team members begin coming around and working together toward their common goals. With increased clarity about the group's vision and increased technical skills, they experience success, which creates positive feelings and makes future success easier. Group identity increases as well. Members start thinking in terms of

"we" rather than "I." (As sports coaches like to say, they start playing for the name on the front of their jerseys.)

Increased trust allows for better sharing of leadership and control. Members no longer rely on the single strong leader or the subgroup leaders who threatened the leader's authority. The team still has work to do, however. Recognizing that the positive climate is new and fragile, members tend to avoid conflict. This reluctance can slow progress and lead to less effective decisions.

The major issues at this stage are the sharing of control and avoidance of conflict.

In troops, teams often move into the Norming phase as youth and adult leaders attend NYLT or Wood Badge and as, over time, members get to know and trust each other. Success breeds success as well; a patrol that earns a blue ribbon at a camporee or a troop that earns Gold status in the Journey to Excellence program should be primed for higher performance in the future.

Performing

At the fourth stage, Performing, both enthusiasm and productivity are consistently high. The team can focus on performance since it has done the messy work of team-building in the past. The team's goals are clear, team members' roles are understood by all, and performance standards are high.

At this stage, the team functions as one. Members enjoy working together and focus on continuous improvement.

The major issues at this stage are continued refinements and growth.

A group of adults or older Scouts who have been working together for several years is probably at the Performing stage. You can often spot this stage at the end of a high-adventure trek. Early in the trip, breaking camp might have taken two hours and much grumbling; by the end of the trip, the Scouts get the job done with the speed and efficiency of a racetrack pit crew.

Stages of Team Development at a Glance

Stage	Description	Enthusiasm	Skills
Forming 	Pickup Sticks	High	Low
Storming 	At Odds	Low	Low
Norming 	Coming Around	Rising	Growing
Performing 	As One	High	High

Stage 5: Adjourning

A dozen years after introducing the four stages of team development, Bruce Tuckman (working with Mary Ann Jensen) added a fifth stage: Adjourning. Sometimes called Mourning or Deforming, this stage occurs when a team breaks up, either because of a crisis situation or because it was intended to be short-lived in the first place. (Think, for example, of a jamboree troop or a crew formed just for a high-adventure trip.)

Depending on the situation, members may feel a sense of loss at this stage; after all, they're going from being members of a high-functioning team to being individuals again. At the Adjourning stage, it's important to celebrate the team's accomplishments and to ensure that each member has a safe place to land after the team dissolves.

Team Development in the Troop

As mentioned at the outset, every troop is a group of teams, each of which is at a different stage. The Scoutmaster corps and troop committee might be at the Performing stage, most of the patrols might be at the Storming stage, and the new-Scout patrol is probably at the Forming stage. Each team's current stage determines how effective it will be and, in the case of the patrols and the patrol leaders' council, how adult leaders can provide support. In the case of the new-Scout patrol, for example, the assigned assistant Scoutmaster and troop guide would need to be more hands-on at the Forming stage, should provide strong support to the elected patrol leader at the Storming stage, and could be able to back off a bit at the Norming stage. By the Performing stage, the patrol should be self-sufficient.

With experience, you should be able to identify at a glance which stage a team is at and thus adjust your approach. The assessment exercise on the following page can also help.

Team Development Assessment

This assessment instrument will help you determine a team's development stage.
Score each statement using the following scale:

3=Definitely true 2=Sometimes true, sometimes false 1=Definitely false

1.	The team's effectiveness is increasing.	
2.	Enthusiasm is high.	
3.	Team members won't ask each other for help.	
4.	Conflict often happens within the team.	
5.	Every team member contributes to the team's success.	
6.	The team seems to be making little progress.	
7.	The team accepts the leader, and he or she accepts constructive criticism.	
8.	Team members seem to be pulling in many different directions.	
9.	Team members feel a shared sense of responsibility for success or failure.	
10.	The team's goals and vision are works in progress.	
11.	The team usually achieves its goals.	
12.	There's lots of talk but not much action.	
13.	The team challenges itself to succeed, often overachieving.	
14.	Members seem less excited than they used to be about the team's progress.	
15.	Members accept one another's faults and eccentricities.	
16.	There's little sharing of fears and concerns.	
17.	Members argue over who is responsible for what tasks.	
18.	The team works to resolve any conflicts that arise.	
19.	Team spirit is high; the team is clearly having fun.	
20.	Members always look to the leader for guidance.	
21.	Everyone's role on the team is understood and accepted.	
22.	The leader gets a lot of pushback from members.	
23.	Members are excited to be on the team but are unsure of their roles.	
24.	The team works by consensus and shared leadership.	

Scoring: Transfer the score for each question to the blanks below.
After you have entered all the scores, total each column.

3.		4.		1.		2.	
6.		8.		7.		5.	
10.		12.		11.		9.	
16.		14.		15.		13.	
20.		17.		18.		19.	
23.		22.		21.		24.	
Total Forming		Total Storming		Total Norming		Total Performing	

For each stage, you should end up with a total score of 6 to 18 points. The highest score should indicate which stage the team is in.

Adapted from the Team Development Survey by Donald Clark, hrweb.mit.edu/system/files/stage_survey.doc

Team Development Activities

Teams don't advance from one stage to the next automatically. Without intentional effort, they're likely to stagnate or even backslide. Here are some activities that can help at each stage.

Forming-stage Activities

Beach Ball 411

Using a permanent marker, write a series of get-to-know-you questions all over an inexpensive beach ball. These questions can be Scouting-related or more general in nature. Here are some examples:

- What is your favorite TV show?
- What do you like to eat for breakfast?
- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Describe a holiday tradition in your family.
- What is your favorite Scouting activity?
- Where would you like to go on vacation?
- What merit badge would you most (or least) like to earn?
- What are three adjectives that describe you?
- What type of movies do you like (or dislike)?
- What extracurricular activities do you participate in?
- Pick your favorite: basketball or football. Explain your choice.
- What animal would you like to be? Why?
- What would you do if someone gave you $1,000?
- What is the hardest point of the Scout Law for you to obey? Why?
- What is one thing nobody in the group knows about you?

Have the group form a circle. Toss the ball to one person, who answers the question under their left or right thumb (the choice is up to the individual) and then tosses the ball to another person. Continue until everyone has answered at least one question or until time runs out.

Debrief by asking how knowing more about the other members of the group can improve group function.

Commonalities

Have group members pair up. Each pair's task is to come up with three things they have in common (aside from Scouting involvement). These things could be activities, experiences, or interests—anything from playing the same sport to enjoying the same movies.

Once each pair has a list of three commonalities, have it combine with another pair. The new group of four must identify two things all the members have in common—but the things the pairs listed before don't count.

Once each group of four has a list of two commonalities, bring the whole group together and have them identify one thing they all have in common. Again, the things listed in the previous rounds don't count.

Note: This activity is designed for a group of eight—a typical patrol. Adjust the numbers in each round if your group is larger.

Debrief by asking how the members' commonalities can contribute to the group's success.

Storming-stage Activities

All Aboard

Using a 10-foot length of rope, form a circle on the floor. Challenge the group to stand inside the circle so that no part of anyone's body is touching the floor outside. Once the group is successful, shrink the circle and have the group try again.

There are many variations to this game, including having the players communicate without talking or having two teams race to see which can succeed at the challenge first.

Debrief by discussing how the group solved the problem and who showed leadership. If there was conflict—such as different group members offering different solutions—discuss how that conflict was resolved.

Human Knot

Have the group members stand in a circle facing each other, shoulder to shoulder. Ask them to put one hand into the middle of the circle and grasp another person's hand. Then, ask them to put their other hand in and grasp the hand of a different person.

Once the group is suitably knotted, challenge members to unknot themselves into a circle (or interlocking circles) without anyone releasing their grip. (It's OK for two people to change their grip for comfort; they just can't undo the knot that way.) Depending on the time you have available, play the game a couple of times.

Debrief by discussing how well the group worked together and what could have been done differently. Ask how the group shared leadership and resolved conflict.

Norming-stage Activities

Yurt Circle

Ask everyone to stand in a circle facing the middle, join hands, and expand the circle outward until all participants feel some gentle pull on their arms from each side. (There must be an even number of players, so you may need to add someone from outside the group.) Ask the participants to spread their feet to shoulder width and in line with the circumference of the circle, then ask the group to count off by twos. Have all the "ones" slowly lean in toward the center of the circle, while all the "twos" slowly lean out (without bending at the waist or moving their feet).

If the group works together, each person can accomplish a remarkable forward or backward lean. Now ask the group to slowly reverse positions. With practice and cooperation, the reversal should be quite smooth.

Debrief by discussing the role trust played in the group's success. Also discuss how the group had to adjust for players of different sizes.

Willow in the Wind

Have everyone stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle with one person (the "faller") standing rigid (arms crossed, with elbows on chest and fingertips at shoulders) in the center. Remaining rigid, the faller falls slowly in any direction. Before the faller moves very far off-center, the people in the circle redirect the faller's body to another arc of the circle. This fall-catch-push sequence continues in a gentle fashion until the faller is relaxed (but remaining rigid) and the people in the circle have gained confidence in their ability to work together toward handling the occasional weight shift of the faller. Change positions so that everyone who chooses can be the faller.

Debrief by discussing what the group's success says about the level of trust group members have. Discuss what the group could do to further build trust.

Performing-stage Activities

Teams that have reached the Performing stage are ready for activities where they can simply enjoy being and working together. For example, the group could participate in a weekend of COPE activities, perhaps as part of a patrol outing or PLC retreat. Another option would be a collaborative activity such as researching a new type of cuisine and preparing a feast on a campout.

CHAPTER 7
Teaching EDGE and Leading EDGE

Among the most powerful tools in your leadership toolbox is EDGE, which stands for Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable. EDGE allows you to tailor your teaching and leadership styles—and those of your youth leaders—to the needs of your Scouts. When you meet your Scouts where they are, learning and growth happen.

For in-depth information on how to teach, consider taking the courses in the BSA's train-the-trainer series, called T3 or T-cubed. These courses are The Fundamentals of Training, The Trainer's EDGE, and the Master Trainer course.

The Teaching EDGE

EDGE

E Explain: Tell them what to do.

D Demonstrate: Show them what to do.

G Guide: Watch them do it.

E Enable: Have them practice and/or teach it.

To understand the Teaching EDGE, think about how you might teach a group of new Scouts to build a fire. You could, of course, simply hand them a box of matches and wish them luck, but that would undoubtedly lead to failure and frustration. You could also deliver a lecture on the art of fire-building, complete with an explanation of the chemistry involved, but the Scouts would be unlikely to turn that information into action (even if they remembered everything you said).

A better approach is to use the EDGE method, a step-by-step approach to teaching a skill.

Using the Teaching EDGE

Explain

Initially, the Scouts will be enthusiastic—what Scout doesn't like fire?—but their skill level will be low. Before they start wasting matches, you should explain the basics of fire-building, such as the ingredients of fire (fuel, heat, and oxygen) and the materials to use (tinder, kindling, and fuel wood). You don't need to tell your Scouts everything there is to know about the subject, just enough to prepare them for the next step.

Demonstrate

The second step is to demonstrate the skill. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "There is no teaching to compare with example." Gather the Scouts around a campfire ring and build a campfire for them, describing the process as you go. This allows the Scouts to see as well as hear how to build a fire. They can follow the process from beginning to end, and you can add information you left out of the Explain step (for example, how to create a teepee fire lay or why you should have water on hand to extinguish your fire).

Guide

Eventually, of course, the Scouts will need to build their own fires. It's one thing to watch someone do something and another thing entirely to try it yourself. (How many armchair quarterbacks could throw a perfect spiral, for example?) This is where the third step comes in. As Confucius said, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Once your Scouts have seen you build a fire, you can send them out to collect firewood and build their own fires while you observe.

Your continued involvement as the teacher is critical here because mistakes are likely. While giving the Scouts freedom to figure out things on their own, you still need to support them with encouragement. You may also need to redirect them (for example, if they start cutting live tree limbs to use as kindling).

Enable

Finally, you should enable the Scouts to build fires on their own without your involvement. Continue offering support as needed, but also offer them opportunities to use the skill, such as choosing campsites where fire-building is allowed or holding a fire-building competition on an outing. Skills people don't use are quickly forgotten. If you want your Scouts to retain the skills they learn along the trail to First Class, make sure your program encourages them to use those skills regularly.

Teaching is also part of the Enable step. When learners become teachers, they move closer to true mastery of the skill. That's a side benefit of having Scouts serve as den chiefs, troop guides, and instructors.

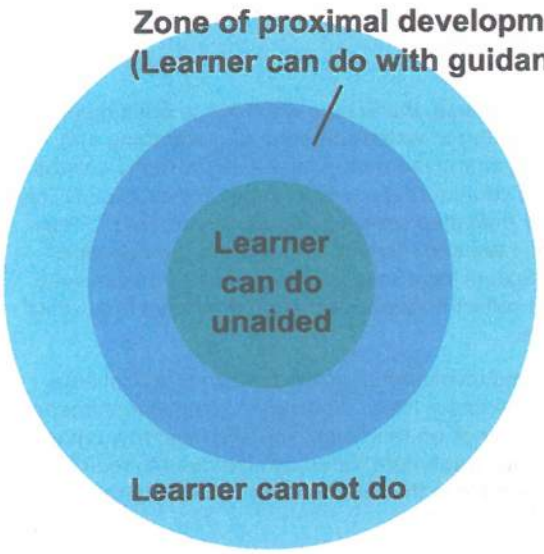
A key to effective leadership is to act with integrity, showing the way by your words and actions. Much of leadership is simply modeling the kind of behavior you want others to practice.

Learning Styles and Instructional Scaffolding

Why is the Teaching EDGE so effective? One reason is that the steps meet the needs of learners with different learning preferences. Auditory learners benefit from the Explain step, visual learners benefit from the Demonstrate step, and kinesthetic learners benefit from the Guide and Enable steps. (Kinesthetic, or tactile, learners learn by carrying out physical activities.)

The Teaching EDGE also relates to the concept of instructional scaffolding, which simply means providing tailored support to the learners to help them achieve their goals. According to experts in instructional design, scaffolding has three essential features: the process is collaborative, the learning takes place in the learner's zone of proximal development, and the teacher's support is gradually removed as the learner becomes more proficient.

What's the zone of proximal development? Introduced by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, it's the range of tasks a learner can perform with assistance but not yet independently. There are some tasks learners can do unaided and other tasks learners cannot do even with help; the zone of proximal development is the sweet spot in between.



When you stray outside the zone of proximal development, you can create frustration on the part of teachers and learners alike. Younger Scouts become frustrated when they try to learn skills they aren't physically strong enough for yet, such as the rescue dives for the Lifesaving merit badge. Older Scouts become frustrated when they're asked to revisit skills they've already mastered, as when learning basic knots becomes a default rainy-day activity in a troop. (In that case, the older Scouts, who are at the Enable stage, should be teaching the younger Scouts, who are at the Explain stage.)

Stepping Backward and Forward

In theory, you would move through the steps of EDGE in sequence. In practice, the process is more fluid. As we noted in the fire-building example above, you actually have opportunities throughout the process to explain important points about the skill. In fact, that's usually a better approach than front-loading your teaching with too much information. (If the skill is potentially dangerous—lighting a backpacking stove, for example—always cover the safety rules first.)

With complex skills, you may find yourself alternating between the Demonstrate and Guide steps. For example, if you're teaching Scouts to set and follow a compass heading, it probably makes sense to break down the skill into smaller steps. You may also need to allow extra practice time in the Guide step for them to put all those steps together.

Finally, there may be times when Scouts need to learn a skill the hard way—not in a way that causes them harm, of course, just in a way that helps them see the importance of the skill you're teaching. For example, if a patrol is trying to build a fire with wet wood, it might be worth letting them struggle a bit rather than just telling them to strip the bark to get to the dry wood inside.

When should you step in and help a struggling Scout? Aside from situations involving health and safety—when you should always step in—ask yourself whether the struggle is likely to lead to success or increased frustration.

Matching Your Teaching to Your Learners

Chapter 6 introduced the stages of team development: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. People learning new skills go through the same stages:

Forming. Learners begin with low skill but high enthusiasm. They are excited about the possibilities but do not yet know how to perform the skill.

Storming. As learners work at the skill, they may become discouraged. The skill level is still low, but because they now know how difficult this will be, enthusiasm can fade.

Norming. With work, each person will make advances in learning how to do something. The skill level will rise and so will enthusiasm.

Performing. When learners have mastered a skill, their enthusiasm will be high. They will have made the skill their own and will know it so well that they can teach it to others.

The following chart shows how Teaching EDGE behaviors align with skill-development stages.

Skill-development Stage	Enthusiasm (Morale)	Skill Level (Productivity)	Teaching EDGE Behavior
Forming	High	Low	Explain
Storming	Low	Low	Demonstrate
Norming	Rising	Growing	Guide
Performing	High	High	Enable

The Importance of Discovery

The Teaching EDGE has four steps, but you ought to consider one more step: Discovery. Before you begin to teach, plan an activity that will let you assess your learners' knowledge and whet their appetites to actually learn the skill.

A great time to do that is during the preopening, the 15 minutes or so before the troop meeting begins. Let's say you're planning to teach knot-tying. As Scouts arrive, pair them up for a knot-tying shoot-out. Have two Scouts stand back to back, ropes in hand. When a leader calls out the name of a knot, they spin around, tie the knot, and hold it high. The first to tie the knot correctly earns a point. Keep playing (assign different knots each time) until one Scout earns three points.

An observant instructor will quickly know whether to start with the square knot or to teach more advanced knots. This may also identify Scouts who could serve as co-teachers.

Teaching Scouts to Teach

In a Scout-led troop (which every troop should be), youth leaders should be doing most of the teaching, at least for basic Scouting skills. But they aren't born knowing how to teach any more than they are born knowing how to tie knots or build fires. That's why teaching them how to teach is a key role for the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders.

Start by modeling the Teaching EDGE whenever you teach a skill. The Teaching EDGE is also part of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops, which your troop should conduct each time you install a new group of youth leaders. Personal coaching plays a role, too, especially as Scouts work on the rank requirements related to EDGE.

Beyond the troop setting, encourage your Scouts to attend National Youth Leadership Training when it is offered in your local council. The Teaching EDGE is fundamental to this course, which models the Teaching EDGE in every session, teaches it explicitly during one session, and has participants use it to teach others during another session.

The Teaching EDGE and Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership is important in Scouting. Every leader—youth or adult—should strive to put others first. Servant leadership extends to teaching, where the goal is meeting the needs of the learner, not making great presentations where the teacher is the star.

Remember these principles as you implement the Teaching EDGE in your troop:

- Effective teachers focus on the learner and not on their role as the person at the front of the room.
- The key outcome is to meet the needs of the learner.
- The teacher works in all ways possible to help the learner achieve success.
- The success of the presenter is based on the success of the learner.

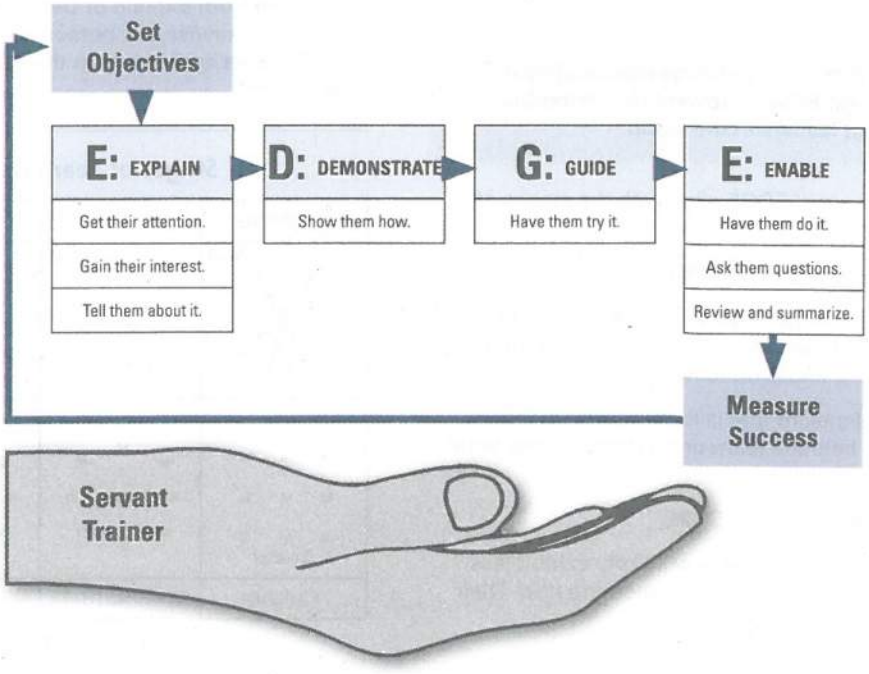
Putting the needs of the learner first is the hallmark of a truly effective teacher—and of an effective leader, too.

Getting Creative With EDGE

Concepts like explaining and demonstrating are straightforward, but that doesn't mean you have to do the same thing every time. Explaining, for example, doesn't just have to be talking. Here are ways to get creative:

Explain

- Display posters illustrating the key points.
- Have Scouts read information in the Scouts BSA handbooks.
- Set up laptops or tablets so Scouts can read information about the skill online.
- Draw out the Scouts' knowledge by asking what they know about the subject (the Socratic method).



Demonstrate

- Show a YouTube video of the skill. (Be sure to preview the video to make sure it's appropriate and demonstrates correct technique.)
- Have Scouts demonstrate the right and wrong way to do the skill.
- Have a show-and-tell of equipment related to the skill.
- Have a guest expert demonstrate the skill.

Guide

- Pair up experienced and inexperienced Scouts to practice the skill.
- Have Scouts practice the skill while you give verbal hints and tips.
- Let Scouts try the skill; then talk about what they experienced.
- Work through the skill together as a group.
- Have Scouts create songs or skits demonstrating the skill.

Enable

- Play a game that tests the skill.
- Plan an outing where Scouts use the skill.
- Provide resources Scouts can use to learn more about the skill on their own.
- Have Scouts create a training video about the skill.
- Have Scouts teach the skill to a Webelos den.

Each topic in *Program Features for Troops and Crews* includes a page of topic-specific EDGE suggestions.

The Leading EDGE

While we typically think of EDGE as a tool for teaching, it's just as important as a tool for leadership. Whenever you're leading a team, you should match your leadership style to the team's stage of development.

We shouldn't just strive to be the best leaders in Scouting. We should work toward becoming the best leaders in the world.

Here's how the elements of EDGE align with the stages of team development discussed in chapter 6:

Forming (High Enthusiasm, Low Skills)

If the team is in the Forming stage, the members will likely exhibit high enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new, though their skills and productivity are low.

An effective leader of a team that is forming will do lots of careful explaining to help the team understand exactly what the leader expects them to do.

Storming (Low Enthusiasm, Low Skills)

A team that is in the Storming stage will likely exhibit less enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new. Their skills and productivity are still low.

An effective leader will continue to make things clear by demonstrating to the team how to succeed and showing support as it makes even halting progress.

Norming (Rising Enthusiasm, Growing Skills)

If the team is in the Norming stage, the members will likely exhibit increasing enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new. Their skills and productivity are developing as well.

Leaders of teams in the Norming stage can find success by giving team members lots of freedom to act on their own, while being ready to provide guidance (coaching) when a little help is needed.

Performing (High Enthusiasm, High Skills)

If the team is in the Performing stage, the members will likely exhibit high enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new, and their skills and productivity will be high as well.

A leader enables team members to make decisions on their own and to keep progressing toward completion of the task.

The illustration on this page shows how the leader relates to the group at each stage of team development.

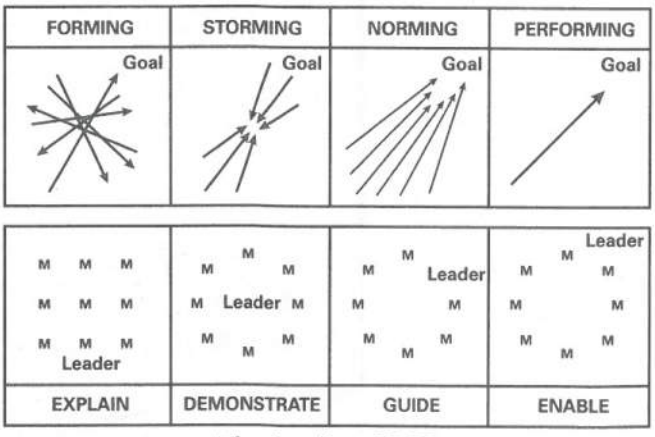
Many adult leaders get stuck at the Demonstrating stage. They make themselves the most visible leaders in the troop rather than guiding and enabling their senior patrol leaders.

The Leading EDGE in Action

To get a sense of how the Leading EDGE works in a troop setting, imagine that your troop has assembled a crew for a Philmont trek. The chart on the following page shows how the crew leader could use the EDGE method at different stages of the crew's first overnight shakedown trip.

With time, determining which step in the Leading EDGE is appropriate should become second nature. If you feel that you are holding someone back, you probably need to move from Explain or Demonstrate to Guide or Enable. Likewise, if a person is confused or unsure, perhaps an earlier step in the EDGE process is just what is needed.

Stages of Team Development



The Leading EDGE

Crew Situation	Team Stage	Leader Response
Arriving at the trailhead on Saturday morning, everyone is excited. Although the crew has been on day hikes before, this is the first overnight trip with full packs.	Forming	Before the crew hits the trail, the crew leader gathers everyone to review the weekend plan and **explain** the rules for hiking.
Midway through the morning, morale is breaking down. The fast hikers don't want to wait for the slow hikers, who are having to stop frequently to readjust their packs and boots.	Storming	At the lunch break, the crew leader has the crew sit in a circle and conduct a brief Thorns and Roses reflection on the morning's hike. (See volume 1, chapter 12.) The leader **demonstrates** how to rebalance the weight in their packs and the proper use of a hiking stick.
The crew arrives at its planned campsite and begins to set up camp. They are cooperating but don't seem to have things quite on track.	Norming	The crew leader monitors how setup is going and **guides** them by suggesting that most of the crew work on setup while a couple of Scouts start on dinner.
Sunday morning begins with an interfaith worship service led by the crew's chaplain aide. At one Scout's suggestion, the Scouts redistribute the crew gear and designate the slowest Scout as the pacesetter for the morning.	Performing	The crew leader continues to monitor the crew but stays more in the background than on the previous day, **enabling** the crew to achieve success.

Here's another example, this one focusing on how leaders would interact with four different patrols as they cook dinner on a campout.

Patrol Situation	Team Stage	Leader Response
The Frog Patrol (the troop's new-Scout patrol) is on its first campout. When the youth were Webelos Scouts, their leader always cooked for them, so they're excited to try their hand at camp cooking for the first time.	Forming	The troop guide **explains** the rules of stove safety and the steps the patrol needs to take to cook its dinner. The troop guide **demonstrates** each step and then **guides** the Scouts as they take over the task. **Enabling** them to succeed on their own will come at a later meal.
The Pioneer Patrol has been camping before but has rarely cooked more than hot dogs and mac-and-cheese. Now that several members are working on the Cooking merit badge, they've decided to get more ambitious by cooking a Dutch-oven stew; but cooperation has given way to frustration and arguments.	Storming	Before things get out of hand, the patrol leader asks the instructor to **demonstrate** the proper way to prepare and use a Dutch oven. The instructor also shows them how to test the beef they're cooking for doneness, and then steps aside. The patrol leader continues to **guide** the group by offering suggestions. Before long, they'll be **enabled** to succeed without help.
The Alligator Patrol is made up of older Scouts who've been working together for several years. They're pretty good cooks but struggle to get everything ready at the right time.	Norming	The patrol leader monitors how the cooks are doing and **guides** them with leading questions, such as "Which course will take longer to cook?" and "Could you put your cobbler on the coals while you enjoy dinner?" They'll soon be **enabled** to succeed.
The Owl Patrol includes the troop's oldest, most experienced Scouts, all of whom are Life or Eagle rank. They enjoy working together and can prepare a gourmet campout meal without assistance or even the need for a duty roster.	Performing	The senior patrol leader stops by occasionally to see how the patrol is doing—but mostly to make sure of getting an invitation to dinner. While sharing the meal with the patrol, the senior patrol leader praises the Scouts' accomplishment, **enabling** them to be even more successful in the future.

CHAPTER 8
Working With Youth Leaders

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* introduced the concept of youth leadership and discussed the role of youth leaders in the troop. The focus there was primarily on position descriptions and the training continuum for youth leaders. But there's much more to the youth leadership method than tasks and training. Becoming a Scout-led troop is more art than science, and success relies at least as much on what adult leaders do as it does on what youth leaders do.

Becoming Scout-led takes time and patience. Being in charge doesn't feel natural to Scouts who rarely get the opportunity in other areas of their lives. And adults aren't accustomed to yielding authority to kids their own children's age—perhaps especially if those kids are their children.

Evaluating Where You Stand

The troop self-assessment in chapter 2 includes 10 questions related to youth leaders. Although those questions are a good start toward recognizing your troop's strengths and weaknesses, a more in-depth, two-part assessment might be warranted. The goal is not to grade your troop—what would it mean to say you're 75 percent Scout-led?—but to identify barriers to becoming more Scout-led.

This chapter introduces a two-phase assessment to get you started. First, complete the "Assessing Your Youth Leaders" worksheet, which will clarify who the players are and what training they've had. Second, complete the "Youth Leadership in Action" worksheet to gauge how the youth leadership method is working in troop meetings, patrol leaders' council meetings, and troop outings.

Assessing Your Youth Leaders

List your elected and appointed youth leaders below, along with the adults who are assigned to support them. (We've left some blanks at the end in case you have multiple youth leaders holding the same position or more than four patrols.) Write Yes or No in each of the other spaces.

Position	Scout in Position	Adult Advisor	Has Completed ILST	Has Helped Lead ILST	Has Completed NYLT	Has Served on NYLT Staff	Has Completed NAYLE	Has Served on NAYLE Staff
Senior Patrol Leader								
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Troop Guide								
Den Chief								
Historian								
Order of the Arrow Troop Representative								
Librarian								
Quartermaster								
Instructor								
Chaplain Aide								
Outdoor Ethics Guide								
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster								
Scribe								
Troop Guide								
Webmaster								

Youth Leadership in Action

A good way to get a sense of how youth-led your troop is—and where adults may need to adjust their level of involvement—is to evaluate a troop meeting, a patrol leaders' council meeting, and a troop outing. If possible, have someone who is not directly involved in the meeting (perhaps your junior assistant Scoutmaster or your unit commissioner) complete the worksheet.

Troop Meeting

Date _____

Preopening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Opening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Group instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Skills instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol meetings

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Interpatrol game

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Closing

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Date _____

Grade the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Was there a written agenda for the meeting? _____

If so, who prepared it? _____

Did the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader collaborate ahead of the meeting? _____

How many Scouts were in attendance? _____

How many adults were in attendance? _____

Would the meeting have been as effective if all the adults had been in another room? _____

Who called the meeting to order (or decided when to begin)? _____

Who led the meeting? _____

Who kept the meeting on track? _____

Whom did participants turn to when they had questions? _____

Who took minutes of the meeting? _____

How prepared was the senior patrol leader to lead the meeting? _____

Troop Outing

Date _____

Grade the outing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who selected the activity? _____

Who selected the location? _____

Who made any required reservations? _____

Who assigned campsites to patrols? _____

Who planned the menu? _____

Who shopped for the food? _____

Who cooked the food? _____

At departure, who took roll and decided it was time to set out? _____

Who led activities during the outing? _____

Who kept the outing on schedule? _____

Who decided on any changes to the original plan? _____

Who coordinated campsite cleanup? _____

At the end of the outing, who took roll and decided it was time to return home? _____

Were there areas where adults led too much? Explain. _____

Were there areas where adults provided too little support? Explain. _____

Reading the Results

What does all this information tell you? Let's start with the "Assessing Your Youth Leaders" worksheet. The most important thing it does is highlight gaps in training. You'll quickly see whether you need to schedule ILST or make a special effort to get Scouts to NYLT. You may also discover that you have several Scouts who are ready to move to the next level of training by serving on NYLT staff or attending NAYLE. (Either of those experiences would benefit the troop because those Scouts would return with an even better understanding of leadership concepts.)

If your Scouts can't take NYLT in your own council because of scheduling conflicts or lack of space, check with neighboring councils.

Nearly as important in the chart is the Adult Advisor column. If you end up with a lot of blanks in that column, it's safe to assume your youth leaders are struggling to get by with sporadic support. In fact, they may not have even had someone explain their roles—the first step in the EDGE process.

Without assigned adult advisors, youth leaders can receive conflicting guidance from multiple adults. If you've ever held a job where you answered to more than one person, you know how frustrating that can be.

While the first worksheet will give you hard numbers, the second is more subjective. You won't end up with a simple score for each event. Instead, you will begin to get a sense of where the youth leadership method is working well and where it's not—perhaps because adults are doing too much out-front leading or not enough behind-the-scenes coaching.

Because the "Youth Leadership in Action" worksheet is subjective, consider having several people, both Scouts and adults, complete it independently for the same meetings or outings. You may discover that your youth and adult leaders have starkly different perspectives.

From this evaluation process, you should be able to identify three to five areas of emphasis around which you can develop a plan for improvement. For each area, develop a SMART goal, a goal that is:

S—Specific: Is it specific in targeting an objective?

M—Measurable: What are the measurable indicators of progress or success?

A—Attainable: Is it attainable by someone on the team?

R—Relevant: Does the goal support the troop's project and overall vision? Is it an appropriate goal within the current context of the troop?

T—Time-based: When will the project be completed?

Also for each goal, answer these questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. (See the example on this page.)

SMART Goal Example

Goal: We will ensure that our senior patrol leader and at least two other youth leaders attend National Youth Leadership Training next summer.

Who: Achieving this goal involves the Scoutmaster, troop committee chair, senior patrol leader, and other youth leaders.

What: Adult leaders will work with youth leaders to ensure that they attend NYLT.

When: Work will occur in the winter and spring so Scouts can attend NYLT over the summer.

Where: Planning will occur at troop and troop committee meetings. NYLT will occur at the local council camp (or at a neighboring council's camp, depending on scheduling constraints and space availability).

Why: NYLT will give the youth leaders the tools they need to be effective in their positions of responsibility.

How: The Scoutmaster will find out when NYLT will be offered locally and will secure commitment of youth leaders to attend. The troop committee chair will work with the troop committee and chartered organization to secure financial support, if needed.

Using EDGE With a Youth Leader

When Scouts accept positions of responsibility, they are agreeing to try something new. They are moving into unknown territory and taking a risk. It falls to the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders to show them the way and then support each of them as they learn what they are supposed to do and gain confidence by doing it.

The EDGE method can help. Here's how a Scoutmaster could use it to work with a new senior patrol leader. Of course, the same principles would apply to any other position.

Explain

Before senior patrol leaders can carry out duties of the role, those duties must be explained. While they have doubtless seen others in that role in action, they probably haven't seen what senior patrol leaders have done behind the scenes to make the troop run effectively.

As described in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, as soon as a Scout becomes senior patrol leader, they should receive from the Scoutmaster a brief orientation to the position. This process is outlined in more detail in the syllabus for Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops. Read through this section of the syllabus, and you'll see several paragraphs that begin this way:

"Tell the senior patrol leader ..."

"Express to the Scout that ..."

"Give the senior patrol leader ..."

"Explain the role of ..."

Clearly, this is a time when the Scoutmaster does much of the talking. The goal is to help the senior patrol leader

understand what is expected and how to fulfill those expectations.

Demonstrate

The senior patrol leader has seen the role demonstrated by previous senior patrol leaders—and hopefully by the senior patrol leader at the National Youth Leadership Training course. They could discuss with the Scoutmaster what has been learned from these other Scouts and how those lessons could be applied during their term.

There will also be times that the Scoutmaster can demonstrate leadership techniques. For example, when teaching a skill or presenting a Scoutmaster's Minute, he or she can demonstrate how to control the group. Making the Scout sign and waiting patiently (instead of yelling "Sign's up" or talking over the Scouts) models the right behavior for the senior patrol leader.

Guide

Guiding is an essential element of the Scoutmaster-senior patrol leader relationship. Before each patrol leaders' council meeting, the Scoutmaster should work with the senior patrol leader to craft an agenda. They should also touch base before each troop meeting to make sure the senior patrol leader has the resources needed to be successful. During meetings and activities, the Scoutmaster should observe the senior patrol leader in action and provide whatever support is needed. After meetings and activities, the Scoutmaster should help the senior patrol leader to evaluate the leadership experience while also providing guidance to increase effectiveness.

Enable

As the senior patrol leader's skills and confidence increase, the Scoutmaster's guidance should gradually decrease. To outside observers, in fact, the Scoutmaster's role might seem superfluous.

The Scoutmaster still has important work to do, however. Behind the scenes, he or she can provide the human and physical resources the senior patrol leader needs to be successful. He or she can also protect the senior patrol leader from well-meaning but counterproductive input from other adult leaders and parents. The senior patrol leader should know they have the Scoutmaster's support when having to make unpopular decisions.

Encouragement is a big part of enabling the senior patrol leader to be successful. The Scoutmaster should praise the senior patrol leader's successes, provide support and guidance when things don't go so well, and remind them of the progress made up to that point.

How Adults Can Support Youth Leadership

Every meeting and every outing gives adult leaders the chance to support youth leaders—or to undermine their authority. By following these time-tested principles, you can ensure that you're building up your youth leaders, not inadvertently tearing them down.

- **It's the Scouts' troop.** Instead of thinking of authority as a privilege you give your youth leaders, think of it as a right you can't take away. When you do that, you'll be less likely to pull rank or countermand a decision of the patrol leaders' council. (Situations involving health and safety are an obvious exception.)
- **The buck stops with the Scoutmaster.** The Scoutmaster retains responsibility for the troop, including making sure that BSA policies are followed. Part of that responsibility includes shielding youth leaders from criticism of their decisions.
- **The Scouts' success is your responsibility.** As an adult leader, you should do whatever it takes to make your youth leaders successful. That includes coaching them before meetings and outings and guiding them as they work. For example, there's nothing wrong with quietly reminding the senior patrol leader that the troop meeting should have started five minutes ago or with helping craft an agenda for a patrol leaders' council meeting.
- **The mark of a good leader is the question mark.** Rather than tell your youth leaders what to do, ask them questions that will lead them to a sound decision. If the patrol leaders' council wants to go bungee jumping, ask them if they've checked the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (which prohibits bungee jumping). If they want the troop's first backpacking trip to be an ascent of Denali, ask them what training hikes and money-earning projects they think they would need to plan.
- **Don't sandbag your youth leaders.** Once the patrol leaders' council has made a decision—even if it's to climb Denali—do everything you can to support that decision. Don't sandbag them by failing to pull together the necessary resources.
- **Don't undermine your youth leaders' authority.** When Scouts or parents look to you for decisions, gently redirect them to the appropriate youth leader. For example, if a Scout asks where to pitch a tent, you might ask, "What did your patrol leader say?"
- **Never send an adult to do a Scout's job.** The list of things youth leaders can't do in a troop is pretty short—including such tasks as driving, conducting Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review, and signing applications and other forms. Youth leaders are perfectly capable of greeting visiting Webelos Scout dens, assigning new Scouts to patrols, formulating uniform and electronics policies, and deciding whether to cancel an outing due to bad weather.
- **Model the behavior you expect.** If you want rank-and-file Scouts to respect their youth leader, don't interrupt the senior patrol leader during a troop meeting. Instead, raise your hand and ask permission to speak.
- **Keep your distance.** If adult tents are at the far end of the campsite, Scouts will be more likely to turn to a youth leader when they need help. If few adults are visible in the troop meeting room, youth leaders will be more likely to solve their own problems. (This does not mean that adults should be inaccessible; after all, adult association is a method of Scouting, too.)
- **Praise in public; criticize in private.** This principle should apply in every situation, but it's especially important in the relationship between adult and youth leaders. Public praise demonstrates that the adult leaders support the youth leaders and that both youth and adult leaders are of one mind. Providing criticism in private avoids undermining a Scout's leadership in front of the other Scouts.

Freedom to Fail

Given their inexperience and immaturity, youth leaders are all but certain to fail at tasks both large and small. One of the best gifts adult leaders can give them is the freedom to fail—assuming that that failure is productive and doesn't endanger anyone's health and safety.

Failure is a critical part of learning how to lead. Budding leaders discover what works and what doesn't by making plans and then putting them in motion. The plans will succeed or fail on their own merits and on the adjustments the leaders make along the way. Moving forward despite the risk of failure brings focus and intensity to leadership situations. It instills resilience, flexibility, and responsibility, and brings with it teachable moments when real leadership education can occur.

Unfortunately, adult leaders often refuse to let youth leaders fail. Perhaps they feel overly protective and want to shield their youth leaders from disappointment and criticism. Perhaps they think youth leaders' failure will reflect negatively on themselves. Perhaps they think following a meticulous schedule is more important than imparting critical life lessons. For whatever reason, they either don't let youth leaders lead or they bail them out before things go awry.

A better approach is to do whatever you can to help your youth leaders succeed—and then to help those youth leaders bounce back and learn from their mistakes if they do fail.

Strategies for Keeping Adult Leaders at Bay

One challenge youth-led troops face is adult leaders who can't (or won't) step back and let the Scouts lead. Men and women who are used to being in charge at home or on the job can easily slip into boss mode at a troop meeting.

Even if your adult leaders are all on the same page, mistakes can happen. Here are some strategies that can prevent mistakes—or at least call attention to them so they don't happen again.

Encourage Hands in Pockets

Body language can reveal a person's attitude, but it can also shape his or her attitude. Adult leaders who keep their hands in their pockets when approaching Scouts are less likely to "help" a youth leader by taking over skills instruction or "help" new Scouts by folding their tent for them. The best way for adults to reinforce youth leadership is to answer a Scout's question with, "Ask your patrol leader (or senior patrol leader)."

Create a Code Word

In some troops, adult leaders use a code word to alert each other when they are overstepping. Simply mentioning the phrase in passing can make a leader think about whether or not his or her intervention was appropriate. A good example is CFD, which stands for Confusion, Frustration, and Danger—three situations when increased adult involvement is warranted. You could also simply ask, "Good chaos?" as a reminder that it's sometimes OK to let a chaotic situation continue—assuming there is no danger and youth leaders are learning from the situation.

Youth leaders should know the code as well. And they should feel empowered to use it when needed. Every youth leader should be comfortable saying to an adult, "It's OK; I've got this."

Create an Oops Jar

An oops jar is a fun way for adults to penalize themselves—and reward the Scouts—when they mess up. Put a large jar in a prominent spot in your meeting place and challenge adults who overstep their bounds to deposit a quarter (or a dollar—whatever the market will bear) for each infraction. When the money collected meets a certain threshold, throw a pizza party for the patrol leaders' council.

Parents and Youth Leadership

In terms of making youth leadership work, parents can be your biggest stumbling block—or your biggest advocates. It's critical that they understand the youth leadership method and its impact on troop operations.

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* discussed the new parent conference. This important meeting introduces parents to the Scouts BSA program and explains how running a troop is different from Cub Scouting. Parents should leave this meeting understanding why the troop is youth-led and how they can support the youth leadership method. (A good way to demonstrate youth leadership is to have the senior patrol leader, junior assistant Scoutmaster, or another youth leader serve as a presenter or even chair the meeting.)

For more information, see the supplemental training module Orientation for New Scout Parents.

But orienting parents when they join the troop is only the start. You also need their buy-in when their children become youth leaders and especially when they take on key roles such as senior patrol leader. If a parent is unwilling to drive his or her Scout to patrol leaders' council meetings or to help pay for National Youth Leadership Training, the Scout will be less successful. A few suggestions:

- Share position descriptions with parents when their children take on leadership roles.
- Invite parents to sit in when you orient new youth leaders to their roles.
- Copy parents on all communications you have with youth leaders. (Per the BSA's social media guidelines, private, one-on-one contact between adults and Scouts is prohibited.)


BSA
FIRST AID

CHAPTER 9
Making the Patrol Method Work

The patrol method is fundamental to Scouting. It's also rare among youth programs. As Robert Baden-Powell wrote in *Aids to Scoutmastership,* "The patrol system is the one essential feature in which Scout training differs from that of all other organizations."

Patrols give Scouts a home base within the larger—sometimes very much larger—troop. They're a setting in which Scouts can build friendships, learn Scouting skills, practice leadership on a small scale, and discover what it means to put the needs of the group ahead of their own interests. Strong patrols are the foundation of strong troops; the larger the troop grows, the more important its patrols become.

Strong patrols don't just happen. It takes a lot of work on the part of adult leaders and Scouts alike to make them successful. We'll offer some guidance in this chapter.

Making the Patrol Method Fail

Before we discuss how to make the patrol method work, it's probably useful to think about how troops inadvertently make it fail. Here are three common mistakes troops make.

Frequently Reorganizing Patrols

In many troops, the default solution to poorly functioning patrols is to do a top-to-bottom reorganization. Some troops even reorganize patrols every year whether or not they're working well. Often, the reorganizations come in such rapid succession that half the members of the troop end up wearing the wrong patrol emblem or can't remember which patrol they're supposed to be in.

While there are times that patrol membership does need to be adjusted, frequent reorganizations are counterproductive for several reasons:

- They destroy whatever level of patrol spirit exists and add uncertainty. (If you've been through a corporate restructuring, you can relate.)
- They send the subtle message that patrols are little more than administrative conveniences, that it really doesn't matter whether a Scout is a Bear or a Frog.
- They trade natural friendships for imposed alliances. (If Scouts aren't spending their free time with their patrol mates, they're probably in the wrong patrols.)
- Most importantly, they ignore the reason the patrols haven't been functioning well in the first place, whether that's inadequate training, the lack of patrol advisors, or some other reason. (This situation is a lot like when people try fad diet after fad diet without reducing their caloric intake or increasing their level of physical activity.)

What's more, these reorganizations are often led by adults, which weakens the authority of the youth leaders. In one breath, the Scoutmaster tells the Scouts that the troop is theirs to run; in the next, he or she decides by fiat who will be in which patrol.

Training courses like National Youth Leadership Training and events like national jamborees do assign Scouts to carefully balanced patrols. (Criteria at NYLT include age similarities, range of Scouting skills and rank, and geographic and cultural diversity.) Keep in mind that these are patrols formed for specific purposes and limited time periods. There's no need to adopt this approach back home.

Circumventing the Patrol Structure

Another common problem is frequently circumventing the patrol structure for reasons of convenience. This is perhaps most evident in campout cooking. In the interest of time, the patrol leaders' council—or the adult leaders—might decide that the whole troop will cook and eat together instead of by patrols. Or, several patrols that are below strength on a campout might be combined for cooking purposes.

Does it take more time for four patrols to cook breakfast than for a couple of adults to do it? Yes. Is it hard for a patrol of three Scouts to handle a complex menu? Of course. But remember that ease and efficiency are not among the aims of Scouting. Will forcing a patrol of older Scouts to cook the same simple menu as the younger Scouts enhance the older Scouts' skills? No.

It's also easy—but inadvisable—to mix up Scouts when it's time to play a game during a troop meeting. A smaller patrol may struggle (or its members might have to go twice during a relay race), but they'll have an incentive to get their missing patrol mates to the next meeting.

Going Around the Patrol Leader

Patrol leaders are often in a tenuous position. They're leading their peers (which is always a challenge), they probably have little leadership experience, and they may not have even completed training yet. When those above or below them in the troop structure go around them, their authority is further weakened.

This problem can take many forms. An adult can take over a patrol meeting and lead it like a Cub Scout den meeting. A Scout can go directly to the senior patrol leader or an adult with questions their patrol leader should be able to answer. The troop can have Scouts sign up individually for outings rather than have patrol leaders report attendance. While

there's no need in Scouting for strict chains of command, there is a need to avoid end runs around the patrol leader.

The Patrol Advisor

A great way to make the patrol method work is to assign a patrol advisor to each patrol. This is an assistant Scoutmaster (or perhaps a parent) whose primary role is to advise and support the patrol leader. For position descriptions, see volume 1, chapter 15; look for the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol, the assistant Scoutmaster for traditional patrols, and the assistant Scoutmaster for the older-Scout patrol.

Here are some specific things the patrol advisor can do to support the patrol:

- Attend all patrol meetings (both those held during troop meetings and those held separately) and all patrol outings. His or her presence alone can help with crowd control.
- Meet with the patrol leader before each patrol meeting—keeping in mind Youth Protection policies—to help develop an agenda.
- Meet with the patrol leader after each patrol meeting to help evaluate how the meeting went.
- Help the patrol leader prepare for patrol leaders' council meetings.
- In between troop meetings, remind the patrol leader of any assignments the patrol has received at patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Periodically help the patrol leader evaluate their own performance. Depending on the troop, the patrol advisor may be responsible for signing off on the patrol leader's leadership requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle.
- Encourage the patrol leader to assign leadership roles to patrol members (as described in volume 1, chapter 3) and to monitor Scouts' performance of their duties.
- Encourage the patrol to schedule patrol outings beyond troop outings and help secure needed resources.
- Promote participation in Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops and National Youth Leadership Training.
- Encourage the patrol to pursue the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Encourage the patrol to set goals, such as reaching a certain membership level, having all members advance within six months, or building a new patrol box.
- Report back to the Scoutmaster or other adult leaders about additional support the patrol needs.

The patrol advisor can also support individual patrol members. The patrol advisor should:

- Monitor Scouts' attendance and encourage the patrol leader to follow up if a Scout misses several meetings in a row.
- Monitor Scouts' advancement and encourage the patrol leader to provide support (or to ask a youth instructor to provide support) if a Scout is stuck.
- Be aware of situations in Scouts' families (financial difficulties, for example) where the troop could provide support.

As your troop grows, the role of the patrol advisor becomes increasingly important. In a large troop, it can be easy for an individual Scout to fall through the cracks. Moreover, patrols in large troops often function independently, making the patrol advisor effectively the Scoutmaster of the patrol.

Honor Patrol Programs

Volume 1, chapter 3 introduced the National Honor Patrol Award, which any patrol can earn over a three-month period. This award is represented by an embroidered gold star that members wear beneath their patrol emblems.

Many troops also create their own homegrown honor patrol programs to recognize the patrol of the month. Such programs don't replace the National Honor Patrol Award; instead, they complement it by adding competition and allowing the troop to focus on areas of emphasis that the National Honor Patrol Award might not address.

The concept is fairly simple: The patrol leaders' council sets point totals for measurable achievements, such as advancement and attendance. Points are tallied after each troop meeting and outing during the month, and the winning patrol is recognized at the beginning of the next month. The prize could be a ribbon the patrol gets to display on its patrol flag or a star that is ironed onto its flag. Every six months, you could throw a pizza party for the patrol that has won the most times.

Here's a sample set of criteria:

- 10 points for each rank advancement
- 10 points for each new Eagle Palm
- 5 points for each merit badge
- 2 points for each member at a troop meeting; 5 points if in full uniform
- 3 points for each official representative at a patrol leaders' council meeting
- 5 points for each member at a troop campout, service project, or other activity
- 10 points for conducting a special patrol activity (hike, campout, service project, etc.)
- 2 points for winning the game at a meeting
- 5 points for winning a major patrol competition (cook-off, etc.)
- 5 points for each prospective Scout who attends a meeting or outing
- 15 points for each new Scout who is recruited and registered

As you can imagine, adjusting the point totals would help you emphasize areas where the troop needs to improve.

A good variation on the honor patrol idea is to run a shorter-term contest using these or other criteria. Give a prize to the first patrol to reach a given number of points.

Patrol Meetings

Like any organization, the patrol must meet regularly if it is to function well. Patrol meetings are a time for Scouts to learn new skills, plan future activities, and have fun with friends. Business items include taking attendance, collecting dues, planning the patrol's involvement in upcoming troop activities, selecting menus for hikes and campouts, assigning patrol members to specific tasks, and working out any other details for the smooth operation of the patrol. Depending on how much business the patrols must handle, typical patrol meetings can vary in length from five to 20 minutes or more.

Patrol meetings may be held at any time and any place. Here are some options:

- A portion of most troop meetings can be set aside for patrols to meet separately, often in the same room as the troop meeting. (This is sometimes called patrol corners.)
- Patrols with members who are less experienced may want to meet more frequently when preparing for upcoming events than patrols with lots of experience in a particular activity.
- A patrol may meet at the home of a patrol member on an evening other than that devoted to the troop meeting.
- Patrols can hold meetings during troop campouts and other outings, especially if there are unexpected developments to address.

In many troops, patrol meetings that occur during troop meetings are a waste of time. Scouts are sent to their patrol areas with only vague instructions and spend the time accomplishing little. To avoid this, the patrol advisor should work with the patrol leader to develop an agenda, as shown below. In addition, the troop meeting agenda should include action items for patrol meetings, such as planning menus or practicing skills for the interpatrol game.

To really give your patrols room to operate, consider designating one troop meeting night per month for patrol meetings. Or, if a month includes five Mondays (or whichever night your troop meets), set aside the fifth Monday for patrol meetings.

The Patrol Meeting Agenda

1. Opening—This can be a call to order or a simple ceremony.
   - Scribe takes roll.
   - Scribe reads the log of the last meeting.
   - Patrol leader announces the purpose of the current meeting.
   - Assistant patrol leader reviews advancement by patrol members.
2. Business—Items of business may include one or more of the following:
   - Plan for upcoming activities and make assignments.
   - Address new business.
   - Present the patrol leader's report on the patrol leaders' council meeting.
   - Check and repair camping equipment.
   - Vote on issues that need to be decided.
   - Build patrol spirit (yell, song, flag, logo).
3. Skill activity—Practice a Scouting skill that will be needed in the future.
4. Game—Play a Scouting game. It may be selected from the troop's program resources.
5. Closing—Use a brief closing thought by the patrol leader or another member of the patrol to end the meeting and remind Scouts of the importance of what they are doing.

Patrol Activities

As described in volume 1, chapter 3, patrols can undertake their own activities if they follow these guidelines:

- The Scoutmaster and the participants' parents give permission.
- The activity doesn't conflict with the troop calendar.
- The policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* are followed, including the need for two-deep adult leadership.

Patrol activities are a great way to do things that only interest the members of one patrol or that aren't feasible for a larger group. A new-Scout patrol might plan a campout that focuses on basic skills, for example, while an older-Scout patrol might undertake an ambitious backpacking trip.

Service projects and advancement activities can also work well on the patrol level. For example, a Scout working on an Eagle project might recruit patrol mates to participate, or a patrol could work on a merit badge together. (Although each Scout must complete all requirements individually, many merit badges lend themselves well to group learning.)

To encourage patrol activities, the troop could designate certain weekends for them during the annual planning conference. Patrols could be challenged to conduct a certain number of activities during the year, and doing so could help them earn the troop's honor patrol award.

Building Patrol Spirit

The most successful patrols have a strong sense of identity and view other patrols as friendly rivals. They wear their patrol emblems proudly, carry their patrol flags everywhere, and emblazon their logos on T-shirts, patrol boxes, and other patrol gear. They create a patrol cheer like your Wood Badge patrol did.

If your troop has never had strong patrols, you may need to help Scouts understand what patrol spirit looks like. They see teams all the time—sports teams, "tribes" on reality-TV shows, the houses in the *Harry Potter* movies, etc.—so it should be easy to solicit ideas of how those teams identify themselves and differentiate themselves from other teams.

To earn the Scout rank, a Scout must be familiar with their patrol's name, emblem, flag, and yell. Those elements are the starting point for building patrol spirit.

Patrol Name

Patrol spirit starts with a name that the members select for themselves and that fits their personalities or the image they'd like to project. Unless the name is offensive, it

shouldn't be vetoed—and certainly not by the Scoutmaster. (You may prefer Foxes and Bears over Aliens and Zombies, but your Scouts probably don't.)

The patrol names for which you can buy stock patrol emblems are mostly one word: Fox, Ninja, Scorpion, Bulldog, etc. But patrols don't have to limit themselves to those names. Instead of being the plain-vanilla Fox Patrol, a patrol might choose to be the Red Foxes or the Wily Foxes. Instead of being the Bulldog Patrol, a patrol choosing that patch might become the Junkyard Dogs or the Big Dawgs.

Patrol Emblem

Patrols will typically choose a stock patrol emblem—the simplest option—although some purchase blank patrol emblems and create their own. In the latter case, be sure the patrol makes extra emblems to allow for future growth and lost uniforms, and be sure the design complies with the teachings of the Scout Law.

Each member of the patrol should wear a patrol emblem, of course, but the emblem can appear other places as well, such as on patrol equipment. A patrol can also enhance its identity by creating a logo that incorporates the patrol emblem and other elements, such as the troop number and city. A good way to generate logo ideas is to do an internet search using a phrase like "wolf logo image." While the logos you'll find are protected by trademark and can't be used, they can suggest ideas a patrol could incorporate in its own logo. If you have Scouts or parents who are artists, they could turn a patrol's rough ideas into a polished design. Some T-shirt companies have in-house artists who can do the same thing when you order T-shirts.

Patrol Flag

A flag gives a patrol something to rally around and a place to show off the ribbons it has won at camporees and other events. Scouts should make flags that are durable and easy to carry on outings. Patrols sometimes enhance their flags with the Scouts' names. (If there's not a lot of space, the Scouts' names could be written on leather strips that hang from the flagpole.)

Patrol flags can be incorporated into campsite gateways and used at troop ceremonies. Consider building simple flag stands that can be placed where patrols line up at troop meetings. Such stands will encourage patrols to bring their flags along since they'll have a place to put them.

Patrol flags come in all shapes, sizes, and designs. Only three rules should govern their design and creation. First, all the members of the patrol should be involved in the process; the patrol leader's mom might be able to make a better flag, but that's not the point of the exercise. Second, the flag's design and construction should be practical. Third, the design must comply with the Scout Law. Flags that are too heavy or bulky to carry or that are made with materials that can't stand up to bad weather are unlikely to be used.

Patrol Yell

A patrol yell could be as simple as a single word or as complex as a call-and-response cadence chant. The spontaneous cheers sports fans begin when their teams are winning are a good example of what a patrol yell could sound like.

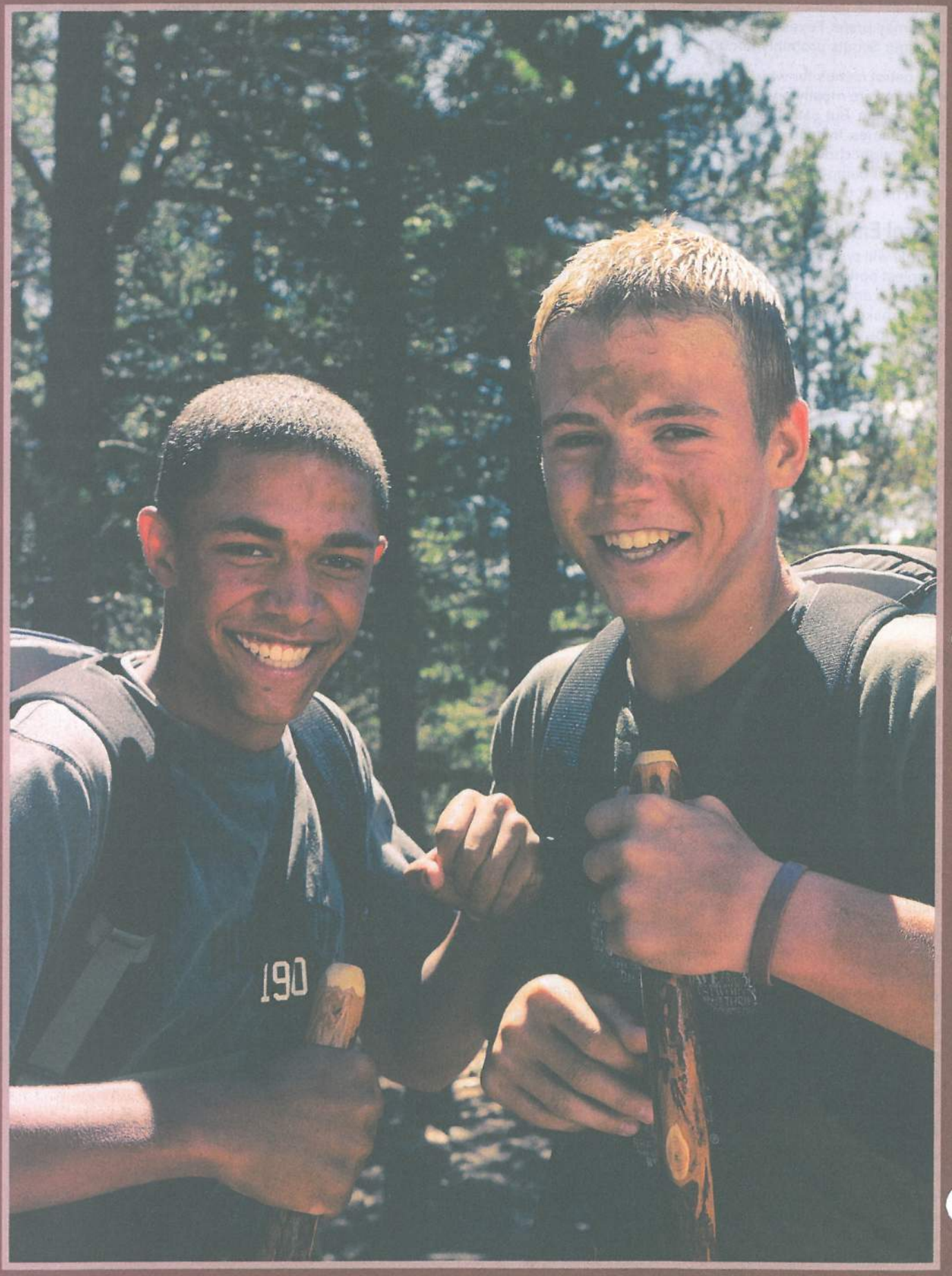
Like the patrol flag, the patrol yell should be used regularly, not created and forgotten. For example, the senior patrol leader could ask the patrol that wins the interpatrol game at a troop meeting to share its yell.

Other Elements of Patrol Spirit

Patrols should be encouraged to think of other ways to build patrol spirit. Here are a few ideas:

- Patrols could be encouraged to purchase their own gear, supplementing the basic gear the troop provides.
- Each patrol could have its own page on the troop website to post pictures and information about patrol activities.
- If you have exclusive use of your meeting place, each patrol could decorate its room or corner.
- Patrols could establish traditions, such as a special meal they prepare on every campout.
- Patrols could design their own T-shirts to wear as part of the activity uniform or on patrol outings.

Activities like these build patrol spirit because they encourage patrol members to work together, to use their resources, and to wrestle with what's important to them. They help your patrols go from being mere administrative conveniences to strong groups of friends who will stay together long after their time in Scouting ends.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THE POWER OF PROGRAM AND HIGH ADVENTURE

No 11-year-old joins Scouting for character development. And few of them join to attend troop meetings, wear the Scout uniform, or sit before boards of review. Instead, they sign up for fun and adventure. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "Camp is the boy's Elysium and the Scoutmaster's opportunity."

Elysium—paradise—is a high standard, but it's one all Scouters should strive for. In this section, we'll discuss ways to make meetings and outings as appealing as possible while providing an effective setting in which we can teach the values and skills of Scouting.

CHAPTER 10
Extraordinary Everyday Programs

Every year, more than 50,000 Scouts and leaders visit one of the BSA's four national high-adventure bases. Every four years, more than 30,000 Scouts and leaders gather for the National Scout Jamboree. Those are impressive numbers—until you remember that there are more than 800,000 11- to 17-year-old Scouts in the BSA. In other words, nine out of 10 Scouts won't enjoy one of those signature events this year.

That doesn't mean that 90 percent of Scouts must have ordinary experiences, however. With careful planning and a dash of creative thinking, you can create extraordinary everyday programs in your troop. And it's those great everyday programs that will engage and excite your Scouts and encourage them to remain active until they turn 18 and have acquired all the skills and values Scouting promises. That's what this chapter is all about.

A troop program doesn't have to be exotic or expensive to be effective. Give Scouts a chance to decide what they want to do; then allow them to assume leadership for preparing for adventures and then carrying them out, and much of the rest of Scouting will fall into place.

Troop Meetings

College basketball coaches often worry about trap games—those contests their teams should win without breaking a sweat but sometimes lose because they put forth no effort. It's easy to get players excited about a championship game, a matchup against an in-state rival, or an appearance on national television; it's much harder to get them excited about a midweek game against a no-name opponent on a cold Tuesday night in January.

Troop meetings are Scouting's trap games. Because they happen every week and usually lack the excitement of outings, troop leaders (youth and adult alike) don't necessarily bring their A game to every meeting. They should, however, because boring, poorly planned meetings turn away Scouts and lead to less-effective outings. In fact, a single meeting might convince a wavering Scout to remain in your troop or to move on to some other activity.

Maintaining Balance: Meeting Parts

As described in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, most troop meetings should include eight parts:

- Preopening
- Opening
- Group instruction
- Skills instruction
- Patrol meetings
- Game
- Closing
- After the meeting

Including all eight parts can bring a host of benefits.

- Every Scout should find something of interest during the meeting, whether it is enjoying physical activity, learning new skills, hanging out with other patrol members, or participating in inspiring ceremonies.
- Each part is short enough that no one should get bored—and manageable enough that the youth leader in charge won't feel overwhelmed.
- Scouts have plenty of opportunities to get up and move around. They don't feel trapped in a classroom like they may in school.
- If one part of the meeting bombs, it's easy to move on to something more interesting or better planned.
- There are more opportunities for youth leaders to run parts of the meeting.

Maintaining Balance: Age Groups

Another way to think about balance is to consider how effectively a meeting addresses the needs and interests of new Scouts, experienced Scouts, and older Scouts. A meeting that skews too much toward new Scouts will be boring to older Scouts who have learned to tie the basic Scout knots seemingly dozens of times. A meeting that skews too much toward older Scouts won't teach the basic skills new Scouts need to know.

Every Scout is different, of course, but consider these simple profiles of the three age groups.

For more detailed information on the stages of adolescent development, see chapter 12 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, volume 1.

New Scouts

New Scouts are still mastering basic Scouting skills and working toward the First Class rank. (The BSA recommends that Scouts reach First Class within the first 12 to 18 months.) While they may have been camping before, they still need help knowing what and how to pack, and their patrols need lots of help developing menus, shopping lists, and duty rosters.

For new Scouts, everything is a new experience. That can be good, in that even the stalest activity can seem fresh. It can

also be bad, in that they don't understand things older Scouts take for granted, such as sign-up deadlines for outings.

New Scouts have more energy than attention span. They need to be moving and doing, not sitting and listening.

New Scouts spend much of their time in the new-Scout patrol under the supervision of an assigned troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster. They probably haven't yet made friends with many members of other patrols. They need opportunities to interact with other Scouts so that the new-Scout patrol doesn't become a troop within a troop.

Experienced Scouts

Experienced Scouts are the sandwich generation; they are no longer new Scouts, but they haven't earned the status enjoyed by older Scouts. They have probably been in the troop for a year or two and have probably reached First Class rank. They've mastered basic Scouting skills and understand how the troop operates.

Because they're now pursuing higher ranks, advancement work at troop meetings is less important to them unless it relates to merit badges. A session before a troop meeting on a specific merit badge might be attractive, but you'll need to give them a reason to remain engaged if you teach bandage-making yet again. (The reason could be that they're teaching the skill or that they'll need the skill in a patrol competition or disaster simulation.)

To keep basic skills fresh, add a twist. Teach Scouts a different way to apply a bandage, challenge them to tie knots blindfolded, or turn skills practice into a competition.

Having been camping several times, these Scouts know how to camp. They also know how to take shortcuts. They can plan a whole campout's menu in the time it takes the new-Scout patrol to plan one meal. However, what they plan may be less ambitious than what the new Scouts plan. It is important to challenge experienced Scouts to try new things. Learning how to think outside the box is a valuable skill for them to learn.

Many experienced Scouts will be serving in positions of responsibility. At troop meetings, they may need to split their time between working on advancement, teaching skills, and huddling with their adult counterparts. A quartermaster who is busy checking out camping equipment may miss big chunks of the troop meeting.

Older Scouts

Older Scouts are the veterans of the troop. After four or more years in Scouts BSA, they've done pretty much everything the troop has to offer—sometimes several times. They need new challenges to keep them motivated, whether that's high adventure, opportunities for real leadership, or pursuit of the Eagle Scout rank or awards like the 50-Miler. Of course, when older Scouts are already Eagle Scouts or have advanced as far as they plan to, you'll need to use tools other than badges—like introducing them to advanced skills, for example—to motivate them.

Section 5 offers more information on keeping older Scouts involved.

Like the new Scouts at the other end of the age spectrum, older Scouts have more in common with each other than they do with the rest of the troop. Many see the age gulf between themselves and the "little kids" as insurmountable and are content to hang out in a patrol room with friends they only get to see at Scout meetings.

While older Scouts have mastered basic skills that they can use in instructing others, they will soon lose interest if all they do is teach younger Scouts. They need activities that challenge them. Using outside consultants is a great tool to keep their interest and help them learn advanced skills.

Many older Scouts have part-time jobs or are involved in sports, band, and various social activities. They're less able to attend outings, so time spent preparing for outings during the troop meeting may not interest them. Similarly, the advancement help they need at this stage is more personalized; even group merit badge work will be of relatively little interest. Their advancement needs may take on a sense of urgency as well, as in the case of the 17-year-old Life Scout who is making a last-ditch effort to complete the Eagle Scout requirements.

The key to actively involving older Scouts is to focus on their interests. Though it might sound simple, there is no better way to find out what those interests are than asking them. When a meeting or outing involves something they want to do, they will be more likely to attend.

It can be tempting to compel Scouts who aren't going on an outing to help pack gear or plan menus. Keep in mind, however, that they won't be around to suffer the consequences if key equipment or ingredients get left behind.

With the needs and interests of the three age groups in mind, you can easily see how effective any given troop meeting is likely to be. Working with your senior patrol leader and PLC, review each part of the meeting plan and think about how it meets the needs and interests of each group. The worksheet on the following page will get you started. If your troop uses the *Program Features for Troops and Crews,* each program feature has ideas to make each outing or activity achievable and interesting for each of the three types of patrols we have been discussing.

Troop Meeting Evaluation

How Well Does This Part Meet the Needs of ...

Meeting Part	Planned Activity or Activities	... New Scouts?	... Experienced Scouts?	... Older Scouts?
Preopening				
Opening				
Group Instruction				
Skills Instruction				
Patrol Meetings				
Game				
Closing				
After the Meeting				

What if you see a gap? You have several options:

- The senior patrol leader could talk with the youth leader in charge of that part of the meeting to discuss ways of broadening the scope of what is planned.
- The patrol leaders' council could plan a separate activity for that part of the meeting to meet the needs of neglected age groups.
- Adult leaders could plan to work with their youth counterparts during that part of the meeting.
- The Scoutmaster could schedule Scoutmaster conferences during that part of the meeting.
- The troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol could work separately with their Scouts during that part of the meeting.

It's easy to evaluate troop meetings based on how well they follow the PLC's plan. It's harder—and far more important—to evaluate them based on how well they achieve the aims of Scouting.

This may sound like a laborious process, and perhaps it is. The good news is that by going through the process a few times, you will teach the PLC to plan meetings that meet the needs of every Scout in the troop every week. You may also discover your troop's tendency to unconsciously cater to the needs of some Scouts to the exclusion of others.

Maintaining Balance: The Methods of Scouting

A third way to think about balance is to consider how many methods of Scouting a meeting uses. If the meeting is skewed too much toward one or two methods or ignores several methods altogether, it probably isn't as effective as it could be.

For an even more focused evaluation, think about an individual Scout—perhaps the Life Scout who only shows up once a month or the First Class Scout who is serving for the first time in a troop-level position of responsibility. How will the meeting you're evaluating meet the needs of this Scout?

Here are some ways a troop meeting could use each method:

- **Adult Association:** Scoutmaster conferences, youth leaders working with their adult advisors, PLC huddles, informal interaction during downtime
- **Advancement:** Opportunities to complete advancement requirements during the meeting, recognition during the closing of Scouts who have advanced, merit badge sessions before the meeting, promotion of specific merit badges by visiting merit badge counselors, Scoutmaster conferences, boards of review
- **Ideals:** Reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law during the opening, Scoutmaster's Minute during the closing
- **Leadership Development:** Youth leaders running the meeting with minimal adult involvement, adult leaders

coaching their youth counterparts, youth leaders such as the quartermaster working in their functional areas

- **Outdoors:** Activities that take the meeting outside, preparation for outings, teaching and practicing outdoor skills, making or repairing camping equipment
- **Patrol Method:** Patrol meetings/patrol corners, patrol responsibility for ceremonies or meeting room setup/cleanup, interpatrol competitions
- **Personal Growth:** Scoutmaster conferences, service opportunities, promotion of the religious emblems program
- **Uniform:** Scouts and leaders attending the meeting in uniform, occasional uniform inspections, distribution of patrol patches and badges of office

Adding Life to Your Troop Meetings

If your troop meetings begin to feel dull and repetitive, it's time to shake them up a bit. That doesn't necessarily mean a radical departure from the meeting structure that has worked successfully for decades. It does mean finding ways to ramp up the interest and excitement.

Take the opening ceremony, for example. If your troop does the same ceremony every week—say a flag presentation followed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law—your Scouts (and adult leaders) are probably just going through the motions. Here are some ways to enliven that basic ceremony:

- **Go outside.** Raise the flag outside your meeting place, either on a permanent flagpole in front of your meeting place or on a flagpole your Scouts lash together.
- **Involve the experts.** Invite students in Junior ROTC or representatives from a local veterans group to handle the presentation of the colors.
- **Include a dramatic reading.** After the Pledge of Allegiance, have a Scout read a patriotic poem.
- **Add music.** Sing the national anthem or "God Bless America," accompanied by an ad hoc band made up of Scout musicians, or have an ensemble of Scouts who are good singers perform. Play patriotic music, such as a march by John Philip Sousa, as Scouts assemble.
- **Develop an honor guard.** Form a specially trained group of Scouts to handle flag presentations.
- **Go international.** In addition to reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law, have a Scout share the Scout Oath and Scout Law from another country—in both English and the original language if possible. (An internet search will turn up plenty of examples.)
- **Add meaning.** After repeating the Scout Oath and Scout Law, have Scouts explain, in their own words, the meaning of both. Light candles for each part of the Scout Oath (duty to God and country, duty to others, and duty to self) and for each point of the Scout Law.

Honor-guard members may wear the Honor Guard patch, No. 621029, on their right uniform sleeves, below the patrol patch or Journey to Excellence patch. Note that honor-guard service doesn't count as a position of responsibility for advancement purposes.

Doing things like these won't make the opening much longer, but they can make it much more meaningful. Even when you go back to your standard opening ceremony, Scouts are likely to pay a little more attention.

You can make similar tweaks to every other part of the troop meeting. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Meet outside.** Whenever possible, hold your meetings outside, either on your chartered organization's lawn or at a nearby park. The meetings will feel less like school, and it will be easier to teach outdoor skills.
- **Use consultants.** Venturing uses consultants to teach many skills, but you can do the same in your troop. Check with local outdoor retailers, schoolteachers, merit badge counselors, and leaders from other troops who have special expertise. Besides offering expertise, consultants free the troop's leaders to work in other areas.
- **Use technology.** Today's Scouts are digital natives. Show internet videos to introduce skills or get Scouts excited about an upcoming outing destination. Encourage Scouts to use their smartphones to look up new camping recipes. Have Scouts track their advancement status online during patrol meetings.
- **Tweak the schedule.** Adjust the meeting schedule as needed. There may be times when you'll want to play a longer game—or even two games—or skip skills instruction. On the other hand, a guest presenter might need more than 15 or 20 minutes. Make meeting plans work for the troop, not the other way around.
- **Add food.** Every Scout likes to eat. Have samples of new camping recipes available as Scouts arrive, or start the meeting with a potluck Dutch-oven dinner.
- **Provide resources.** Elements like games can get repetitive when PLC members don't know where to go for new ideas. Assemble a resource library of helpful internet bookmarks. Encourage the PLC to visit www.programresources.org for ideas for games, ceremonies, and more.

Phone Calls, Emails, Huddles, and Evaluations

The best-laid plans of your patrol leaders' council can easily fall apart between the monthly PLC meeting and the next troop meeting. Adult leaders can play a key role in ensuring that good plans lead to great troop meetings.

You'll probably develop your own methods for keeping planning on track, but three activities can help.

- **Phone calls and emails.** A few days before each troop meeting, the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster (or assistant Scoutmaster for program) should touch base by phone or email to review the meeting plan. The senior patrol leader should also touch base with the patrol leaders and other youth leaders who are in charge of each part of the meeting. If any adult leader is providing guidance to a youth leader, he or she should also follow up to review plans. These conversations give you a little extra time to head off any problems, such as when a youth leader forgets to recruit a guest instructor or when the weather forecast threatens to make an outdoor cooking demonstration difficult. (Be sure to follow BSA Youth Protection policies that apply to communications.)

- **PLC huddles.** Before each troop meeting, the PLC should hold a brief huddle to review the meeting plan. If the Scout in charge of the game is home with the flu, it's better to learn that before the meeting starts than when it's time for the game.
- **Evaluations.** The PLC or the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader should meet briefly right after the troop meeting to evaluate the meeting using the Start-Stop-Continue model. This is also a good time to review assignments for the next meeting.

How involved should adult leaders be in leading troop meetings? Ideally, most of their work should occur behind the scenes. Keep in mind, however, that youth leadership is just one of the eight methods of Scouting. Your troop meetings should be run by the Scouts—not run into the ground by them!

Meetings in a Box

Unless your PLC functions at a very high level, at least the occasional troop meeting will go off the rails. When that happens, your default reaction might be to spend the evening cleaning out patrol boxes or to have a game night. While games are fun and your patrol boxes probably do need some serious scrubbing, you could make a wasted night more productive by planning ahead. Work with your senior patrol leader to develop a few meeting plans that could be carried out at a moment's notice. Depending on the plans, you could even assemble any needed supplies in a box that you could pull out if the need arises.

Here are bare-bones examples of seven such emergency meeting plans.

Emergency Meeting #1: Supermarket Smorgasbord

Take the Scouts to a nearby grocery store. Give each patrol $15 in cash—adjust the amount based on patrol size and local store prices—to plan as complete a camp dinner as possible. (For an added challenge, specify the type of cuisine, such as Mexican or Italian.) Back at your meeting location, fire up your camp stoves and have the patrols cook the meals they planned. While the cooks monitor the stoves, other Scouts play a simple pickup game like Four Square. Have the senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader judge what the patrols have cooked and award a prize to the best patrol; this could be a cake or other treat picked up during the shopping trip. End the meeting by having the patrols share the food they've prepared with each other.

Emergency Meeting #2: Neighborhood Observation Test

Observation skills have long been an important part of Scouting. Robert Baden-Powell introduced Kim's Game, where Scouts had to remember a series of two dozen or so common items after observing them for a minute. This meeting plan turns Kim's Game into a hike.

Take the troop on a 45-minute hike in the neighborhood around your meeting place. (To make sure you get back in time, hike for 20 minutes, stop for a break, then retrace your steps back to your meeting place.) A youth leader on the hike carries a notebook and writes down 20 or so questions that the Scouts should be able to answer when they return. For example:

- What brand of gas is sold at the convenience store on the corner?
- Do addresses on the west side of Main Street have odd numbers or even numbers?
- Was the American flag flying at the middle school?
- What direction does Elm Street run?
- What are the five closest streets to the meeting place in order?
- What is the full name of the elementary school at the top of the hill?
- What are the three restaurants in the strip mall anchored by the grocery store?
- Were the garage doors at the fire station open or closed?
- What color was the Corvette that passed as we returned to the meeting place?

Back at your meeting place, hold a quiz-show–style competition to see which patrol was most observant.

Emergency Meeting #3: Advancement Checkup

This meeting requires a little prior planning to be as effective as possible, although it could be run on the spur of the moment if necessary. Equip adult leaders with paper, pens, and copies of the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book. (They could also use their smartphones or tablets to access advancement requirements on the BSA website.) After the opening, have Scouts meet with adults individually or as patrols, depending on your ratio of Scouts to adults, to review their advancement status. Each Scout should write a list of steps needed to complete the next rank and/or to complete any merit badges they have begun. Challenge each Scout to set a date for accomplishing their plan.

Work with Scouts to identify merit badge counselors or other resource people. Share notes with the PLC on how upcoming meetings and outings could help Scouts achieve their goals, such as planning a five-mile hike during the next campout.

During the second half of the meeting, play a wide game like Capture the Flag.

Emergency Meeting #4: Troop Olympics

Using older youth leaders supported by adult leaders, set up stations around your meeting place where Scouts can test their fitness. Include the exercises required for Tenderfoot (push-ups, sit-ups or curl-ups, modified stretch-and-sit, and 1-mile walk/run), as well as others listed in the *Personal Fitness* merit badge pamphlet. Have the leader at each station record the Scouts' results; announce the best result for each exercise during the closing.

For variety, include two-person fitness games like arm wrestling. *Troop Program Resources* includes several such games. You could even do simple single-elimination tournaments for some of these games.

See chapter 12 for more ways to incorporate fitness into your troop meetings and outings.

Emergency Meeting #5: Indoor Campfire Program

Plan and hold a troop campfire program at your meeting place. (A roaring fire is optional.) Give each patrol 15 minutes to plan and practice a skit, a song, and a cheer. They should report each element as their planning progresses so that the senior patrol leader can put together the order of acts. After the planning is done, get the troop together and enjoy 45 minutes or so of fun.

You could also include improvisational sketches: When a patrol comes on stage, assign it a location, several characters (real or fictional), and a couple of props that must be used and have it improvise a skit.

While the program is progressing, send a couple of adults to the grocery store to pick up some treats. If you have access to a microwave oven, you could even make microwave s'mores.

Emergency Meeting #6: Photo Scavenger Hunt

Make sure each patrol has a smartphone or digital camera. Give each patrol a list of 15 to 20 items to photograph at your meeting place or in your neighborhood before a given deadline. The items on the list can be concrete—an out-of-state license plate, an American flag, a pine tree, a house with a blue door, a stop sign, etc.—or conceptual—patriotism, pattern, cold, solitude, tall, age, etc.

When the patrols return, have the senior patrol leader judge the pictures to determine a winner in each category. Or, if you have the technological capability, project the photos on a screen and let the whole troop vote. (If all the cameras use SD memory cards, you could easily transfer them to a laptop computer.)

Emergency Meeting #7: Meeting Place Scavenger Hunt

Before the meeting, develop a list of items Scouts should learn about your meeting place by using observation and Scout skills. Here are some examples:

- How tall is the flagpole in front of the building?
- How wide is the front of the building?
- What is the square footage of the building?
- How many exterior doors does the building have?
- What species of trees grow on the front lawn?
- What is the compass heading from the traffic light at the corner to the front door?
- What year was the building constructed? (This question assumes there's a cornerstone.)
- Who is the senior pastor (or other chartered organization leader, depending on where you meet)?
- Where are the building's first-aid kits and automated external defibrillators located?
- What needed service projects do you see around the building?

Have Scouts guess the answers first; then send them out in pairs to determine the correct answers.

For more ideas of things to look for, see the BSA's Meeting Place Inspection Checklist and the home safety checklist in the *Safety* merit badge pamphlet.

If the meeting generates ideas for service projects, be sure to schedule them. With some advanced planning, you could even incorporate simple service projects into the meeting.

Troop Outings

Troop outings feature the same cast of characters as troop meetings and use the same methods to achieve the same aims. But outings are different from meetings in ways that go far beyond length and location. For example, downtime at meetings can lead to boredom and mischief, but downtime on outings can give Scouts the chance to hang out with their friends, explore nature, and simply enjoy a break from busyness. Such breaks are important since many youth today are constantly being coached, tested, or hurried to their next activity.

While some outings may require strict schedules, consider planning some outings that are more laid-back. Ask yourself if it really matters whether your Scouts get breakfast cooked before noon on Saturday.

That said, outings can still begin to feel ordinary. Too many trips to the same campground, too many hikes down the same trail, and too many weekends with the same menus can send Scouts elsewhere in search of novelty.

Meeting Needs and Using Scouting Methods

The first step in making your outings extraordinary is to ensure that they, like troop meetings, meet the needs of a range of Scouts. New Scouts, experienced Scouts, and older Scouts should all have the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to experience something new during the course of each outing. (See "Maintaining Balance: Age Groups" earlier in this chapter for more information.)

How that looks from one month to the next will vary greatly. If you're doing a float trip or working on a skill that's new to everyone, there may be little difference in what different age groups do. If you're working on skills you've covered before,

each group may do somewhat different activities. For example, new Scouts could learn basic lashings, experienced Scouts could build trestles and test them in chariot races, and older Scouts could build a monkey bridge the whole troop could enjoy later in the weekend. There may also be months when patrols do their own activities on different weekends or at different locations.

Meeting the needs of all your Scouts also requires taking into account the whole of your Scouts' lives. For example, fall outings can be a problem for older Scouts who play high school sports or are in the band. If you want them to participate, you may need to make arrangements for them to arrive in camp on Saturday morning.

Also, as with troop meetings, outings should use the methods of Scouting. Here are some ways a troop outing could use each method:

- **Adult Association:** Camp is a great place for the sort of in-depth conversations with adults that many young people long to have. Relaxed camp schedules also allow for Scoutmaster conferences and coaching youth leaders. There's also room to spread out and have one-on-one conversations in full view of other people, as required by the BSA's Youth Protection policies.
- **Advancement:** Most Scouts should come out of most outings with at least a few advancement requirements completed; if nothing else, each campout should contribute to the number of nights required for the Camping merit badge. Camp is a great place to conduct boards of review—and those boards of review give you a great excuse to invite troop committee members along.
- **Ideals:** You could start and end each day with a flag ceremony, reflect on Scouting values during a Scoutmaster's Minute at a campfire program, and explore the meaning of duty to God during an interfaith worship service.
- **Leadership Development:** Camp is where youth leaders really get to shine. Adult leaders can take a back seat—in part by camping somewhat apart from the Scouts—giving the senior patrol leader and other youth leaders more latitude.
- **Outdoors:** Scouts get to put into practice what they've learned in troop meetings, from camping techniques to outdoor ethics.
- **Patrol Method:** Each patrol should have a distinct campsite, cook its own meals, and function as a group during many campout activities.
- **Personal Growth:** Camp is where Scouts learn to be independent, to overcome fears, and to face challenges. Character is revealed—and formed—when Scouts are tested by bad weather, burned breakfast, and bruised feelings.
- **Uniform:** While the field uniform might not be practical for most campouts, you could travel in uniform or dress up for a fancy dinner your last night in camp. Troop or patrol T-shirts can also offer a sense of uniformity.

As in other areas of Scouting, you should be careful not to emphasize some methods so much that you neglect others. For example, when adult leaders cook apart from the Scouts, they encourage leadership development and the patrol method at the exclusion of adult association—although Scouts can obviously hang around adults at other times during the weekend. One solution would be to invite the troop-level youth leaders to eat with the adults. (They're probably too busy working to cook anyway.) Another solution would be to shut down the adult kitchen and have a couple of adults eat with each patrol, rotating from one meal to the next. On the other hand, if the adults cook for the whole troop, you could have plenty of adult association but fall short on advancement, ideals, leadership development, patrol method, or personal growth—not a good trade-off.

Outings and Advancement

The patrol leaders' council might not understand how advancement opportunities should dovetail into the annual planning calendar. Adult leaders can help guide PLC discussions by laying out the advancement needs of all the Scouts in the troop and asking questions like these: When will Scouts have the chance to cook over an open flame? How can we accommodate a Scout's need to complete a certain number of nights in camp? Where could we add service projects to the calendar?

Adding Spice to Outings

Even outings that address the needs of all Scouts and incorporate all eight methods can fall flat. Given the huge array of other things Scouts could choose to do on any given weekend, it's important to make every outing as attractive as possible.

Great outings start at your annual planning conference, where the PLC should determine the date, the focus, and perhaps the location of each outing for the next year. While these decisions are the Scouts' to make, adult leaders can and should push them to think a little more creatively. Here's a simple way to do this: Before the planning conference, print out internet photos of activities the Scouts could do or places they could go. Post these pictures around your meeting room and encourage the Scouts to review them before they brainstorm ideas for the next year. Chances are they'll come up with a more creative plan than they would have otherwise.

If certain activities are getting stale, encourage the PLC to place a moratorium on them for a year.

At the same time, don't assume that every outing has to be a once-in-a-lifetime, mountaintop experience to be attractive and enjoyable. Often, simple tweaks to familiar outings are sufficient. If your PLC comes up with an outing idea you know could be strengthened, suggest one of these tweaks:

- **Do the same activity but at an unusual location.** An urban hike would give your Scouts a new perspective on hiking and on their community.
- **Go to a familiar location but do an unusual activity there.** If you always go canoeing at a nearby state park, plan a backpacking weekend there instead.
- **Do a familiar activity but at an unfamiliar time.** Wilderness survival is a much different experience in the winter than in the summer; hiking at night or in the early morning is different from hiking in the middle of the day.

- **Modify the menus.** Cook recipes from a different country at each meal or do utensil-less cooking all weekend.
- **Team up with another troop.** Do a joint outing with another troop (or Venturing crew). Each unit can share its strengths and learn from the other unit. And a huge game of Capture the Flag could be a great way to end a day of fun.
- **Do a mash-up activity.** Combine two types of activities in a surprising and fun way. Canoe to a field where you can build pioneering projects. Create a troop triathlon that includes canoeing, cycling, and orienteering. Develop a treasure hunt with clues placed along a hiking trail. Hike to places of worship in your community where religious leaders (or, better yet, troop members) share the fundamentals of their faiths.
- **Create a theme.** Come up with a fun theme to tie the weekend's activities together. For example, you could have an alien theme complete with costumes, a wide game between competing armies of aliens (the patrols), and a battle royal of meteors (water balloons launched from lashed-together catapults).

Consider the example of a minor-league baseball team. Nearly every game includes some sort of promotion—from bobblehead dolls to dollar hot dogs—to encourage fans to attend. What difference would it make if you gave that kind of attention to your outings?

Program Features for Troops and Crews

Outings can focus on activities far beyond the skills needed for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. The three-volume *Program Features for Troops and Crews* offers ideas for outings that focus on a host of topics, including science, citizenship, living history, music, duty to God, special needs awareness, and even spectator sports. Modules are grouped into the categories of outdoors, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), and arts and hobbies, allowing your PLC to develop a well-rounded program that meets the interests of all your Scouts.

The modules address the needs of new, experienced, and older Scouts by including ideas for skill instruction that focus on essential, challenging, and advanced skills, respectively. Each module includes ideas for three outings—or main events, as they're called—one each at the essential, challenging, and advanced levels.

Volume 1

Camping
Climbing and Rappelling
Communication
Cycling
First Aid
Games
Geocaching
Hiking
Outdoor Ethics
Paddle Sports
Pioneering
Rifle Shooting
Safety
Science
Snowboarding and Skiing
Spectator Sports

Volume 2

Archery
Backpacking
Citizenship
Engineering
Fishing
Fitness and Nutrition
Living History
Mathematics
Mentoring
Music
Orienteering
Scuba Diving
Soccer
Special Needs Awareness
Wilderness Survival
Wildlife Management

Volume 3

Caving
Cooking
COPE
Duty to God
Emergency Preparedness
Ethics
Financial Management
Multimedia
Nature and Environment
Project Planning
Shotgun Shooting
Skateboarding
Sustainability
Swimming
Technology
Winter Camping

Moving Toward High Adventure

The next chapter covers high adventure in depth, but you should consider adding elements of high adventure to regular outings as well. That could mean planning a three-day backpacking trip over a holiday weekend, building up to a 20-mile hike, or participating in a 100-mile weekend cycling tour. Doing activities like these makes regular outings more appealing and gives Scouts a taste of what they can expect on full-fledged high-adventure trips.

Summer Camp

For many Scouts, a week at summer camp is the highlight of the Scouting year. They can take part in activities that are rarely available on weekend outings, such as shooting sports and COPE, while enjoying such luxuries as sleeping on a cot and eating in an air-conditioned dining hall. And they can do all this while spending a week hanging out with their best friends.

But just like weekend outings, summer camp isn't automatically an extraordinary experience. To make it a week your Scouts will remember forever, your youth and leaders must invest some extra effort before and during the week.

The first step is choosing the right summer camp, one that meets the needs of all your Scouts. That means choosing a camp with a strong new-Scout program, an array of fun merit badge classes (especially for outdoor-related badges), and challenging high-adventure opportunities for older Scouts. While that camp may be located right down the road, it could be a couple of states away. Occasionally going out of council for summer camp adds novelty to the experience and gives you touring opportunities along the way. You'll probably also find the bonds among your Scouts strengthened since the only people they will know, at least at first, will be each other.

Consider asking the camp director to sit down with select older Scouts to talk about staff opportunities. Working on camp staff can keep older Scouts involved in the program after they turn 18. And having your older Scouts on staff gives your younger Scouts something to aspire to.

Here are some other ideas for creating an extraordinary summer camp experience.

- **Supplement the summer camp program.** Bring along fishing gear, materials for carving neckerchief slides, or card games. Encourage adult leaders who are merit badge counselors to help Scouts with those badges during free time.
- **Extend the experience.** Look for tour opportunities on the way to camp. Leave home a day early and visit a historic site or enjoy a day of whitewater rafting.
- **Fill the holes in the schedule.** If there's a free night in camp, plan ahead to fill it with an activity like cooking your own dinner or making homemade ice cream.
- **Don't waste your check-in day.** The first day of camp is often given over to swim tests and medical rechecks. Plan activities you can do that day, such as merit badge activities or a hike around the camp.
- **Create a home away from home.** Build an attractive gateway at your campsite, make name plaques for your tents, or take other steps to give your campsite a homey touch.
- **Connect with other troops.** Bring along troop T-shirts or souvenirs from your hometown to trade or give away. Invite another troop to your campsite for a cracker barrel one evening.
- **Take advantage of everything the camp offers.** Compete in wide games, work to earn the honor-troop award, attend the Wednesday night interfaith service as a troop, and get up early on Friday for the polar-bear plunge.
- **Put your adults to work.** While it can be nice to nap, read a book, or take advantage of the free Wi-Fi in the leaders' lounge, the week will ultimately be more satisfying for adults if they volunteer around camp. Note that some camps also offer adult training during summer camp, making it easy for adults to complete supplemental training on topics such as CPR and Safe Swim Defense.

CHAPTER 11
High Adventure

In some troops, high adventure is business as usual. In others, Scouts are lucky to participate in one or two high-adventure trips in their Scouting careers, whether to a national or council high-adventure base or some other destination. Not surprisingly, the former troops are often more effective at retaining older Scouts and keeping the interest of adult leaders.

This chapter provides a brief overview of what high adventure is and how you can plan high-adventure outings. By necessity, it only scratches the surface. To learn more about specific high-adventure skills, see the *Fieldbook*. High-adventure planning is the focus of Powder Horn training, a hands-on resource management course for registered adults and older Scouts who want to conduct troop-based high-adventure activities. Between those resources, you should be able to launch a high-adventure program even if your troop has never camped out of sight of your troop trailer.

Defining High Adventure

According to the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, a high-adventure experience includes at least five nights and six days of trekking in wilderness and other rugged, remote locations—which could include backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking, horse packing, mountain climbing, ski touring, rafting, kayaking, or a host of other outdoor adventures. It also limits such activities to more experienced Scouts, typically those who are at least 13 years old. (Some high-adventure bases have higher age limits.)

But numbers don't tell the whole story. In reality, any activity that's longer, more remote, and more physically and mentally challenging than the typical outing probably qualifies. As the chart on this page shows, high adventure is at the far end of a continuum that starts with Cub Scout day camp. While the dividing line may not be clear, you'll recognize high adventure when you see it—and so will your Scouts.

A 12-day trek at Philmont Scout Ranch is definitely high adventure. So is a week spent mountain biking, climbing, and shooting at the Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base (part of the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve). Florida Sea Base and the Northern Tier High Adventure Program offer an array of high-adventure experiences on, in, and under the water—as well as other activities, like Florida Sea Base's Out Island Adventure and Northern Tier's dogsled trips.

Scouting's Camping Program—Ever-Increasing Challenge Out-of-Doors

AGE-APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES FOR CAMPING	LIONS (With Adult Partner)	TIGERS (With Adult Partner)	WOLF/BEAR SCOUTS	WEBELOS SCOUTS	SCOUTS BSA	OLDER SCOUTS BSA, SEA SCOUTS, VENTURERS ("Older Scouts BSA" are age 13 and have completed eighth grade or 14 years old and up.)
National High Adventure						✔
Council High Adventure						✔
Wilderness and Backcountry						✔
Jamboree					12-year-olds	✔
Weekend Campouts					✔	✔
Camporees				Day Visit Only	✔	✔
Cold-Weather Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)				✔	✔
Den Overnights				✔		
Council-Organized Family Camp	✔	✔	✔	✔		
Day Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔		
Pack Overnighters	Council-Designated Locations Only					
Family Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)			✔	✔	✔
Resident Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Lock-ins (museums, sports facilities, etc.)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Sample High-Adventure Activities

Backpacking
Bicycle touring
Canoeing
Canopy tours
Caving
Horse packing
Kayaking
Living history
Mountain biking
Mountain climbing
Rappelling
Sailing
Scuba diving
Ski touring
Snow camping
Whitewater rafting
Wilderness survival

You don't have to travel to a national high-adventure base to enjoy high adventure, however. Many council summer camp programs include a high-adventure element for older Scouts. (In some cases, those Scouts stay in camp and participate in special daily activities like COPE courses; in other cases, they leave camp at the beginning of the week and don't return until it's nearly time to go home.) Many councils also operate their own high-adventure bases and programs that are separate from summer camp.

COPE stands for Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience. COPE courses use various activities on the ground and high overhead to foster personal growth and team development.

High adventure can also be a big part of your troop program, which is what this chapter is all about. Whether you plan annual trips to a national or council high-adventure base or incorporate high-adventure elements into monthly outings, you will find that high adventure can strengthen every element of your troop program.

Why High Adventure?

In *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods,* Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." The same rationale could apply to high adventure, which offers a host of benefits both to those who participate and to the troop as a whole. Why do high adventure? Here are a few reasons.

Challenge

Teenagers today seek ever greater challenges to their physical and mental abilities. Some try to outdo their friends at weightlifting. Some enjoy staying up all night at lock-ins or video game tournaments. Some relish eating the hottest hot sauce they can find. Some engage in risky behaviors that can permanently damage their minds and bodies.

High adventure offers a safe, wholesome alternative to riskier challenges and inspires young people to undertake worthy challenges. The exhilaration of being in the backcountry is hard to top. While some high-adventure activities (like rock climbing) can seem dangerous, they are remarkably safe when conducted in accordance with procedures like the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety. (For more information, see section 7 in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook.)*

Fitness

Fitness, one of the three aims of Scouting, is increasingly important in an era when childhood obesity is epidemic. High adventure promotes fitness by giving Scouts a meaningful reward for becoming more fit. For most young people, being able to climb a mountain is a better incentive for fitness than forestalling diabetes and heart disease, which they can't imagine ever developing. What's more, hiking and canoeing are far more interesting to most people than lifting weights and walking on treadmills.

To enjoy a backcountry trek, Scouts and leaders must be fit. Part of preparing for rugged outdoor experiences means undertaking a physical conditioning program to enhance aerobic capacity and tone muscles. Participants must also complete Part C of the Annual Health and Medical Record and see a doctor or other medical professional, which can further spur them to improve their fitness level.

High adventure also fosters improved mental fitness as Scouts face and overcome challenges of terrain and weather. Most high-adventure participants—Scout and adult alike—return home with an added measure of mental toughness.

Leadership and Teamwork

A high-adventure trip is a great opportunity for Scouts to practice leadership and teamwork. In most cases, crews are patrol-sized and have limited contact with other groups in the backcountry. They must rely on themselves more than in other Scouting environments.

Moreover, the process of forming a crew (perhaps including Scouts from different patrols or troops) and preparing for a trip is a good exercise in team-building. In fact, there are few better places to observe the stages of team development than on a high-adventure trip. A group that initially takes two hours and much grumbling to wake up, break camp, and hit the trail will soon be doing the same tasks in 30 or 45 minutes with ease.

Planning

Scouts must plan for every outing, of course, but poor planning has relatively minor consequences on short outings where Scouts can find extra gear in the troop trailer. Those things can't happen when you're a four-hour hike away from the trailhead.

The consequences of poor planning are more serious in high-adventure settings. If you ruin your dinner on an overnight campout, you'll be hungry until morning. If you ruin your dinner on a backpacking trip, you may not have the energy to get through the next day's hike.

Program Focus

Troops that don't have ambitious outdoor programs often struggle to come up with meaningful activities for troop meetings. After all, you can practice knot-tying and first aid only so many times before Scouts get bored.

Boredom at troop meetings shouldn't be a problem when you're preparing for a high-adventure outing—especially if it involves an activity you've never done before. Just consider these topics related to backpacking: hydration, using camp stoves, lightweight gear, packing a backpack, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, map reading, bear precautions, physical conditioning, hiking techniques, first aid for blisters, and weather awareness. All could be incorporated into troop meeting plans.

Long-term Goals

At some point during the middle-school years, many Scouts hit a rough patch when they're ready to give up on Scouting—call it the three-year itch. Peer pressure, increased homework loads, and boring programs can all contribute to this problem. One way to solve it is to help Scouts set long-term goals that can pull them through short-term difficulties.

Earning the Eagle Scout Award is a great long-term goal that many Scouts set. High adventure can be another. When a Scout signs up for a high-adventure trip that will occur a year or even two years from now, that Scout has an incentive to stick around longer. The Scout now has the trip to look forward to and is participating in increasingly challenging shakedown trips in the intervening months. High adventure can also be an appropriate long-term goal for those who earn the Eagle Scout Award at a young age and are looking for their next challenge.

Strengthening the Troop

High-adventure trips can also strengthen the troop as a whole. The crew gear you purchase for the trip can be used on future outings. The leadership skills Scouts learn in the backcountry will come home with them. The sense of anticipation for upcoming adventures will filter down to those Scouts who aren't old enough for the current trip but will be ready when the next trip comes around.

High Adventure in the Troop Setting

For all the advantages high adventure offers, there are potential drawbacks. Given cost, age limits, time constraints, and restrictions on group size, many, perhaps most, troop members won't be able to participate in major outings. Balancing the needs of the many with the interests of the few is important. Here are a few suggestions:

- Set the annual troop calendar first and then fill in high-adventure dates.
- When possible, have outings serve double duty. For example, a weekend float trip could double as a shakedown for a Northern Tier trip.
- Hold participant and parent meetings before or after troop meetings, not during them.
- Create an older-Scout patrol that focuses on high adventure. When high-adventure trips are patrol outings, you can use patrol-meeting time to work on skills and planning.
- Name an assistant Scoutmaster for high adventure, someone who doesn't have other key responsibilities.
- Make each high-adventure trip financially self-sustaining. Participants pay just what the trip costs and receive refunds if you come in under budget.
- Ensure that trip-specific money-earning projects don't conflict with those that support the general troop budget. That could mean doing different types of projects or scheduling them at different times of the year.

High-Adventure Fundraising

Fundraising for high adventure can be a challenge, especially if the troop has other money-earning projects going. One option is to find a fundraiser that complements what the troop is already doing; for example, if the troop sells mulch, high-adventure participants could offer to spread it for an additional fee. When most participants are old enough to have part-time jobs, it may be more effective to let them pay their own way rather than plan additional fundraisers.

Participant Qualifications

Every participant—youth and adult—must be in good health as verified by a current (within one year) physical examination, signed by a licensed medical practitioner. In addition, every Scout who desires to participate must have sufficient emotional and mental maturity to withstand the stresses and pressures of an extended high-adventure experience. A basic level of skill in the chosen activity is also essential for a safe, enjoyable trip. Parents and Scout leaders should determine who is ready for a high-adventure experience based on those qualifications.

Given sufficient time, consider planning a discovery experience as a troop outing before Scouts sign up for the high-adventure trip. This will let them try out the activity—backpacking, canoeing, etc.—before they commit to participate.

A youth or adult leader who desires to participate but who is not emotionally, mentally, or physically ready for a high-adventure trip must be so informed. In the case of an unqualified youth, decide whether to counsel the youth directly or to inform the parents and let them speak with their child. Telling a Scout that they are not qualified for an adventure can be an extremely difficult task. However, it is far better to take such action than to have the Scout face a challenge in which failure could result in significant harm to the Scout or other participants. It is in the youth's best interest to wait a year or two in order to benefit fully from the experience.

When coaching a Scout, make sure it is understood that there will be an opportunity for a future high-adventure experience. Young people are more motivated when they are given encouragement and can work toward a specific objective.

Being emotionally, mentally, and physically capable is just the beginning. Participants must also commit to the trip's payment schedule, training program, and equipment requirements.

Suggested Program of Conditioning and Training

Before your first high-adventure trip (or your first time doing a new type of activity), you'll want to plan a series of shakedown activities leading up to it. If your focus is backpacking, for example, you might do a few day hikes, then an overnight trip where you practice backpacking techniques, then a three- or four-day trek in the most rugged terrain you can find using the actual gear you'll take on your adventure. If you'll be going canoeing, you might start with a paddling clinic at a local lake and gradually build up to a long weekend on a nearby river.

Shakedown activities are great for developing your crew and practicing outdoor skills. They aren't so great for physical conditioning, however, simply because you can't schedule enough of them to make a difference. High-adventure participants should commit to their own schedules of physical development.

Here's a suggested schedule for a summer trip.

Month	Activity
January	Complete health history on individual medical forms and get parent's approval (signature). Be examined by a physician or osteopath. Call the medical professional's attention to the rigors of a high-adventure trip, which are outlined on the Annual Health and Medical Record. Discuss any special medical needs or areas of concern. If overweight, get physician's recommendation for how to lose weight through dieting and exercise.
February	Walk, jog in place, swim, or pedal an exercise bike indoors for 20 minutes or more at least three to five times a week. Gradually increase the length and the intensity of exercises.
March	When weather permits, jog, run, or walk outdoors. If you will be paddling or climbing, do some weight lifting. Start with 20-minute sessions and gradually increase the length and the intensity.
April	Continue exercising. Schedule a couple of 5- to 10-mile day hikes. Carry a full backpack on the second hike. Or paddle a canoe or raft and do a portage on the second trip.
May	Continue exercising. Schedule at least two overnight backpacking treks of 10 to 20 miles or two canoeing trips of 20 to 40 miles. Plan the second trek to cover more rugged terrain or increase the mileage. Depending on the high-adventure program selected, consider meeting the requirements for the appropriate merit badge. The Backpacking merit badge, for example, requires three three-day backpacking treks of at least 15 miles each, and one five-day trek covering at least 30 miles.
June–July	Continue exercising until the day you depart for your high adventure. Come to the trek in top physical and mental condition, ready for vigorous physical activity.

Be clear from the outset about what gear participants need to purchase. Families should know up front if they'll need to buy boots, backpacks, tents, or other gear that's not included in the cost of the trip. Those expenses could easily double the amount families need to spend. You also don't want families to buy gear that is unneeded or unsuitable for the activity in question.

Staying current with payments is especially important when you will be attending a national or council high-adventure base (or using a commercial outfitter) and must make deposits months ahead of the trip. With any trip, regular payments also show that Scouts are still committed to the trip. (Someone who falls behind—and is not experiencing financial difficulties—may well drop out of the trip unexpectedly.)

Participation in first-aid training, shakedown trips, and pre-trip meetings is also critical. Given the busy lives many Scouts lead, you may not be able to expect 100-percent participation, but you should set a minimum standard.

High-adventure trips require the written approval of a parent or guardian for each crew member. Many troops go a step further by having participants and their parents sign a covenant agreeing to abide by the payment plan, training schedule, and equipment requirements.

Who Gets to Go?

If you anticipate that a trip will be overbooked, decide at the outset who gets priority. Does a deposit check guarantee a slot? Do Life Scouts get in ahead of Star Scouts? Does active participation in the troop or service as a youth leader make a difference?

Whatever you decide, announce the criteria before signups begin. And keep a waiting list in case someone has to drop out along the way.

Planning Group Adventures

Most adventures are more fun when friends travel together, and they are safer, too. At the minimum, be sure to have at least four people in your crew, including two adults, so that if one person is injured, a companion can stay with the victim while two others go for help.

On the other hand, you won't want a group that is too large. A crew of five to eight people can travel lightly and quickly.

You won't require large campsites, you'll see more wildlife, and you'll find it easier to camp without leaving a trace. Crew size must be within the limit specified by land management officials. Find out what restrictions apply and plan accordingly. Under no circumstances should your crew have more than 12 members.

What Are the Crew's Capabilities?

Before planning a high-adventure trip or any outdoor adventure, it is crucial to consider the capabilities of the crew. Ask these questions:

- Who will go on the trip?
- What are the ages of the crew members?
- What are the medical restrictions of those who want to go on the trip?
- How much camping experience does the crew have?
- How much experience does the crew have in the activities anticipated on the trip?
- Do the crew members cooperate with one another, and does everyone pitch in to help with crew tasks?
- Does each person accept responsibility to help other members of the crew who may have difficulty?
- Does the crew accept the crew leader's leadership?
- Does the crew leader discuss options with the crew before making decisions?
- Does the crew leader consistently use good judgment in making decisions?
- How well does the crew deal with tough problems?
- Is everyone committed to the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles?
- Is everyone committed to safety?

The answers to these questions will make a significant difference in how ambitious a trip the crew is prepared to undertake. Matching the high-adventure experience to the capabilities of the crew is the most important initial step in planning a trip. It can make the difference between a successful, enjoyable experience and a disastrous misadventure.

Matching the Adventure to the Group

There are two ways to match a group with an outing. Older Scouts can decide on the adventure and then find companions who have the necessary abilities and interests. Or, they can decide with whom they would like to share an adventure and then tailor activities to fit the strengths and weaknesses of everyone involved.

Each member of the crew will have certain strengths that will help make the trip successful. Also consider limitations when selecting an adventure just right for the group. Take into account the following important qualities.

Experience and knowledge. The amount of experience a person has is often, but not always, an indicator of how well that person will do on a trip. Crew members should have a mastery of the skills of any activity planned. It's also valuable for them to have related experience such as first-aid training, backcountry navigational expertise, swimming and lifesaving abilities, and an understanding of weather, wildlife, and botany. Still, abundant experience does not necessarily create abundant wisdom. People in the habit of using poor camping practices are not better campers if they repeat the same mistakes many times. Experience must be tempered with good judgment, a concern for the environment and the members of the group, and a willingness to learn from anyone who can teach better outdoor skills and ethics.

Leadership. Every group that ventures into the backcountry should have a youth leader and an alternate, along with adults backing them up. The leader is responsible for monitoring the needs and desires of the group and for making decisions to ensure safety and enjoyment. A good outdoor leader learns the abilities and limitations of each individual in the group and delegates tasks accordingly.

Maturity. The more mature the members of the crew, the more demanding the adventures they can enjoy. Mature backcountry travelers can take care of themselves in the backcountry and help others when the need arises. They use good judgment and, rather than waiting for someone to tell them what to do, keep their eyes open and pitch in wherever they can to make an outing run smoothly.

Attitude. When difficulties arise while a group is away from home, the attitudes of crew members will determine the success of an adventure. Anger and withdrawal can spoil a trip, but even the worst weather and the silliest mistakes can be overcome if the group takes adversity in stride and endures. Cheerfulness is infectious. Keep spirits high; trips with the most miserable conditions may create the fondest memories.

Interests. Each member of the crew will have definite likes and dislikes. One member might love kayaking but dislike mountain climbing. Another might enjoy camp stew and hate freeze-dried chili. Still another might like to spend time alone while another person might thrive on the company of others. As the group discusses what it would like to do on an adventure, each person probably will make personal interests known. All will want to do the things they like best. Are crew members willing to try something new? Does a crew member have a skill to teach the rest of the group once in the field? Can several different interests be satisfied with one trip, or should the group focus on a single activity on this trip and do something different next time?

Physical capabilities. Different adventures require different degrees of exertion. Therefore, be certain the activities you are considering are not beyond the physical capabilities of your group. An exhausted hiker is not only miserable but also more likely to become injured, lost, or ill. A clue to the fitness of your crew is the amount of exercise they get during a typical week. If they regularly engage in sports, walk a lot, bicycle, or go camping on weekends, they probably are in good shape.

Planning the Duration of a Trip

Determine how much time you have for a trip. A preparatory trip could be an afternoon excursion or a weekend campout, while the high adventure itself could be a wilderness trip lasting several weeks. Include in your plans sufficient time to travel to and from the points where your adventure will begin and end. If necessary, also include time to acclimate to significant changes in elevation.

To get maximum participation, the time frame for the trip should fit the schedule of a majority of the crew members. Available time is a factor—along with the physical condition of

your crew and the amount of energy you wish to expend—that helps determine the shape of an adventure. Plan your trip so you will arrive refreshed.

How Far Do You Want to Travel?

The distance a crew can cover while backpacking depends on the terrain, the crew members' physical condition, the nature of your gear, and your reasons for taking a trip.

Is the country rugged? A mile of flat trail is far different from a mile that gains a thousand feet in elevation. Are crew members fit and strong, or a little out of shape? As a group, do you walk with a fast, steady stride, or at a leisurely pace with frequent pauses to study flowers, watch wildlife, and take photographs? In planning a trip, estimate the amount of time required to travel from place to place. As a general rule, an average hiker can walk about 2 miles every hour in level country. Backpacking with a heavy pack over rugged terrain will take an hour per mile, if conditions are good. To that, add one hour for each thousand-foot climb. For each thousand feet of elevation loss, add a half-hour. Estimate time generously to allow for unexpected problems.

Novice backpackers often don't realize that they'll travel half as fast with heavy packs in rugged terrain as they do on simpler day hikes. Before your Scouts commit to back-to-back 10-mile days, be sure they calculate how long that will take.

Be conservative when planning the distances of your first trips. With a group of backpackers, it is important to establish a moderate pace. It is better to have too much time to reach a destination than too little. By not rushing, you'll enjoy yourself a great deal more, be less apt to make mistakes, and have time for other activities such as taking photos, observing nature, and discussing plans for the next day.

Distances for float trips, meanwhile, will vary greatly based on current, water conditions, and the number of portages you'll need to make. A good rule of thumb from Northern Tier is that the average crew will travel approximately 2 to 3 miles per hour, including portages. Easy days at Northern Tier encompass 8 to 12 miles, while difficult days exceed 20 miles.

For road cycling trips, a good starting point is to assume a speed of 8 to 10 miles per hour including stops. (To earn the Cycling merit badge, a Scout must be able to ride 50 miles in 8 hours, which equates to 6.25 miles per hour, on a road bike; or 22 miles in 6 hours, which equates to 3.8 miles per hour, on a mountain bike.) Of course, terrain will be a major factor, as will physical conditioning and whether Scouts have decent road bikes.

Trip Pacing

Before you leave home, decide how strenuous a trip will be so that once you're underway, no one will be caught by surprise. Some crew members may want to travel long and hard, while others would rather spend time studying the surroundings and photographing wildlife, or making camp early so they can fix gourmet backcountry meals. Take the desires of everyone into consideration and see if you can work out compromises. Perhaps you will plan to hike hard one day and take it easy the next, or plan a leisurely preliminary outing followed by a more ambitious trip.

Any trip ought to begin gradually and, if desired, increase in difficulty after the first few days. This allows crew members to get accustomed to carrying a pack, riding a bike, paddling a canoe, etc. It also allows the crew to get organized for performing tasks more efficiently, such as pitching and breaking camp, preparing meals, and packing packs.

Preparing for a trip in the forests of the East, the plains of the Midwest, or the rolling terrain of the South can be relatively simple. Trekking at high elevations in the West, however, is quite different. Additional preparation often is needed to acclimate to areas where the air is thin. The first several days of trekking at high elevation need to be tailored to allow crew members' bodies to adjust gradually to the change. (Even arriving in the area early and enjoying a day of sightseeing helps with acclimatization.) When trekking at high elevations, it is wise to plan to ascend no more than a thousand feet per day to avoid acute mountain sickness, which usually necessitates getting a crew member to a lower elevation to alleviate the symptoms.

Even the best-prepared crew should plan some leeway into a trip for unforeseen events. Give yourselves anywhere from a few hours' to several days' leeway in case the weather is bad or the terrain is more rugged than expected. A layover during a trip allows crew members to do laundry, rest and relax, take a side trip or hike to a nearby point of interest, or prepare a lavish meal. Layover days boost the spirits of everyone in the crew and allow flexibility in the overall itinerary. If inclement weather or a minor accident precludes trekking on a particular day, a layover day permits the crew to get back on its original schedule. For long trips, it may be wise to include several layover days in the itinerary. The group might elect to spend three days, for instance, in one location where good fishing or numerous opportunities for side hikes exist.

Planning Where to Go

Once you have considered the capabilities and interests of the crew and how long the crew wants to spend on the trip, the next step is to make decisions: where to go and when. A majority-rules vote is a good way to arrive at decisions.

Where does the group want to go? The possibilities are endless. In addition to the BSA's four national high-adventure bases and council bases found in every corner of the country, consider the alternatives: National parks, national forests, Bureau of Land Management areas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges, state recreation areas, or privately administered lands are just a few. If your trip will be on public land, contact the land-managing agency well in advance to inquire about reservations, group-size limits, and permit requirements.

Your costs may be higher if you go to a high-adventure base (or use a commercial outfitter) than if you strike out on your own in a national park. However, you will also enjoy more support and will need to supply less crew gear.

When using commercial outfitters, keep in mind that the policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* still apply.

Crew Size

Experience has proved that the best size for a high-adventure crew is four to 12 persons, including adult advisors. A crew of five to eight is ideal. Some public land agencies may require fewer than 12 participants per crew. Their regulations must be met. When planning a trip, ask the administering agency or landowner for the applicable regulations.

If you have a larger group, organize two or more crews according to level of skill. Each crew can choose an itinerary that corresponds to its ability, and travel at its own pace. With careful planning, the crews could rendezvous at the midpoint of the trip to share stories.

Crew Leader

Each crew should elect a Scout as crew leader several months before the trip. The crew leader is a key person in a successful expedition, and the adult advisor must support the leader. The crew leader is responsible for organizing the crew, assigning duties, making decisions, and recognizing the capabilities and limitations of each member. The crew leader leads by example and discusses ideas and alternatives with the entire crew to hear everyone's opinion and arrive at a consensus before taking action. This responsibility requires someone with leadership ability who is respected by everyone.

The crew leader provides leadership in the following areas:

- Planning the itinerary based upon the desires of the crew
- Choosing routes during the trip based upon the capabilities of the crew
- Securing regulations from the administering agency or landowner, and getting a use permit if required
- Setting up and breaking camp
- Establishing a duty roster
- Seeing that all crew and personal equipment and supplies are properly stored and that proper precautions are followed to avoid encounters with bears and other wildlife
- Making sure the BSA Wilderness Use Policy (described on page 72) is upheld and that all crew members observe Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles at all times

A crew leader who is busy with school and extracurricular activities may need to delegate some responsibilities. Each crew member could take the lead on planning a shakedown event, for example, and you could name a crew quartermaster for gear and a crew scribe for recordkeeping. Also, keep in mind that the crew leader's pre-trip work will be less intense if you are working with an outfitter or a high-adventure base.

Adult Advisor

The role of the adult advisor is to counsel and advise the crew leader and crew. If necessary, the advisor should be prepared to discipline, without verbal or physical abuse, a crew member. Insofar as it is possible, the advisor lets the crew leader lead the crew. The more capable the crew leader, the more the advisor should remain in the background, giving support only when needed.

The advisor should

- Arrange transportation, overnight stops, and meals en route to and from the high-adventure activity (or advise older Scouts as they make these arrangements)
- Assist Scouts in earning their way through fundraising efforts
- Help ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in the crew
- Address crew conflicts that may require discipline
- Serve as a counselor and coach, and give appropriate guidance to the crew leader and crew members

A highly effective crew leader will rely on the adult advisor for little more than car keys and credit cards.

First-Aid and CPR Training

Evacuating an injured crew member from a remote backcountry location or getting medical professionals into a remote area may take several hours. Training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is essential to allow proper and prompt attention to injuries or illnesses. In every crew, at least two people, and preferably three or more—either adults or youths—should be currently trained in Wilderness First Aid–Basic (or equivalent) and CPR, having completed a minimum eight-hour course from any recognized community agency, such as the American Red Cross or National Safety Council. It's a good idea to train the entire crew as part of planning and preparation. Equivalent training in wilderness first aid and CPR can be obtained from the following nationally recognized organizations:

- American Red Cross: **www.redcross.org**
- Emergency Care and Safety Institute: **www.ECSInstitute.org**
- Health and Safety Institute: **www.hsi.com**
- National Outdoor Leadership School: **www.nols.edu**
- National Safety Council: **www.nsc.org**
- Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities: **www.soloschools.com**
- Wilderness Medical Associates: **www.wildmed.com**
- Wilderness Medical Society: **www.wms.org**
- Wilderness Medicine Training Center: **www.wildmedcenter.com**
- Wilderness Safety Council: **www.wfa.net**

Planning an Award-Winning Trip

The Boy Scouts of America through local councils makes available two interesting and valuable awards: the Historic Trails Award and the 50-Miler Award.

The Historic Trails Award may be earned by members of a troop or Venturing crew for hiking a trail on the Nationally Approved Historic Trails list and completing a project related to the trail.

The 50-Miler Award is a recognition given to members in a troop or Venturing crew who take a backcountry trip of no less than 50 consecutive miles (on foot or by boat, canoe, or bicycle) in at least five consecutive days and fulfill requirements for group service projects on the trail.

See where you can find applications for these awards in the appendix.

Itinerary Planning

An itinerary is a blueprint of your trip. Once you have the plan on paper, you'll discover that it's easy to see what meals you'll need to prepare and what equipment you'll want to take. You won't be likely to forget essential details like arranging transportation to and from the area. The more extensive the trip being proposed, the more thorough your itinerary planning should be. Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mount Everest, once said, "Good planning means living the experience in advance."

Being able to anticipate trails and trail conditions, changes in elevation, the expected range of temperatures, the availability of water, and the availability of campsites will help your crew plan an itinerary that is appropriate for the circumstances you expect to encounter.

For any trip, it is crucial to match the itinerary to the capabilities of the crew. The trip should be sufficiently challenging for the older, more experienced Scouts in the crew, yet not so difficult that anyone in the crew faces a situation where success is uncertain or where the challenge exceeds the participant's skill. In a crew with members of varying skill levels, the trip must accommodate the least skillful individual and offer more difficult experiences to those who have the ability. For instance, at a Class III or IV rapids, half the crew might portage while the remaining crew scouts the rapids and then applies its knowledge and skills in running it.

"Challenge by choice" is a good watchword for activities like shooting rapids, climbing a rock face, or participating in a COPE course. Foster an environment where every participant—youth and adult—can feel comfortable in saying "no."

The crew's objective should be for everyone to meet the challenge and ensure that each crew member is committed to that goal. This may mean shouldering part of the load for another crew member who may be having difficulty for whatever reason. The crew succeeds when every member is successful.

Also crucial to the planning of any backcountry itinerary is the amount of food and equipment that must be carried. The more food and gear that must be taken, the more often you'll need to be resupplied. Most groups find that taking four or five days of food is the maximum weight they can carry and the maximum bulk that will fit in packs or in panniers carried on bicycle or horse treks.

If specialized climbing gear, cold-weather clothing, or other extra gear is required, the crew will likely need to be resupplied even more often.

An alternate plan should be devised for every itinerary in case plans are disrupted by unforeseen events. When the entire group is involved in this process, unpleasant surprises are reduced by considering what might cause a change in plans and then developing an alternate itinerary.

Trip Plan

When your crew arrives at a consensus of what your itinerary and alternate plans will be, write them down. Include a full description of your intended route, where you plan to camp, and what time you will return.

A trip plan lets people know where you're going and when you intend to be back. Be sure everyone understands your itinerary, and then stick to it. Good organization requires that everyone concerned with the group have accurate information on the whereabouts of the group at all times. Give copies of the trip plan and alternate plans to parents, the troop committee, the local council service center, and any park officials, forest rangers, or law enforcement agencies whose jurisdictions include the areas in which you'll be traveling.

Also give each member of the party a copy of the trip plan, a list of license plate numbers of the party's vehicles, and telephone numbers and addresses of scheduled stops. Make sure each person understands what to do if separated from the group. This is vitally important and should include such instructions as:

- Contact the group by phone at the next scheduled stop and stay at the point of departure.
- Contact a designated person in your home community.
- Look in the telephone book or online to see whether there is a BSA local council in the vicinity; call the local Scout executive for help.
- Call the police or sheriff's office for help in locating your group.
- Notify the Scout executive of your local council by telephone.

Where Will You Get Help?

Although your travels may take you far from roads, a large network of people remains ready to assist you during an emergency if you can alert them to your needs. As you plan a trip, take time to identify and learn how to contact search-and-rescue teams and medical personnel. Use the internet to research information, and think through a course of action you would take to get help. Determine the following:

- The location of the nearest medical facility in the area of your trip
- How to evacuate an injured crew member who is unable to walk
- How to contact the nearest public land management agency in case of emergency
- Where to deliver an emergency message while you are on the trip if someone in your crew becomes seriously injured
- Who the home contact person is in case an emergency occurs
- Who will pay for the cost of an evacuation if one is necessary

The nearest community of any size will probably have a medical facility, but telephone the chamber of commerce or other community service agency as part of the trek planning to be sure.

Operate within your training and abilities. If your crew does not have the knowledge or experience to carry an injured person out of a remote backcountry area on a litter, you probably will want the administering agency, a search-and-rescue group, or an emergency medical technician unit to handle such a rescue. They have professionally trained members who have experience and know how to manage such an operation effectively. Before your trip, find out how to contact them. Public land management agencies must be contacted to get approval for an evacuation requiring the use of motorized vehicles.

Emergency Communications

For every location on your trip, you'll need to know the location of the nearest telephone or two-way radio, so that if you have an emergency, you will know where messages can be delivered. Check to be sure that communications are available 24 hours a day. You might want to carry a mobile phone. Be aware, however, that coverage in remote areas may be lacking or spotty, or you may need to climb to the crest of a ridge or to the summit of a mountain to make contact.

In extremely remote areas, satellite phones are a viable, although expensive, alternative to mobile phones. Some backcountry users also carry personal locator beacons (PLBs), which allow rescue personal to home in on their location after a distress signal is sent. PLBs with GPS integration can be accurate to within 100 meters, or about the length of a football field.

Leaders must be prepared to deal with emergencies that may develop at home, requiring the immediate return of a member, as well as emergencies on the road requiring treatment and hospitalization or the return home of a member. Keep parents informed and, in emergencies, use the telephone according to prearranged plans.

If an emergency involves the entire group, it probably will be impossible for you to inform all of the parents, as well as the local council service center. An emergency contact person from your troop committee or one individual parent should be designated. You can send a message to that person and let him or her inform the others. Be sure to designate alternates in case the first person cannot be reached. As discussed earlier, you should plan a day-by-day itinerary that shows where the crew will be staying each night and gives a telephone number if a phone is available. Distribute this itinerary to all parents. Leave the emergency contact person a highway map and backcountry map showing your intended route. Also give that individual the name and phone number of the contact person at the land-managing agency. Let your emergency contact know the time of your departure and your expected time of return. If you must deviate from your planned itinerary, inform your emergency contact, if possible, so parents can be notified.

If you are late in returning, people will assume you have encountered difficulties. If you don't return at your appointed time, the emergency contact person should activate a preplanned emergency response. Therefore, if you are delayed for a nonemergency reason, make every effort to notify your emergency contact so that an emergency response is not activated. And when you return, be sure to notify everyone with whom you have left a trip plan so they know you're back and don't report you missing or worry unnecessarily.

Emergency Action Plan

Perhaps the most critical test of your preparedness will be in time of emergency. Having developed and rehearsed an emergency action plan will be invaluable if a crisis arises. This is true on a day hike, an overnight or longer troop campout, and all other activities including high-adventure trips.

A plan should include the following:

- The person in charge
- Action to be taken
- Alternatives
- People and agencies to notify
- Location of nearest telephone or other means of communication throughout your trip
- Location of law enforcement
- Names and locations of fire and health facilities
- Evacuation procedures

Prepare an emergency phone number list, like the one shown on the following page, for out-of-town trips. Keep the list with your first-aid kit.

Emergency Phone Number List

Location of trip or expedition: _____

Location of nearest town(s) or phone(s):

_____

Name and phone number of nearest doctor, hospital, or medical facility: _____

Name and phone number of nearest state or federal agency station: _____

Name and phone number of nearest county sheriff's department: _____

Phone number of _____ Highway Patrol:

_____

Phone number of BSA local council service center:

_____

Plan for the Unexpected

- Determine whom to notify first in case of an injury to a member of the party.
- Determine who will take charge in case of an injury to a leader.
- Maintain a well-stocked first-aid kit to be used by trained persons.
- Make provision for the care of an injured or sick member.
- Determine responsibility for hospital and doctor bills.
- Plan what to do in case of accidental separation of the party or individual members.
- Plan how to make up the schedule and meet appointments in case of breakdown or other delay.
- Leave a forwarding address for mail expected, but not received, en route.
- Make arrangements for cashing traveler's checks, bank drafts, or money orders to prevent loss or theft of money.

Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

All privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wildernesses are included in the term "wilderness areas" in this policy. The BSA's Outdoor Code and the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! apply to outdoor behavior generally, but for treks into wilderness areas, minimum-impact camping methods must be used. Within the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America, there are many different camping-skill levels. Camping practices that are appropriate for day outings, long-term Scout camp, or short-term troop camping might not apply to wilderness areas. Wherever they go, Scouts need to adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that respect the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors.

In wilderness areas, it is crucial to minimize human impact, particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mountains, lakes and streams, deserts, and seashores. Because our impact varies from one season of the year to the next, it becomes important for us to adjust to these changing conditions to avoid damaging the environment. The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes these practices for all troops and Venturing crews planning to use wilderness areas:

- Contact the landowner or land-managing agency (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and private agencies, etc.) well before an outing to learn the regulations for that area, including group-size limits, to obtain required permits and current maps, and to discuss ways Scouts can fulfill the expectations of property owners or land managers.
- Review the appropriate BSA safety literature relating to planned activities. (See Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely.) Also see the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *Fieldbook*.
- Match the ruggedness of high-adventure experiences to the skills, physical ability, and maturity of those taking part. Save rugged trips for older troop members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.
- Conduct pre-trip training for your group that stresses proper wilderness behavior, rules, and skills for all of the conditions that may be encountered, including lightning, missing person, wildfire, high winds, flooding, and emergency medical situations.
- Participate in training in how to apply the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, and be proficient and experienced in the leadership and skills required for trips into wilderness areas.
- Adhere to the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles.

Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to—

- **Be clean in my outdoor manners.** I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.
- **Be careful with fire.** I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only when and where they are appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out. I will leave a clean fire ring or remove all evidence of my fire.
- **Be considerate in the outdoors.** I will treat public and private property with respect. I will follow the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! for all outdoor activities.
- **Be conservation-minded.** I will learn about and practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy. I will urge others to do the same.

CHAPTER 12
Going Beyond Camping

Many people outside the BSA—and even some within the organization—think Scouting is all about camping. While it's true that camping and other outdoor pursuits are central to the Scouting program, they are only means to an end, the setting in which we seek to achieve our aims. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, our method of training is "to offer games and activities which, while being attractive to the boy, will seriously educate him morally, mentally, and physically." That's why the BSA's mission and vision statements—as well as the Scout Oath and Scout Law—don't say anything about the outdoors.

At the same time, Scouting does teach practical skills that Scouts can carry into adulthood. Countless Scouts have put their first-aid and survival training to good use or have found careers and lifelong hobbies through the merit badge program. Adults who've won Academy Awards, Olympic medals, and Pulitzer and Nobel prizes have all credited Scouting with starting them on the road to success.

To ensure that today's Scouts can enjoy future success, the BSA has recently increased its emphasis on two areas of great concern in contemporary society: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and fitness training. The BSA's STEM initiative began in 2012, while the SCOUTStrong initiative began in 2011. In this chapter, we'll discuss how you can incorporate STEM and fitness activities into your troop program.

The BSA has also been pilot testing a standalone program, STEM Scouts® (www.stemscouts.org). This chapter focuses on using STEM in the context of traditional Scouting, not on STEM Scouts®.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

At first glance, STEM seems far removed from Scouting; white lab coats and pocket calculators don't appear on packing lists alongside ponchos and compasses. But STEM and Scouting are more closely related than you might think. Consider these examples:

- When you teach Scouts to identify native plants and animals, you're talking about science.
- When you explain why synthetic fabrics perform better than cotton, you're talking about technology.
- When you show Scouts how triangular structures strengthen pioneering projects, you're talking about engineering.
- When you help Scouts calculate their pace and measure distances in orienteering, you're talking about math.

Incorporating STEM into your program, then, can be as easy as finding STEM lessons in what you're already doing. And that's before you even start talking about the Nova and Supernova Awards, as well as the dozens of STEM-related merit badges.

The Importance of STEM

Many professionals in STEM fields believe the United States should do more to encourage students to enter these fields. It's our best opportunity as a country to boost the spirit of innovation, and it's what we need to do to help make sure America continues on a prosperous and secure path.

In recent years, a number of studies have shown U.S. students are growing increasingly weaker in STEM-related topics*. We can all work to reverse this trend.

- In 2009, just 34 percent of U.S. eighth-graders were rated proficient or higher in a national math assessment, and more than 25 percent scored below the basic level.
- In an international exam given in 2006, U.S. high school students ranked 21st out of 30 industrialized nations in science and 25th in math.
- In 2010, only 43 percent of U.S. high school graduates were ready for college work in math and only 29 percent were ready in science.

**** Sources: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; ACT Inc.; National Center for Education Statistics***

To remain competitive in the world economy, the United States must cultivate the next generation of critical thinkers and innovators. Experts say that our young people need STEM-related skills to compete in the world of tomorrow, where most jobs will require at least a basic understanding of math and science. Even today, factory workers, delivery drivers, auto mechanics, and other blue-collar workers use computers on the job every day.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics support a projection that STEM-related occupations will add nearly 1 million jobs between 2012 and 2022.

The Nova and Supernova Awards

To encourage and reward STEM learning, the BSA has created the Nova and Supernova Awards. These special awards are designed to enhance interest in STEM fields while making it fun for Scouts to learn about STEM. The goal is to entice Scouts to begin exploring STEM topics and to build on their interest with progressively more challenging activities. Here's an introduction to the two levels of awards.

While not part of the advancement program, the Nova and Supernova Awards promote advancement by requiring Scouts to earn merit badges along the way.

Nova Awards. The Nova Awards allow Scouts to discover some of the basic principles of STEM and to experience science, technology, engineering, and math in fun and interesting ways. These awards focus on encouraging future exploration in STEM fields. The goal is to build confidence and demonstrate that career opportunities in STEM fields are attainable, fulfilling, and interesting. As such, Nova activities are fairly basic and designed to spark interest in one or all of the categories of awards. They are straightforward to complete and offer a quick reward in the form of the Nova patch for the first award earned and a pi (π) pin to attach to the Nova patch for each additional award earned. Scouts may complete any Nova Award with a parent's or unit leader's guidance. Each Nova Award can be accomplished fairly easily in a few weeks.

As the STEM program expands, more Nova Awards will be offered. In fact, proposing such awards is a requirement for the Dr. Albert Einstein Supernova Award, the top STEM award for Venturers.

Supernova Awards. The Supernova Awards require a deeper level of understanding and effort. They challenge Scouts who have a greater interest in the STEM fields to experiment, understand the outcomes of these experiments, and present their findings to their Supernova mentor. The focus is to build on the basic STEM topics with activities that will result in greater learning and an increasing complexity in the Scouts' knowledge. Completing the requirements takes more work and includes some research. Most Supernova activities will take several weeks or months to complete.

In Scouting, the Supernova has two levels, and each Scout may earn both Supernova Awards. The Supernova Awards are the following:

- Dr. Bernard Harris Supernova Award (level 1)
- Thomas Edison Supernova Award (level 2)

Level 1 requires the Scout to have earned any three of the four Scouts BSA Nova Awards; level 2 requires completion of the fourth Scouts BSA Nova Award in addition to the Harris Supernova Award. The Supernova Awards are available to all Scouts who have achieved the rank of First Class. Completion of a Supernova Award earns the Scout the right to wear the Supernova Award medal.

For all Supernova Awards, a mentor, who serves much like a merit badge counselor, is required. Just like merit badge counselors, mentors must be registered with the BSA as an adult volunteer and be approved by the local council.

Complete award requirements, additional aids for Supernova counselors, and information on support for councils, districts, and units is available online at **www.scouting.org/stem-nova-awards/award**.

Nova and Supernova Award Comparison

Award	Description	Eligibility	Time to Complete	Approval	Recognition Item
Nova Awards Shoot! (science) Start Your Engines! (technology) Whoosh! (engineering) Designed to Crunch (math)	Introduces one STEM field per award	Any Scout aged 11–17	A few weeks	Parent or unit leader	Nova patch (first award); pi pin (each additional award)
Supernova Awards Dr. Bernard Harris Supernova Award (level 1) Thomas Edison Supernova Award (level 2)	Recognizes Scouts who earn Nova Awards, do Supernova activities, and complete certain other requirements; the level 1 award is a prerequisite for the level 2 award	Any Scout who has achieved First Class rank	Several weeks or months	Registered Supernova mentor	Medal

Age-appropriate Nova and Supernova Awards are also available for Cub Scouts and Venturers. They are structured like the Nova awards for Scouts, although they have different names and requirements.

Adult Roles: Nova Counselor and Supernova Mentor

The Nova Awards program is fairly uncomplicated and more along the lines of completing a merit badge or a special award like the BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding award. The BSA uses the term "counselor" for the adult age 21 or older working with Nova candidates. Parents and unit leaders may serve as Nova counselors even if they have little or no background in STEM—although of course they do need to understand the material well enough to help the youth with questions. Those who serve in this role must register as Nova counselors using position code 58 (even if they are already registered in another position). This is a non-unit position, and no fee is required.

Because the Supernova program is more complex, it requires a deeper and longer-term association between the adult and youth. The BSA designates the adult role as "mentor" to signify the relationship between adult and youth. A mentor is ideally someone who has successfully negotiated a STEM career path or has other subject matter expertise (such as hobbies or other special training), and is willing to share accumulated wisdom and experience. The adult will work closely with the youth for a number of weeks or months and will likely provide significant input and guidance. Supernova mentors must be 21 or older and be registered using position code 52; this is a non-unit position, and no fee is required. They must also complete the Supernova Awards Mentor Information form.

All Nova counselors and Supernova mentors must have current BSA Youth Protection training and certification appropriate for the program they're involved in (Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, or Venturing).

Extensive training and self-study information for mentors and counselors is available at **www.scouting.org/training/adult**.

Adult Role: Unit STEM Coordinator

To ensure that STEM plays a prominent role in your troop program, consider recruiting a unit STEM coordinator. This person works with the troop's youth and adult leadership to integrate STEM and Nova activities into the program. Here are some possibilities:

- Promote STEM at the annual planning conference.
- Offer ways to integrate Nova Award activities into the troop program.
- Identify resources from local organizations such as schools, museums, government agencies, professional societies, and business groups.
- Learn about and promote STEM activities offered in the district and council, either at camporees, summer camp, or special events.
- Learn about and promote STEM programs offered at the national level, such as STEM treks at the national high-adventure bases and STEM conferences for adult leaders at the Philmont Training Center and Florida Sea Base.

The unit STEM coordinator should be registered as a member of the unit committee and must be current in Youth Protection training. The coordinator need not be a STEM expert, although comfort with STEM material would be helpful.

The unit STEM coordinator position could be perfect for a parent who works in a STEM-related field and doesn't have the time or interest to serve the troop in a more traditional role.

The unit STEM coordinator's responsibilities can vary depending on troop needs, but they would typically involve the following:

- Be knowledgeable of the Nova Awards program.
- Promote the Nova Awards program at troop meetings to Scouts, parents, and leaders.
- Help Scouts with ideas of ways to earn the Nova and Supernova Awards.
- Work with leaders (youth and adult) to add fun STEM activities to meetings and outings.
- Be aware of STEM and Nova activities offered by local, regional, and national Scouting organizations.
- Be aware of STEM programs offered by local non-Scouting partner organizations.
- Connect Scouts with Nova counselors or Supernova mentors as needed (which may involve recruiting adults to serve in those roles).
- Identify counselors for STEM-related merit badges.
- Serve as the unit contact person for all things STEM related.

Adding STEM to Your Troop Program

Depending on your interest and resources, you can incorporate STEM into your program in small or large ways. Often, it's simply a matter of highlighting the STEM aspects of things you're already doing. Consider these examples:

- When Scouts are learning fire-building, you could talk about the chemistry of fire.
- When Scouts are learning to use GPS units, you could talk about satellite technology.
- When Scouts are learning to find evidence of native animals, you could talk about why certain animals are found in certain habitats.
- When Scouts are sitting around a campfire, you could pull out a star chart and help them identify constellations.

It's also easy to turn Scouting activities into scientific experiments or investigations. Here are three examples:

- On a day hike, Scouts could wear different types of socks on each foot to determine which fabric keeps their feet dryer. They could also use smartphone apps to calculate elevation gain, hiking speed, and caloric output.
- During a pioneering campout, Scouts could build water-balloon catapults and experiment with ways to achieve the maximum throw distance. They could also experiment with different tower designs to determine which is the strongest.

- When cooking, Scouts could experiment with ingredient amounts (such as the amount of baking powder in a biscuit recipe) or with cooking temperatures. They could also develop a Dutch-oven temperature chart showing how many charcoal briquettes are required for certain baking temperatures.

As mentioned earlier, many merit badges relate directly or indirectly to STEM. Incorporating these merit badges into your program—or simply inviting counselors to introduce the badges at troop meetings—is a great way to promote STEM learning. (Most Scouts would enjoy merit badges like Robotics or Signs, Signals, and Codes, but they won't necessarily go out of their way to find a counselor.)

The three volumes of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* also include numerous STEM topics. There are specific features on science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as related topics like sustainability.

Nova Awards in the Troop

The Nova Awards can easily be adapted for use in the troop setting. Depending on how much work Scouts do independently, a single award might take four to five weeks to cover if it's your program feature or 10 to 12 weeks if you offer half-hour Nova sessions before troop meetings.

Take the Shoot! Nova Award as an example. Here's a summary of the requirements:

1. Watch and discuss about three hours of science-related shows or documentaries that involve projectiles, aviation, weather, astronomy, or space technology (option A).
2. Complete one of these merit badges: Archery, Astronomy, Athletics, Aviation, Rifle Shooting, Robotics, Shotgun Shooting, Space Exploration, or Weather.
3. Use a projectile simulation applet on the internet and design and complete a hands-on experiment to demonstrate projectile motion (option A).
4. Discover the latitude and longitude of your current position; find and track a satellite (option B).
5. Design and build a catapult that will launch a marshmallow a distance of a least 4 feet (option A).
6. Discuss with your counselor how science affects your everyday life.

Assuming you make requirement 2 a prerequisite or offer a merit badge class before troop meetings, here's what a month's worth of activities might look like:

Meeting 1

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Work with online projectile simulators (requirement 3).

Meeting 2

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Conduct an experiment to demonstrate projectile motion (requirement 3).

Meeting 3

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Determine your latitude and longitude; find and track a satellite (requirement 4).

Meeting 4

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Build and experiment with marshmallow catapults (requirement 5).

Main Event—Visit to a Science Museum

- Watch a live 60-minute science show (requirement 1).
- Discuss the impact of science on everyday life (requirement 6).

Note that the science museum visit could just take up an afternoon during a campout. Or, you could stay all day and do other STEM-related activities there.

For more ideas on STEM and Scouting, visit www.scouting.org/stem-nova-awards/stem-faq.

Fitness

While STEM education is a relatively new focus for the BSA, fitness training has been around since the very beginning. In the Scout Oath, Scouts pledge to be physically strong and mentally awake, and most outdoor activities require some measure of fitness. Strenuous outdoor activities also encourage Scouts to become more fit. In fact, many Scouts (and not a few adult leaders) undertake their first serious fitness regimens when they begin training for a high-adventure trip.

How well your troop program promotes fitness depends in large part on what that program looks like. If your calendar includes backpacking, canoeing, rock-climbing, and other rugged activities, Scouts will have both incentives and opportunities to get fit. If the most strenuous thing Scouts do on outings is lug patrol boxes a few dozen yards from the parking lot to their campsite, they may end up being the outdoor equivalent of couch potatoes.

Fitness Awards

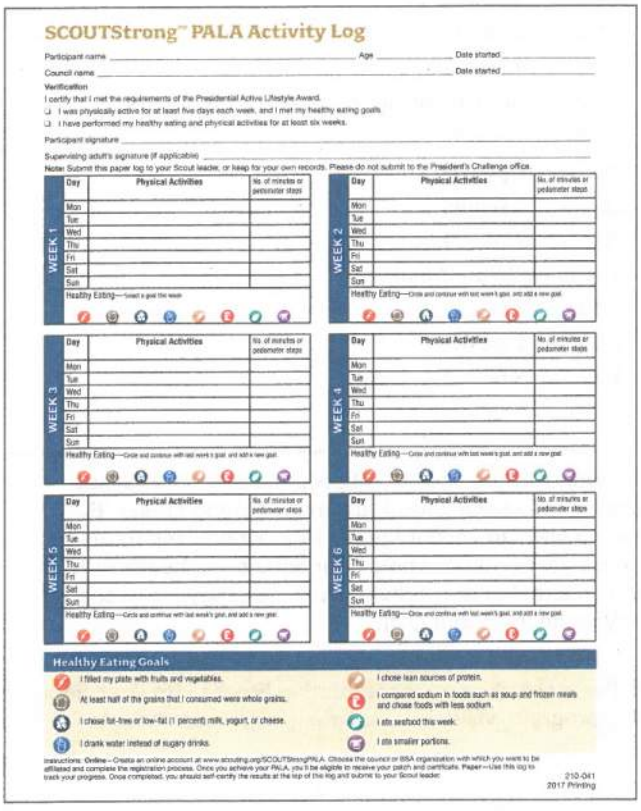
Fitness has always been built into the Scout advancement program. As of January 1, 2016, Scouts must complete these fitness requirements along the trail to Eagle Scout:

- For Tenderfoot, they must record their best results in four fitness tests, develop and follow a fitness plan, and show improvement after 30 days.
- For Second Class and First Class, they must be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day for five days a week for four weeks while at the previous rank. They must also set goals for including physical activity in their daily lives.
- For Eagle Scout, they must have earned the Personal Fitness merit badge, as well as the Swimming, Hiking, or Cycling merit badge.

Other requirements along the way address nutrition and the dangers of using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. And merit badges such as Athletics and Sports provide Scouts further opportunities to explore aspects of fitness.

The BSA has also developed two special awards that relate directly to fitness: the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award for individuals and the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award for packs and troops.

SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award. A Scouting-specific version of the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award, this award can be earned by Scouts, adult leaders, parents, friends of Scouting, and BSA alumni. To earn the award, participants must meet a daily activity goal of 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for kids under 18 for at least five days a week, for six out of eight weeks. These activities can range from walking and gardening to canoeing and water aerobics; the key is to engage major muscle groups at a moderate to vigorous activity level. Also, each week participants must focus on a healthy eating goal. There are eight to choose from, and each week participants add a new goal while continuing with their previous goals. Recognition items include the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge patch, No. 614207, and a downloadable certificate (**www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit**).



SCOUTStrong™ PALA Activity Log

Participant name _____ Age _____ Date started _____

Council name _____ Date started _____

Verification

I certify that I met the requirements of the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award.

- ☐ I was physically active for at least five days each week, and I met my healthy eating goals.
- ☐ I have performed my healthy eating and physical activities for at least six weeks.

Participant signature _____

Supervising adult's signature (if applicable) _____

Note: Submit this paper log to your Scout leader, or keep for your own records. Please do not submit to the President's Challenge office.

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 1		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Select a goal the week		

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 2		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 3		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 4		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 5		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 6		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		
Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Healthy Eating Goals

- I filled my plate with fruits and vegetables.
- At least half of the grains that I consumed were whole grains.
- I chose fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- I drank water instead of sugary drinks.
- I chose lean sources of protein.
- I compared sodium in foods such as soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium.
- I ate seafood this week.
- I ate smaller portions.

Instructions: Online—Create an online account at www.scouting.org/SCOUTStrong/PALA. Choose the council or BSA organization with which you want to be affiliated and complete the registration process. Once you achieve your PALA, you'll be eligible to receive your patch and certificate. Paper—Use this log to track your progress. Once completed, you should self-certify the results at the top of the log and submit to your Scout leader.

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SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award. This award is earned by the entire troop (or by a Cub Scout den or pack). It rewards the troop for following three healthy eating practices at meetings, events, and outings: snacking smart, drinking right, and moving more. To earn the award, your troop must serve fruits and vegetables when you have snacks (three meetings), make water the main beverage (six meetings), and include 15 minutes of fun physical activity (nine meetings). Recognition items include the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award patch, No. 620583, and a downloadable certificate (**www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit**).

Both the individual and unit awards rely on self-reporting, and how you implement them is up to you. With the unit award, for example, you might not want to count troop meetings toward the first two goals if you don't serve snacks.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends seeing a doctor before starting a program of vigorous exercise if you have a heart condition or high blood pressure; experience chest pain, dizziness, or loss of consciousness while exercising; or have bone or joint problems.

SCOUTStrong
FIT • FUEL • FUN

SCOUTStrong
Healthy Unit Award Tracker
SCOUTS

Track your progress toward becoming a SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit

Healthy Unit Activities	Record the Meeting / Event / Outing Dates:								
3 Serve fruit or vegetable at 3 meetings.	1	2	3						
6 Serve water as the primary beverage at 6 meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Extra activity: Sugar Detectives Find this activity at www.scouting.org/stronghealthyunit		
9 Do 15 minutes of physical activity at 9 meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Has your unit completed the 3-6-9 requirements? Congratulations, you are a SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit!

www.scouting.org/scoutstronghealthyunit

Healthy Eating Goals

The SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award promotes these healthy eating goals.

- I filled half my plate with fruits and vegetables.
- At least half of the grains I consumed were whole grains.
- I chose fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- I drank water instead of sugary drinks.
- I chose lean sources of protein.
- I compared sodium in foods such as soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium.
- I ate seafood this week.
- I paid attention to portion size.

Taking the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge as a Troop

While Scouts and leaders can earn the individual award at any time, they'll probably be more successful if the whole troop works on the award together. Consider this approach:

- Designate two months during the year to concentrate on the award (perhaps in the winter, when people are less likely to be physically active).
- Increase the amount of physical activity at meetings and outings to make earning the award easier.
- Select one healthy eating goal that the whole troop will work on each week.
- Be sure the healthy eating goals are considered during meal planning for outings.
- Have Scouts and leaders report their progress each week.
- Hold a drawing for fitness-related prizes at the end of eight weeks; everyone who met the challenge gets entered in the drawing. Or give out smaller prizes each week and a grand prize at the end.
- Distribute patches and certificates at your next court of honor, and list the names in your troop newsletter or other communications.

Patrols could also challenge each other to have 100 percent of their members meet the challenge.

Adding Fitness to Your Troop Program

As discussed above, the best way to incorporate fitness into your troop program is to plan activities that build and promote fitness. It makes little sense to emphasize fitness and nutrition one month and then go back to your regular program of sedentary camping and high-fat, high-calorie camp menus.

When your PLC is developing its annual program plan, challenge the Scouts to schedule outings that promote fitness, such as day hikes and canoe trips, or to incorporate physical activity into more sedentary outings (for example, a game of Capture the Flag during a weekend devoted to fishing). At monthly PLC meetings, challenge the Scouts to include active games in troop meetings and to plan nutritious menus. (The *Cooking* merit badge pamphlet includes plenty of recipes to get them started.)

At the same time, an occasional fitness-related theme can teach fitness concepts and motivate Scouts (and adults) to make lifestyle changes. The three volumes of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* include a Fitness and Nutrition feature, for example, and there are additional features on a number of sports and outdoor activities.

Here are some other ways to add fitness to your troop program:

- Develop troop-specific awards to complement the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge and SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit awards. For example, you could create a 100 Mile Club for Scouts and adults who have hiked 100 miles.
- Sign up as a troop for a local 10K run, bike tour, or other fitness event.
- Encourage Scouts to come to troop meetings early to play pickup basketball, ultimate, or another active game that players can easily join in progress.
- Devote the troop meeting after each outing to fitness-related activities.
- Create a troop fitness challenge, building on the exercises required for Tenderfoot. See the box on this page.

Troop Fitness Challenge

Have each Scout complete the Tenderfoot fitness tests, and assign points as shown here. Average the results to get a troop score (or separate patrol scores). Repeat every six months, and look for improvement.

It's not a good idea to compare individual Scouts' results because those results will vary greatly, in part because of age differences. (For example, a 17-year-old in the 50th percentile should be able to run a mile in 7:25, while an 11-year-old in the 50th percentile should take 9:06—a difference of more than a minute and a half.) Moreover, comparing the results of an athlete with an average Scout will discourage the average Scout without challenging the athlete to improve their performance.

Push-ups (number in 30 seconds)

1–29	1 point
30–39	2 points
40–49	3 points
50+	4 points

Sit-ups or curl-ups (number in 60 seconds)

1–29	1 point
30–39	2 points
40–49	3 points
50+	4 points

Modified stretch and sit (number in 60 seconds)

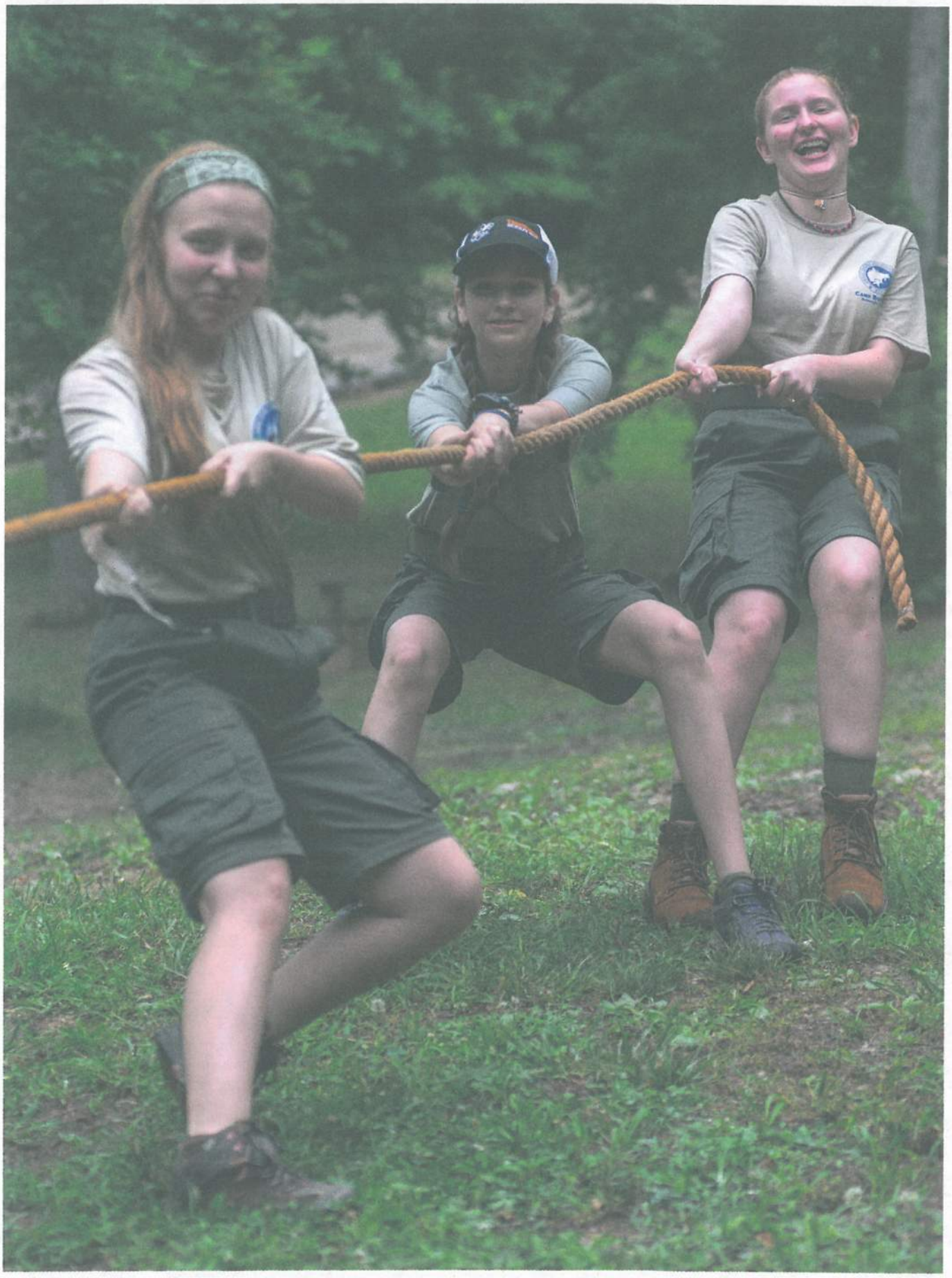
1–19	1 point
20–24	2 points
25–29	3 points
30+	4 points

1-mile walk/run (time)

8:30+	1 point
8:00+	2 points
7:30+	3 points
7:00+	4 points

In a world where obesity is becoming epidemic, Scout leaders can play a critical role in promoting fitness. By finding ways to encourage physical activity and to reward fitness gains, you can help your Scouts live healthier lives and ensure that they fulfill the promise they make each time they recite the Scout Oath.

For more ideas on incorporating fitness into your troop program, visit www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit.



SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP

Service to others and stewardship of natural resources are basic building blocks of the Scouting experience. They are also powerful tools you can use to ensure that your troop's program offers Scouts plenty of opportunities to practice leadership and planning, to strengthen habits of responsibility, and to be recognized for their achievements. Most of all, service to others and to the environment can help fulfill Scouting's commitment to guiding Scouts as they become adults who live according to the values of the BSA.

"To help other people at all times." In reciting the Scout Oath, Scouts promise to look beyond themselves for ways to assist their family, community, and nation.

CHAPTER 13
Troop Service Projects

For adult leaders, service projects are ready-made tools for teaching leadership and Scouting skills, instilling values, and adding exciting and satisfying activities to the troop's program. Most of all, service can enrich the lives of Scouts today and throughout their lifetimes.

Put a Scout in charge of each service project. That will give the Scout valuable leadership experience and preparation for eventually leading their own Eagle Scout service project.

Yet community service projects sometimes get less attention, and make less impact, than they deserve. Sometimes service projects are tacked onto the troop program, almost as afterthoughts. Sometimes they are poorly attended. Sometimes it's hard to tell whether a project has really impacted the community or the Scouts doing the work. In this chapter, we'll discuss some ways to harness the power of service in your troop.

Service and Advancement

Community service is required for each Scouts BSA rank except Scout:

Tenderfoot: one hour or more of service

Second Class: two hours or more of service

First Class: three hours or more of service

Star: six hours or more of service

Life: six hours or more of service, half of which must be conservation-related

Eagle: Eagle Scout service project

For Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, Scouts must also explain how their service relates to the ideals of Scouting.

Reviewing Your Track Record

A good first step is to review your troop's record of service over the last few years. First, complete the Troop Service Record worksheet on this page.

Troop Service Record

	This Year	Last Year	Two Years Ago
Number of troop service projects	_____	_____	_____
Number of patrol projects	_____	_____	_____
Number of Eagle Scout projects	_____	_____	_____

Next, pick the most effective and least effective projects from recent years and ask yourself these questions about each:

- Was the project well attended? How did attendance compare with the average troop campout?
- Who chose the project? Scouts or adults?
- Did the project draw a mix of younger and older Scouts?
- Did the project have a positive impact on the community?
- Did you finish all the work you planned to do?
- Did Scouts understand how the project helped the community?
- Did Scouts have the chance to plan and lead?
- Did Scouts work hard and have fun?
- Did Scouts want to quit before the project ended, or did they want to keep working when it was time to leave?

This simple evaluation should give you a good idea of how prominent and effective service is in your troop program. Share this information with your patrol leaders' council at its annual planning conference and with the troop committee as it reviews the calendar the PLC develops. Look for ways to do a better job in the future.

Adult Leaders and Service Projects

In a Scout-led troop, service projects offer Scouts just as much possibility for developing leadership skills as other activities. However, adults must find the right role for themselves, one that gives Scouts the greatest opportunities to accept responsibility for planning and leadership. As much as possible, adult leaders should stay in the background and allow projects to be Scout-led. They should stand ready to coach youth leaders by offering guidance and support and by providing resources that Scouts need in order to be successful.

When appropriate, you can take part as a participant under the guidance of the Scouts who have organized and are leading a project. This allows you to enjoy the experience while modeling what it means to be a good follower. By staying close to the action where you can observe how the Scouts' plans are unfolding and leadership is being practiced, you will be better able to mentor Scouts who are developing their leadership capabilities.

Transformational Service Projects

In volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* we discussed five attributes of effective service projects and explained how each project should:

- Be real and significant.
- Be democratic.
- Be clearly defined.
- Be well prepared.
- Be followed by reflection and recognition.

You can go beyond effective, however, by doing projects that are truly transformational, both for your community and for your Scouts.

To transform your community, seek out a partner organization that has a clear vision and is moving in the right direction but still needs plenty of volunteer help. If you work with a rudderless organization, you'll end up wasting your time. If you work with an organization that doesn't really need your help (and thus comes up with make-work projects), you'll end up wasting both your time and that of the organization.

Before settling on a project, visit the organization to learn more about its needs and how the troop can help. Talk with the volunteer coordinator to make sure your capabilities align with the organization's needs. Tour the facility to get a better understanding of how, and how well, the organization functions and whether the troop's service will make a real difference. (Taking your senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader along on these visits can teach them a lot about how nonprofit organizations work.)

To transform your Scouts, try to work directly with the people you are serving and/or alongside the partner organization's dedicated volunteers instead of working in isolation. The relationships you and your Scouts build will add a human element that will make service far more than just another activity to do or another box to check off on the way to advancement.

Devising Transformational Projects

What does transformational service look like in the real world? Consider a food drive. The simplest approach is to collect food in your neighborhood, box it up at your meeting place, and have an adult drop it off at the local food bank. This project would meet a need—assuming the food bank needs the sort of food you collect—but it would do little to transform your Scouts.

Now, consider how much more meaningful the project would be if Scouts visited the food bank and talked with its director. What if they got to help distribute the food to needy families or spent some time sorting and inspecting donations? Imagine what they would learn if a few Scouts were able to sit in while a new client met with the food bank's intake coordinator. Or consider how impactful it would be if, instead of collecting food for a food bank, the troop adopted several families that the chartered organization had identified. Tweaks like these can make an ordinary project extraordinary and move Scouts to do greater service in the future.

Many cities, local United Way organizations, and religious institutions hold annual "day of service" events, sometimes in conjunction with national observances like the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in January or the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance. National Trails Day (the first Saturday in June) is a time when volunteers across the country come together to build and maintain backcountry trails. Plugging into these efforts can help your Scouts see that they are part of an army of dedicated volunteers in your community.

Messengers of Peace

When Scouts and Scouters do service projects that contribute to world peace (broadly defined), they become Messengers of Peace and are eligible to wear a special ring patch that goes around the World Crest. That patch symbolizes their participation in an ever-widening circle of Scouts around the globe who are not just visualizing world peace but are helping to make it a reality. For more information, visit www.scouting.org/international/messengers-of-peace.

Helping Scouts Find Great Projects

Many Scouts have a relatively limited worldview. Ask them to come up with service-project ideas, and they probably won't think of much beyond what they've already done or have heard about in school or in their faith communities. While there's nothing wrong with building birdhouses, doing trail work, or cleaning up abandoned lots, Scouts may be more willing to sacrifice a Saturday for a different type of project or for a project they come up with themselves.

A good way to jump-start their thinking is to show them lists of project ideas. The list on the following page will get you started; see chapter 14 for a list of environmental stewardship projects. You can find many other lists through internet

searches. In some cases, Scouts will find just the project they want to do; in other cases, something on a list will spark an idea for a different project. Either outcome is fine.

Another good resource is the National Eagle Scout Association website (www.nesa.org), where you can find the winners of the Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award. Your local council service center may have ideas as well; nonprofit organizations often contact Scout councils looking for Scouts to work on their projects.

You could also have the Scouts brainstorm the types of organizations they want to be involved with. Some Scouts may have a passion for working with animals or children; others may have connected with specific organizations through their schools or faith communities. Once you decide what organization to work with, you can find out what's on its wish list and how the troop could help.

A Sampling of Service Projects

Conduct a book drive for an under-resourced school.

Build raised, wheelchair-accessible planter boxes for a nursing home.

Conduct a video inventory of property at your chartered organization.

Create personal care kits to distribute to homeless people.

Collect toys and books for a local Ronald McDonald House.

Set up collection boxes for donated eyeglasses.

Paint park benches and picnic tables at a local park.

Collect baby clothing and supplies for a women's and children's shelter.

Sort donations at a thrift store.

Plan an Earth Day fair on the town square.

Organize a blood drive and recruit donors.

Run a campaign to encourage people to sign up as organ donors.

Conduct a "don't text and drive" campaign at a local high school.

Help struggling elementary-school students with homework.

Run a bike-safety rodeo.

Work with the fire department to encourage people to replace the batteries in their smoke detectors.

Set up fitness stations at a local park.

Create hygiene kits or flood buckets for victims of natural disasters.

Collect gently used toys to be distributed by police officers to children affected by crime.

Build wheelchair ramps for homebound neighbors.

Plan a holiday party for a local nursing home.

Plan a sports field day for a local children's home.

Provide landscaping for a new home built by Habitat for Humanity.

Build dog-training equipment for a charity that trains companion animals.

Hold a campout for children with disabilities.

Recycle glass, paper, aluminum, or plastic.

Build a recycling station for your chartered organization.

Conduct flag ceremonies for a school.

Shovel snow or rake leaves for homebound neighbors.

Distribute voting reminders or emergency-procedure brochures.

Help set up for a community event like an Independence Day observance.

Paint rooms at your chartered organization.

Hold a child-identification fair where parents can have their children fingerprinted.

Build a community dog park.

Paint large street numbers in front of houses for easy identification by first responders.

Provide computer training to senior citizens.

Create a large map of the United States on a school playground.

Provide assistance and refreshments at a polling place on Election Day.

Hold a flag retirement ceremony.

Produce a documentary about your town's history.

Because most chartered organizations have a strong focus on community service, looking there for project ideas makes sense. Whether you do a project at your chartered organization's location or work with it on a community project it supports, you will strengthen your ties with a key troop partner.

You can also find good service project ideas by talking with the volunteer coordinators at organizations where your Scouts would like to serve or with representatives of your chartered organization. Ask questions like these to get beyond busywork projects:

- What is your organization's vision for the future?
- What projects are on your wish list?
- What would you do if you had unlimited volunteers and financial resources?
- What is the greatest unmet need among the people you serve?

Finally, if your Scouts are still struggling for ideas, ask these questions to help them focus:

- Are you more interested in an outdoor project or an indoor project?
- Do you want to plan an activity or do a construction project?
- Do you want to do a one-time project or get involved in a long-term effort?
- Do you want your project to help children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, military personnel or veterans, pets, the environment, or your community as a whole?
- Do you want to help your local community, people in another state, or people in another country?

Be sure to plan a variety of service projects throughout the year so that every Scout will find something interesting in which to participate.

Making Service Projects Enjoyable

The best way to get Scouts excited about service is to make service projects, especially the first projects they undertake, enjoyable. Though the work may be hard, it should also be satisfying. That starts with choosing projects that are interesting, but there are other things you can do as well. Here are a few.

Choose Reasonable Projects

First projects should be limited in scope and last no more than a few hours or an afternoon. As Scouts gain experience and prove their worth to themselves and others, projects can become more lengthy and complex. However, it's still important to keep in mind the participants' ages and maturity levels.

Some service efforts can be finished in a few hours, an afternoon, or a day. Longer-term projects can be broken into intermediate goals achievable in shorter amounts of time—planting a certain number of trees, for example, or repairing the equipment in just one area of a city park.

Be sure to schedule breaks, perhaps following the backpacking model of taking a 10-minute break every hour.

Consider Skill Levels

A good project should be within the skill levels of the Scouts doing it. Efforts that are too demanding set up Scouts to fail and to lose interest in future projects. On the other hand, there is great value in challenges that push Scouts a little beyond their current abilities and allow them to master new skills. Determining the difficulty of a project is an art that will develop as you move from one project to the next.

Add Variety

A good project has variety. Doing different tasks during the day keeps the work fresh. Even repetitious projects can often be broken down into an interesting series of steps—for example, digging plants to be moved for use in revegetation, transporting the plants to a new site, preparing the soil, doing the planting, and hauling water. Scouts who spend time performing each of these steps will get a taste of a full project, learn about the effectiveness of the entire effort, and come away satisfied at having been involved in all phases of the work.

Plan More Than Just Work

Whenever possible, combine service projects with a fun activity. If you're working in town, that may be as simple as playing a game of ultimate during the lunch break. If you're working in a natural area, try to combine the project with another Scout activity such as a hike, a campout, a swim, or a nature walk with someone who can discuss the ecology of an area. That will enrich the experience for everyone and also reinforce the idea that caring for the environment is a fundamental part of the entire Scouting program.

Combining an outing with a service project lets you save a weekend on the troop calendar.

Ensure Safety

Don't let your guard down just because you're working in your chartered organization's basement or down the street at the local park. Follow the BSA's *Service Project Planning Guidelines* and *Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations* (both available online), as discussed in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*. The former document covers planning, hazard analysis and recognition, tools and equipment, weather considerations, health/sanitation considerations, and assessment and monitoring, while the latter document details age requirements for using various types of hand and power tools.

Celebrate Success

With some projects, it's easy to gauge progress. If you're painting a room, for example, your progress will be readily apparent. In other cases, look for milestones that you can celebrate: 100 trees planted, 1/4 mile of trail repaired, etc. When the going gets tough, take a break and reflect on how far you've come.

Project Planning Questions

What is the scope of the project?

What are the participants' skill levels?

How much supervision do we need?

What tools, equipment, and training do we need?

How will we access the site?

What hazards should we plan for?

What health/sanitation considerations should we plan for?

How could weather affect the project?

What BSA policies or local codes or ordinances apply?

What will the work schedule look like?

How will we gauge our success?

Documentation

Many troops keep logbooks or create online photo albums to document their service and stewardship efforts. A logbook doesn't have to be fancy. In a notebook, Scouts can write down how many hours they worked and what they accomplished—feet of hiking trail repaired, number of bird boxes installed, volume of food-bank contributions collected, species and locations of trees planted, etc.—and some notes about the long-term responsibilities to maintain those projects or to repeat them in the future.

Your Scouts can take before-and-after photographs of their work sites to include in their logbooks, as well as pictures of the work underway. They might use a video camera to film some of the fun and satisfaction that is often a part of projects that help others. Logbooks, photographs, and videos are ideal for use at courts of honor, troop parents' nights, and other gatherings that can showcase the value and excitement of this aspect of the Scouting experience.

Scouts can share a troop's project logbooks with agency resource managers, the chartered organization, and community leaders who have hosted projects. Documentation of completed work is often valuable for them as they assess volunteer involvement and look to the future for more partnerships with Scouts. Photographs and project reports can also help Scouts as they approach other community leaders to explore possibilities for cooperating on projects with them, too.

Recording Service Hours

Each time your troop completes a service project, you should report it on the Journey to Excellence website. This allows the BSA to tally and celebrate the total number of service hours recorded across the country each year—an important indicator of Scouting's positive impact. To report your service hours, you will need your unit ID and unit number; your local council service center can provide this information if you don't have it.

At the website, select the type of project that best describes what you did, then input the data requested:

- Date of the project
- Number of registered Scouts participating
- Number of non-Scouts (brothers, sisters, friends)
- Number of adult leaders participating
- Number of other adults participating
- Total hours worked (number of people times the length of time they worked)
- Organizations that joined you on the project
- Who or what organization benefited from the project
- Number of items collected (if applicable)

For Eagle Scout projects, the preferred method is to let the council registrar enter the project date and number of service hours as part of the Eagle Scout application verification process. This is done when the Life Scout has completed all requirements and the application is submitted to the service center for verification before the Eagle board of review.

Recognition

Most people enjoy being recognized for what they have done. Scouting provides a variety of ways to acknowledge the accomplishments of Scouts involved in service. Patches, awards, and opportunities to complete requirements for merit badges and ranks can all be rewards for work well done and encouragement to continue to act on behalf of others and the environment. At the same time, keep in mind the Scout slogan—Do a Good Turn Daily. Service should be something Scouts do because they are Scouts, not because they expect a reward.

Organization leaders who help Scouts undertake projects also deserve acknowledgment. A sincere thank you and a handshake from Scouts at the conclusion of a project can be very much appreciated. Letters from Scouts to agency supervisors or organization heads thanking those who provided support during projects are always welcomed.

Publicity

Many service projects, including Eagle Scout projects, lend themselves to coverage in the media. Publicizing Scouts' volunteer efforts helps communities understand the role that Scouting plays and can encourage youth to continue to look for ways to be of service. They can also make your troop more attractive to potential members who want to make a positive impact on their communities and show parents that Scouting can teach their children far more than camping skills.

It's great to get media coverage of service projects after the fact, but there may also be occasions when promotion ahead of time makes sense. For example, you could invite members of the public to attend a flag retirement ceremony or ask area residents to donate items to a food drive or other collection effort.

One way to increase awareness is to invite local elected officials or media personalities to work alongside your Scouts.

CHAPTER 14
Environmental Stewardship Projects

The outdoors is Scouting's playground. On hikes, campouts, and other adventures, Scouts are immersed in the environment. The adventure of the outdoors is the reason that many join Scouting, and adult leaders can channel that enthusiasm. Programs can help Scouts become familiar with natural surroundings, develop confidence in their abilities to live comfortably in outdoor settings, and continue to learn about and appreciate the environment. A troop that also weaves stewardship into all its outdoor activities adds immeasurably to the satisfaction, richness, and value of its program.

Simply put, stewardship is an awareness of the environment and a willingness to do one's best to care for it. For Scouts on a hike or campout, it can start with always following the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles. Doing so encourages Scouts to be aware of the impact they have on the land and to make good decisions that will lessen any negative effects their outdoor activities might create. It can become a mark of pride for your troop to master and always practice Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!

Scouts can go a step further by planning and carrying out projects to repair environmental damage and to protect landscapes from further degradation. That's good for the land and great for Scouts. Active stewardship allows them to plan, organize, and work with others, and to use many Scouting skills to complete efforts in the field. Rightly managed, more extensive stewardship efforts can be a great boon to America's public and private lands.

The William T. Hornaday Awards

Scouts, Scouters, and units with a real passion for conservation may want to pursue a William T. Hornaday Award. This program offers a badge and two medals to Scouts who earn conservation-related merit badges and complete significant conservation projects, and it offers a unit award your troop can receive for completing a unique, substantial conservation project. Other awards recognize adults and organizations.

Hornaday Award	Administered by	Awarded to	Type of Award	How to Qualify	Maximum Awards per Year	Requirements
Unit Award	Council	Pack, troop, or crew	Certificate	Be nominated or apply	Unlimited	Complete one project; 60% of unit contributes
Badge	Council	Scout or Venturer	Badge and certificate	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete one substantial project
Bronze medal	National	Scout or Venturer	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete at least three substantial projects, each from a different project category
Silver medal	National	Scout or Venturer	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete at least four substantial projects, each from a different project category
Gold badge	Council	Adult Scouter	Badge	Be nominated	Unlimited	Adult Scouter; leadership to conservation at council or district level for at least three years
Gold medal	National	Adult Scouter	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Be nominated	Six	Adult Scouter; leadership to conservation at national or regional level over a lifetime (at least 20 years)
Gold certificate	National	Organization or individual	Certificate	Be nominated	Six	Outstanding contribution to youth conservation education for at least three years

For details, visit www.scouting.org/awards/hornaday-awards.

Many outdoor activities can be tailored to include environmental work. Hiking, camping, and canoeing trips, for example, may take group members to locations in need of erosion control and revegetation. Conservation projects can also offer the social pleasure of planning and doing something worthwhile with friends, as well as the enjoyment of meeting resource managers and other land users. Hands-on conservation projects encourage Scouts to take ownership of public areas they enjoy and use. The list on this page offers some ideas to get you started.

A Sampling of Environmental Stewardship Projects

Build bird feeders.

Plant shrubs to provide food and cover for wildlife.

Build and set out nesting boxes for birds and wildlife.

Conduct stream-improvement projects.

Plant trees and grasses as part of a restoration plan.

Help thin and prune woodlands in a managed forest.

Remove invasive plant species.

Assist in educational efforts encouraging homeowners in areas prone to wildfires to create no-burn buffers around buildings.

Create conservation exhibits and presentations for schools, fairs, and other public events.

Help develop and maintain a nature trail in a public park or Scout camp.

Help construct or maintain trails for hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other users.

Assist a local agency with trout-stream enhancement.

Improve fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, streams, and shorelines.

Build structures in arid regions to hold water for wild animals.

Conduct measurements of snow depth at backcountry monitoring locations and forward the information to meteorological stations.

Revegetate damaged meadows and hillsides.

Return unwanted and abandoned campsites and trails to their natural conditions.

Plant trees, shrubs, and grasses to control erosion, produce shade, and provide wildlife with sources of food and shelter.

Monitor the quality of streams.

Conduct an ongoing census of selected wild animals.

Maintain picnic pavilions, lifeguard towers, boat docks, playground equipment, and other outdoor recreational facilities.

Prepare and install educational signs along nature trails.

Build fences to prevent the overgrazing of riparian areas.

Establish and care for urban greenbelts, neighborhood parks, or other open spaces.

Clean up urban waterways and paint "Dump No Waste/ Drains to Stream" messages on storm drains.

Distribute informational fliers that outline appropriate ways of disposing of oil, chemicals, and other toxic wastes.

Help fisheries officials stock lakes and streams.

Collect discarded Christmas trees, and install them as revetments to protect stream banks or submerge them to provide shelter for fish.

Construct observation decks and blinds in wildlife refuges.

Develop and maintain outdoor classroom sites.

Increase accessibility of resource-area facilities for disabled visitors.

Teach environmental awareness skills to young people visiting resource areas.

Prepare informational brochures to be distributed at agency visitor centers.

Train others in appropriate conservation work skills.

Help distribute seedlings on Arbor Day.

Finding Places to Serve

Almost a third of the United States is in the public domain. City and county parks, state forests, wetlands, national recreation areas, historical sites, wilderness regions, and seashores are treasures—and every American shares in their ownership. Add to those the many unspoiled landscapes in private ownership, including hundreds of council Scout camps across America, and you don't need to travel very far from home to reach open country where your Scouts can also play an important role in caring for these resources.

Does your troop enjoy spending time in parks or forests, at lakeshores, or on ocean beaches? Are you near a public arboretum, fish hatchery, wildlife refuge, or bird sanctuary? Are there greenbelts and waterways in your neighborhood? When you are visiting any of those areas, encourage your Scouts to find out whom they can talk to about involving volunteers in worthwhile projects. Some agencies and conservation organizations have coordinators of volunteer activities or work with "friends of the park" groups that coordinate volunteer efforts on their behalf. If not, Scouts can discover who is in charge of the area and how that person can be contacted.

They may also discover that the need is great. Conservation professionals entrusted to manage America's public and private lands and waterways often struggle under the burdens of too little funding and too much work. Even the most dedicated staffs overseeing city, state, and national resources can seldom protect the environment as completely as they would like.

As a result, many projects involving stream cleanup, meadow revegetation, erosion control, and improvement of wildlife habitat must be left undone. Monitoring of resource areas used by humans and wildlife is too often delayed or never begun. Without occasional attention, forests, marshes, and lakeshores can suffer from erosion and abuse. Neglected campgrounds, beaches, monuments, recreational facilities, historic buildings, and trails fall into disrepair. Every land manager you contact probably has a list of projects he or she would love to complete if more resources were available.

Your local BSA council can be another source for stewardship projects. A camp ranger or Scouting professional can suggest conservation work troops can do at council camps, especially during the off-season when camp is not in session. Doing projects at your council camp lets you mix service with camp activities.

Stewardship Partnerships

Troops that enjoy using a park or forest regularly for outdoor activities can sometimes develop a long-term conservation partnership with the area's land managers. When those entrusted with natural resources know that a troop's Scouts are committed to being good stewards of the lands they use for camping and hiking, opportunities increase for regular projects that can fulfill the needs of land managers and of the Scouts themselves. That's a terrific way for Scouting to show that its members are involved in caring for parks and forests and other natural resources, not just using them.

Developing a long-term relationship with a land manager can sometimes earn your troop special access, such as the ability to use a campground out of season or to enter a natural area without paying a fee.

An enduring partnership between a volunteer group and a land management agency or service organization will not happen overnight. As each side becomes acquainted with the other and builds a foundation of trust and understanding, the partnership should become increasingly strong. In this ideal setting, volunteers can explore the environmental stewardship opportunities available to them, and resource managers can learn the most effective ways to involve volunteers in conservation work.

Encourage your Scouts to invite conservation professionals to visit a regular meeting of your troop or a troop outing. Seeing Scouts in their own setting can help agency personnel better understand the nature of the troop and the people who are involved with it. Resource managers can also share information about their agency or organization and discuss possibilities for involving the group in conservation projects.

Consider these points when pursuing an ongoing relationship with a service organization or land management agency:

- Ensure that the Scouts are committed to an ongoing partnership before contacting the agency, and agree on the duration of the partnership.
- Emphasize that you are interested in developing a long-lasting volunteer relationship rather than undertaking a one-time project.
- Explain that you are willing to start with small, easily managed projects that will allow resource managers and Scouts to get to know one another, to learn one another's expectations, and to develop a productive partnership. Initial work that has a high likelihood of success and satisfaction will encourage Scouts and resource managers to cooperate on future environmental projects.
- Express the range of projects your Scouts can tackle. Some resource managers may feel they have no projects that will be of interest to Scouts or that fall within the skill levels of Scouts. While this is sometimes true, it is more often the case that management staff is not aware of the broad range of projects that volunteers are capable of doing. Encourage resource professionals to consider all possibilities.

To be successful, everyone involved in troop stewardship projects must give something of themselves:

- Scouts and their leaders must be willing to seek out the training and experience required to direct conservation work effectively. They will need to devote time to planning projects and evaluating completed work.
- Resource managers might need to contribute some staff time to help Scouts and their leaders learn the skills they need to do good work. Managers should also help plan projects that take advantage of the Scouts' skills.
- Scouts must have a willingness to learn, to work hard, and to make a commitment to enhancing the environment.
- The troop must keep its commitment. Consider a time frame for the commitment such as two or three years (which can always be extended). Be sure to give the resource manager as much notice as possible if the troop is no longer able to honor the commitment.

Managers, Scouts, and troop leaders should meet to plan projects and to provide standards and guidance for the satisfactory completion of the work. Resource managers might also be responsible for providing tools and construction materials and for creating a final evaluation to help groups effectively take on future projects.

Good for Scouts, good for a troop's adult leaders, and good for resource managers—long-term stewardship projects hold great promise for everyone involved. By addressing environmental problems with the many hands and minds of enthusiastic Scouts and adult leaders, they are also good for the planet.

In spite of your best efforts, a troop might still find it is simply unable to make headway with particular resource managers. When that is the case, turn your attentions elsewhere. Seek out other agencies and organizations. Groups sincerely interested in providing volunteer help to care for the environment will eventually find conservation professionals pleased to work with them. When you connect with people who appreciate what you and your group have to offer, your volunteers and those resource managers will have the beginnings of a long, productive, and positive relationship.

Stewardship-Partnership Benefits

For Resource Managers

Many resource managers have conservation work they are unable to accomplish due to shortages in funding and personnel. Partnerships with BSA volunteers allow conservation professionals to accomplish much more in the field, especially on projects that require more time and/or people than resource managers normally have at their disposal.

Scouts providing stewardship service on public and private lands can learn about the people who manage those areas—their responsibilities, the difficulties they face, and the pleasures of their duties. That awareness can increase the public appreciation of professional conservation staffs and the work they do.

For Scouts and Adult Leaders

With the ongoing projects of long-term partnerships, Scouts and adult leaders can gain the experience to plan and direct conservation activities on their own. They can also add to their storehouse of work-skills knowledge, which will increase each time they go into the field.

Conservation projects provide adult leaders and older Scouts with many opportunities to make environmental education come alive for the rest of a troop. Through their actions and enthusiasm, Scouts and adult leaders experienced in environmental stewardship can act as role models, demonstrating a wise, hands-on approach to caring for the environment.

For Scouts

Scouts who assist in the protection and enhancement of the environment are learning to accept responsibility. Rather than assuming they have no power to solve the problems they see around themselves, Scouts can become active stewards of the land. The effects of that awareness could be every bit as valuable to the environment in the long term as the projects that the volunteers are completing at the moment. By returning to a site several times, Scouts can see firsthand the positive impact of their work. This will give them an incentive to continue the project as they develop a true connection with the site.

CHAPTER 15
Eagle Scout Service Projects

Perhaps the most prominent and confusing aspect of the Scout advancement program is the Eagle Scout service project. Even veteran leaders sometimes misunderstand what this requirement means and what it doesn't, as well as how they can best support Scouts who are working on it.

The single best resource for information on the Eagle Scout service project is the *Guide to Advancement.* In this chapter, we'll look at key aspects of the Eagle project and discuss its connections with the troop program.

What the Eagle Scout Service Project Is—and Isn't

Although the Eagle project doesn't have to be the last requirement an Eagle Scout candidate completes, it is in some ways a capstone project. After participating in service projects at lower ranks and after serving in various positions of responsibility, a Scout now has the chance to plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a significant project.

Aside from the planning and leadership aspects—which are obviously critical—an Eagle project could look much like any other troop service project. There are a few differences, however:

- **An Eagle Scout project must benefit an organization other than Scouting.** Building a trail at the local Scout camp wouldn't count, for example, while building a trail at a nearby state park could.
- **An Eagle Scout project can't benefit an individual.** For example, building a wheelchair ramp for a homebound senior citizen wouldn't count. An exception can be made when helping an individual benefits the larger community, as described in the *Guide to Advancement.*
- **An Eagle Scout project can't consist of routine labor.** Work the Scout already provides as a job or service doesn't count, nor does work that the beneficiary organization would normally do. See the *Guide to Advancement* for potential exceptions.

Some troops and districts inadvertently add to the project requirement by reading more into the requirement than is there. Here are some common misconceptions:

- **Location:** While the requirement specifies that the project must benefit "any religious institution, any school, or your community," that doesn't limit the Scout to just the local community. As the *Guide to Advancement* explains, a Scout can choose a project that benefits the "community of the world."
- **Number of hours:** There is no minimum number of hours for an Eagle project. As long as a Scout shows leadership in conducting an approved project, the requirement has been met.
- **Lasting value:** An Eagle project doesn't have to have lasting value. Planning a holiday party for residents of a nursing home is just as valid as building a nature trail.
- **Volunteer makeup:** The *Guide to Advancement* says an Eagle candidate must give leadership to at least two other people. There's no minimum requirement beyond that, and it doesn't matter whether the project helpers are other Scouts from the troop, friends from school, the Scout's parents, other adults, or some combination of the above.
- **Originality:** The Eagle candidate doesn't have to come up with a totally new idea. That said, the project must show evidence of planning and development; the Scout can't simply pull an older sibling's project workbook off the shelf and redo it.

Memorializing an Eagle Project

While Eagle projects don't have to have lasting value, it's a good idea to mark those projects that are permanent, such as nature trails or outdoor chapels. BSA Supply Group offers two plaques, including one that can be personalized with the Scout's name, troop number and city, project date, and project description.

The Eagle Scout Project Workbook

One of the most important resources for an Eagle candidate is the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook,* which covers every step from writing the proposal to documenting the completed project. More than just a tool for documentation, it walks the Scout through the necessary work and asks questions the Scout (and parents and Scout leaders) might never think about. Because few Scouts have planned and led big projects of any kind before starting their Eagle projects, the workbook offers essential guidance and can help prevent unnecessary mistakes.

Each Eagle Scout candidate is required to use the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* to plan and document their project. That doesn't mean the Scout must fill out every blank and box, although doing so would probably be helpful to them. Some Scout leaders mistakenly think the workbook must be completed in its entirety.

The workbook consists of three major sections:

- Project proposal
- Project final plan
- Project report

Also included is information on fundraising or securing in-kind donations to support the project. While the project itself cannot be a fundraiser, the Scout may solicit donations to pay for supplies and materials and may request in-kind donations. The workbook outlines the fundraising rules that must be followed and includes a fundraising application.

Eagle candidates should use the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application, not the Unit Money-Earning Application.

Finally, the workbook includes a standalone document, Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project, that explains the project process to beneficiaries. This document can help beneficiaries understand why the Scout can't just jump in and start working, why planning and leadership are important elements of the project, and what the organization can do to help the Scout achieve success.

The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* is available as a fillable PDF document that is compatible with Adobe Reader and other free software. If using Adobe 9 or later, the Scout can fill in and save the document on a computer, add lines to text fields, and include photos, drawings, and other attachments. Opening the workbook in a web browser or other programs doesn't give Scouts access to these features.

Like other BSA documents, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* changes from time to time. Always use the current version from the BSA website.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach

An Eagle candidate's other key resource is the project coach. This is a registered Scouter who guides the Scout through the project process. In some cases, the council or district appoints project coaches; in other cases, it delegates the responsibility to unit volunteers. While an Eagle candidate doesn't have to use a project coach, doing so will make sense almost all the time.

The project coach should be very familiar with the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* and the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. The coach should also understand that each Scout is probably planning their first project of this size, even if the coach has worked with dozens of projects.

The project coach doesn't have the authority to approve or reject a project. Instead, he or she provides guidance and uses logic and common sense to help the Scout make wise decisions.

Here are some ways a coach could help an Eagle candidate:

- Meet with a Scout after the project has been approved but before work begins on the final plan.
- Ask the Scout to describe the project will be planned; then offer advice accordingly.
- Emphasize those elements of a plan that, if ignored, could stop work or create health and safety issues.
- Remind the Scout to share the plan with the project beneficiary; the beneficiary should be fully aware of what will be done. (Note that a final plan for an Eagle Scout service project is between the Scout and the beneficiary. Coaches do not approve final plans.)
- Be available to the Scout as a consultant should questions arise about the planning process.
- Meet with the Scout to review the final plan; discuss its strengths, weaknesses, and risks; and suggest critical improvements.
- Discuss the project report with the Scout and offer advice on how to make a strong presentation at the board of review.

Remember that any contact with the Scout must be conducted according to Youth Protection procedures.

Project Approvals

The following people or groups must approve the Eagle project at various stages:

- Project proposal: unit leader, unit committee, beneficiary, council or district
- Fundraising application: beneficiary, unit leader, council or district
- Project report: beneficiary, unit leader

Note that no approval is required for the final plan.

Getting Project Approval

Before work can start on an Eagle project, the Eagle candidate must have their proposal approved by the Scoutmaster (or the Scoutmaster's designee), the troop committee, the project beneficiary, and the district or council. Years ago, the proposal was a full-blown project plan, and Scouts were sometimes disappointed when their plans didn't pass muster or when they'd chosen an unacceptable type of project (a charity fundraiser, for example).

Today, Scouts follow a different process, one that makes better use of their time and teaches them how projects are typically approved in the adult world. Rather than write a full-blown project plan, a Scout writes a proposal that represents the beginning of planning.

How detailed does this proposal have to be? It must be detailed enough to meet these five tests:

1. It provides sufficient opportunity to meet the Eagle Scout service project requirement. The Scout must show that planning, development, and leadership will take place. The Scout must also show how the project will benefit a religious institution, a school, or a community.
2. The project appears to be feasible. It must be shown that the project is realistic for the Scout to complete.
3. Safety issues will be addressed. The Scout must demonstrate an understanding of what must be done to

KEEPING SCOUTS INVOLVED AND INTERESTED

The longer youth stay in Scouting, the more they will benefit—and the stronger your troop will become. Keeping Scouts involved and interested means offering them a program that's more attractive than the countless other ways they could choose to spend their time. It also means finding tangible ways to mark and celebrate their progress—from merit badges to special ceremonies. Finally, it means recognizing and meeting the special challenges that come with working with older Scouts. Those topics are the focus of this section.

CHAPTER 16
Advanced Advancement Advice

Scouting is awash in patches. Many veteran Scouts and Scouters have shoeboxes and drawers full of them: camporee patches, Order of the Arrow lodge flaps, badges of office, and more. Patches can prompt Scouts to sign up early for summer camp, recruit a friend into Scouting, camp in freezing weather, show up for a service project, or complete the tough final requirements for a coveted award.

Of course, the most important patches in Scouting are those related to the advancement program—and close behind them are those representing the many special awards and honors Scouts can earn. In this chapter, we'll explore how you can use these patches (and the associated medals and pins) to achieve the aims of Scouting.

The policies described in this chapter come from the *Guide to Advancement*. Always consult the current edition of the guide for any policy changes.

The Purpose of Advancement

As chapter 19 in volume 1 explained, advancement is just one method of Scouting, not an end in itself. We use advancement badges and other awards as tools to spur each Scout toward developing character, citizenship, and fitness. It's what's in the head and heart—not on the shirt—that ultimately matters.

Scouting skills—things a young person learns to do—are important, but not as important as the primary goal of personal growth achieved through participating in the troop program. The concern is for total, well-rounded development. Age-appropriate surmountable hurdles are placed before members, and as they face these challenges they learn about themselves and gain confidence.

Learning Scout skills and concepts through active participation is a vehicle for personal growth, but it is not the primary goal. For example, learning how to tie a knot, plan a menu, swim, or administer first aid may turn out to be critical in one's life; but those skills are secondary to the goal of personal growth that comes with learning. As Scouts learn skills and then are tested on them, reviewed, and recognized, they develop confidence. They come to realize they can learn and do other similar things.

The retention of Scouting skills and knowledge is important, of course; but for retention to take place, those skills and that knowledge must be used regularly in the troop program.

Success is achieved when we fulfill the BSA mission statement and when we accomplish the aims of Scouting: character development, citizenship training, and mental and physical fitness. We know we are on the right track when we see youth accepting responsibility, demonstrating self-reliance, and caring for themselves and others; when they learn to weave Scouting ideals into their lives; and when we can see they will be positive contributors to society.

Teaching Life Lessons

Here are three life lessons the advancement program can teach.

- **Meeting a standard.** Every Scout must meet the same standard. Merit badges aren't graded on a curve, and we don't make exceptions in most cases for individual Scouts based on age, height, physical prowess, or intellectual ability. At times, that means Scouts will have to stretch to their limits and beyond. A classic example is when an undersized Scout must "rescue" a hulking waterfront staff member for Lifesaving merit badge. While that Scout may never perform a real water rescue, the Scout's life skills will undoubtedly be put to use every day. In fact, Scouting alumni often remember incidents like that waterfront test as defining moments in their growth.

See chapter 24 for information on advancement options for Scouts with special needs.

- **Working with adults.** To earn merit badges and special awards like the Supernova and William T. Hornaday awards, Scouts are expected to work with adults they may have never met—men and women who have special expertise in particular fields. Along the way, they must pick up the phone, make appointments, navigate to unfamiliar locations, and meet with people who may be decades older than themselves—all skills they will use as they apply for college, interview for jobs, schedule doctor appointments, negotiate loans, and otherwise handle the business of being an adult without a helping hand from Mom or Dad. (Of course, Mom or Dad will probably need to drive them to merit badge sessions, and the BSA's Youth Protection policies are in place to keep them safe.) Merit badge fairs and merit badge classes at summer camp can make advancement easier, but they sometimes rob Scouts of much of the learning the advancement program is designed to foster. (For more information, see "Merit Badge Classes, Fairs, Colleges, and Similar Events" later in this chapter.)

- **Becoming organized and self-motivated.** Cub Scouts advance primarily as a group within their den. The den leader decides which adventure the den will work on and walks the Cub Scouts through the requirements; when they receive their adventure loop or pin, they may not even be aware of all the requirements they have completed. By contrast, advancement in Scouts BSA is an individual endeavor, especially after Scouts leave the new-Scout patrol. Scouts must take initiative to advance, whether that means running for a troop office, requesting a Scoutmaster conference, or asking a youth or adult leader to sign off a completed advancement requirement. That's why some Scouts reach the Eagle Scout rank at age 13, while others run out of time when they turn 18. Scouts must also learn to be organized, something that doesn't come easily to most youth (or many adults). For example, keeping track of spending for three months for Personal Management merit badge can be a major test of a Scout's organizational skills. Some troops short-circuit this aspect of advancement by providing fill-in-the-blank merit badge worksheets, again robbing Scouts of life lessons that will last long after the badge content is forgotten. (For more information, see "Merit Badge Worksheets" later in this chapter.)

How Advancement Benefits the Troop

The primary purpose of the advancement program is to help Scouts grow, but advancement also helps the troop. In fact, it's a tool you can use to keep Scouts of all ages motivated and involved.

First, the advancement program offers an "ultimate" goal, the Eagle Scout rank, to which each Scout can aspire. While becoming an Eagle Scout is *not* the aim of Scouting, this long-range target is important, especially because Scouts are accustomed to working toward some distant goal in most other areas of their lives, whether that goal is a high school diploma or an athletic or academic scholarship. By highlighting the value of the Eagle Scout Award—and emphasizing that every Scout can achieve it—you give Scouts a reason to think further than the next campout.

For Scouts who achieve the Eagle rank well before their 18th birthdays, Eagle Palms offer additional goals beyond the "ultimate" goal.

Second, the advancement program offers a clear pathway toward the Eagle Scout rank. It would be unrealistic to ask an 11-year-old to work toward a goal that's probably five or six years away—that's roughly half the Scout's life so far—so the ranks of Scout through Life serve as milestones along the path. These milestones are important because Scouting, unlike many other youth activities, doesn't have seasonal milestones built in. There are no final exams, postseason tournaments, year-end concerts, or similar events to work toward, so Scouts need other ways to mark their progress from year to year. By helping Scouts move from milestone to milestone, you help them see how far they've come (much as you might point back toward the trailhead after a long and difficult climb on a hike).

Although every Scout has the potential to earn the Eagle Scout rank, not every Scout will. That doesn't mean the Scout who stops at Star—or even Second Class—has not had a valuable experience in Scouting. Be careful not to send the message that a Scout who does not earn the Eagle rank is a failure.

Third, the advancement program offers rewards to go along with the incentives described above, much like sports programs offer trophies and martial-arts programs offer colored belts. A rank patch is the most obvious award, but Scouts also crave the approval of their parents, the applause of their peers, and the chance to move their names up a level on the advancement board in the troop meeting room. When you provide prompt and appropriate recognition to Scouts who earn ranks, merit badges, and other awards, you validate their hard work and spur them on to further progress. That's why the BSA recommends presenting badges as soon as possible after they are earned, and encourages troops hold three or four courts of honor per year.

Scouts who advance in rank should be recognized three times. They should receive verbal acknowledgment as soon as they pass their boards of review, receive their rank patches at the next troop meeting, and receive public recognition at the next court of honor.

Fourth, the advancement program—coupled with the BSA's other awards—offers Scouts optional pathways they can follow, either on the way to the Eagle Scout rank or as an alternative. A Scout who's interested in conservation could work toward a William T. Hornaday Award, as described in chapter 14. A Scout who's into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) could pursue a Supernova Award, as described in chapter 12. A Scout's qualifications could be enhanced by earning a variety of merit badges and special awards while working on a camp's aquatics staff. From this perspective, Scouting is something like a role-playing game where players can chart their own courses and where their play can continue indefinitely; the game—and the growth—never ends. By highlighting the vast array of awards Scouts can pursue, you give them additional reasons to remain involved in Scouting, which benefits both them and the troop.

Gauging Advancement Speed

There's no standard for how quickly advancement should happen; different Scouts will advance at different rates. However, the BSA recommends Scouts achieve First Class within their first 12 to 18 months in the troop. If a Scout hasn't reached First Class by then, it's probably worth scheduling a Scoutmaster conference to discuss the Scout's progress.

A similar discussion might be warranted if an older Scout is taking more than a year to move from one rank to the next. You may discover a problem you can help solve—such as the Scout's need for a position of responsibility. You may also discover that the Scout is perfectly happy to stay at the current rank a little longer or forever, which is each Scout's right.

Understanding Advancement Requirements

The advancement program is relatively complex—although not as complex as some Scouters make it out to be. By having a good working knowledge of the advancement program, you can better support your Scouts and reduce the number of roadblocks they encounter on the trail to Eagle.

Section 5 of volume 1 provides a detailed overview of the advancement program and the many special awards Scouts (and Scouters) can earn. For additional, in-depth information, the best source is the *Guide to Advancement*. This chapter highlights common advancement-related issues of which you should be aware.

***Advancement News* is a great source for advancement-related information. Published several times a year by the BSA's National Advancement Committee, it explores common issues in detail. For information and back issues, see** www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news.

Advancement Fallacies

To the uninitiated, the Scouts BSA advancement program can seem complex. Unfortunately, some Scouters make it even more complex by reading into the requirements things that aren't there. Here are some common fallacies:

- **A parent can't serve as a merit badge counselor for his or her child.** False. If the parent is approved to counsel the badge in question, he or she can work with any Scout. That said, Scouts can be encouraged to work with other counselors, and parents who serve as counselors should probably work with other Scouts along with their own children to prevent appearances of impropriety.
- **The Scoutmaster can sign off any merit badge.** False. The Scoutmaster and other troop leaders can only sign off badges for which they are approved counselors.
- **The Scoutmaster can decide which merit badge counselor a Scout can use.** False. A Scout may work with any approved counselor; the Scoutmaster simply has a discussion with the Scout and provides contact information for one or more counselors.
- **There is a maximum number of badges an adult can counsel.** Generally false. The BSA places no limit on the number of badges an individual can counsel (assuming he or she is qualified and approved); however, local councils can set a reasonable limit. Also, the troop can set a maximum number of badges a Scout can earn from a single counselor so long as that limit applies to all Scouts.
- **The work a Scout does on a merit badge before getting a signed merit badge application ("blue card") doesn't count.** Generally false, although it is the counselor's decision whether to accept work or activities completed prior to the issuing of the signed blue card. In some cases, such as the Camping merit badge requirement of spending 20 nights camping, the Scout may have been working on the requirement since first joining the troop.
- **Some merit badges have prerequisites.** Generally false. Earning the First Aid merit badge is the first requirement for the Emergency Preparedness merit badge, but the requirements (for this and other badges) don't have to be completed in order. On the other hand, the requirements for Scuba Diving clearly state that a Scout must earn Swimming before completing most of the requirements.
- **The Scoutmaster conference must be the last requirement completed before the board of review.** False. While it can make sense for the Scoutmaster conference to be the last requirement completed, the conference can actually be held at any time while the Scout is at the current rank (for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, it may be held after the Scout has completed the Scoutmaster conference for the previous rank). Spreading conferences out can prevent a flurry of rushed conferences and boards of review right before a troop court of honor.
- **A Scout must attend a board of review in full uniform.** False. It is preferred that a Scout be in full field uniform for any board of review. The Scout should wear as much of it they own, and it should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly. If wearing all or part of the uniform is impractical for whatever reason, the candidate should be clean and neat in appearance and dressed appropriately, according to their means, for the milestone marked by the occasion. Regardless of unit, district, or council expectations or rules, boards of review shall not reject candidates solely for reasons related to uniforming or attire, as long as they are dressed to the above description. Candidates shall not be required to purchase uniform items or clothing such as coats and ties to participate in a board of review.

Active Participation and Leadership

Few aspects of the advancement program cause more consternation than the Star, Life, and Eagle requirements that say a Scout must be active in the troop for a certain number of months and must serve actively in a position of responsibility for the same number of months. (For Star and Life, Scouts can also complete a Scoutmaster-approved leadership project instead of serving in a position of responsibility.) Troops have historically struggled to define what "active" means, and that struggle has only gotten more challenging as Scouts' and parents' schedules have become ever more crowded.

Before we look at the specifics of these requirements, it's important to understand that the months in question don't have to be consecutive. A Scout may piece together any times they have been active and still qualify; for example, a Scout who plays high school soccer might count three summer months and three spring months for the six months needed for Life.

Defining Active Participation

The purpose of the active-participation requirements involves impact. Because we prepare young people to go forth and, essentially, make a positive difference in society, we judge that youth are "active" when their level of activity in Scouting, whether high or minimal, has had a sufficiently positive influence toward this end.

Use the following three sequential tests to determine whether the requirement has been met. The first and second are required, along with either the third or its alternative.

1. **The Scout is registered.** This applies to Scouts who have been registered in a troop for at least the time period indicated in the requirement, and have indicated in some way, through word or action, that they consider themselves members of the troop. If a Scout was supposed to have been registered, but for whatever reason was not, discuss with the local council registrar the possibility of back-registering. A Scout should not be penalized because an adult leader forgot to turn in the application.
2. **The Scout is in good standing.** A youth is considered in "good standing" with the troop as long as the youth has not been dismissed for disciplinary reasons. The youth must also be in good standing with the local council and the Boy Scouts of America. (In the rare instance that is not the case, communications will have been delivered.)
3. **The Scout meets the troop's reasonable expectations, or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained.** If, for the time period required, a Scout meets those aspects of the troop's pre-established expectations that refer to a level of activity, then the Scout is considered active and the requirement is met. If a Scout does not meet the unit's reasonable expectations, that Scout is still considered "active" if a board of review can agree that Scouting's values have already taken hold and have been exhibited. This might be evidenced, for example, in how the Scout relates to others in the community, at school, in religious life, or in Scouting. It is also acceptable to consider and "count" positive activities outside Scouting when they, too, contribute to the Scout's growth in character, citizenship, personal fitness, and leadership.

Note that the troop's pre-established expectations must be reasonable. Scouts must not be held to standards that are so demanding as to be impractical for today's youth (and families) to achieve. Ultimately, a board of review shall decide what is reasonable and what is not. In doing so, the board members must use common sense and must take into account that Scouts should be allowed to balance their lives with positive activities outside of Scouting.

Units are free to establish additional expectations on uniforming, supplies for outings, payment of dues, parental involvement, etc., but these and any other standards extraneous to a level of activity shall not be considered in evaluating the active-participation requirement.

Rating Service in a Position of Responsibility

When a Scout assumes a position of responsibility, something related to the desired results must happen. It is a disservice to the Scout and to the troop to reward work that has not been done. Holding a position and doing nothing, producing no results, is unacceptable. Some degree of responsibility must be practiced, taken, or accepted.

Just as the troop can establish expectations for participation, it can also establish expectations for positions of responsibility. Again, these expectations must be reasonable based on Scouts' training, experience, and skill level. If, within reason based on the Scout's personal skill set, these expectations have been met for the specified number of months, then the Scout has fulfilled the requirement.

It is best when a Scout's leaders provide a position description and then direction, coaching, and support. Where this occurs, and is done well, the Scout will likely succeed. When this support, for whatever reason, is unavailable or otherwise not provided—or when there are no clearly established expectations—then an adult leader or the Scout, or both, should work out the responsibilities to be fulfilled. In doing so, neither the position's purpose nor degree of difficulty may be altered significantly or diminished.

If it is left to the Scout to determine what should be done, and a reasonable effort has been made to perform accordingly for the time specified, then the requirement is fulfilled. Even if the results are not necessarily what the unit leader, members of a board of review, or others involved may want to see, the Scout must not be held to unestablished expectations.

On the other hand, if the troop has clearly established expectations for a position, then—within reason—a Scout must meet them through the prescribed time. If the Scout is not meeting expectations, then this must be communicated early. Unit leadership may work toward a constructive result by asking what the youth thinks should be accomplished in the position. What is the Scout's own concept of this role? What does the Scout think the troop leaders—youth and adult—expect? What has the Scout done well? What needs improvement? Often this questioning approach can lead a Scout to the decision to measure up, and the Scout will tell the leaders how much of the service time should be counted toward the requirement.

If it becomes clear that nothing will improve a Scout's performance, then it is acceptable to remove the Scout from the position. It is the unit leader's responsibility to address these situations promptly. Every effort should have been made while the Scout was in the position to ensure the Scout understood expectations and was regularly supported toward reasonably acceptable performance. It is unfair and inappropriate—after six months, for example—to surprise a Scout who thinks they have been doing fine with news that their performance is now considered unsatisfactory. In this case, the Scout must be given credit for the time spent in the position.

Just as a Scout can piece together months of participation for the active-participation requirement, service in different positions can be pieced together for the position-of-responsibility requirement, even if there are gaps between them. However, months when the Scout held two positions can't be double-counted.

If your troop has a large number of Scouts who need a position of responsibility for rank advancement, the Scoutmaster and the patrol leaders' council could decide to assign the same position to more than one Scout. For example, the troop could have one instructor who specializes in first aid, nature, and cooking and another who specializes in pioneering, orienteering, and woods tools. The key is to make sure each youth leader has specific responsibilities.

Scoutmaster-Assigned Leadership Projects

For the Star and Life ranks (but not for Eagle Scout), the Scoutmaster may assign, as a substitute for the position of responsibility, a leadership project that helps the troop. If this is done, he or she should consult the troop committee and unit advancement coordinator to arrive at suitable standards. The experience should provide lessons similar to those of the listed positions, but it must not be confused with, or compared to, the scope of an Eagle Scout service project. It may be productive in many cases for the Scout to propose a leadership project that is discussed with the unit leader and then assigned.

One way to approach this option is to think of things adults in the troop have been doing that Scouts could do. For example, consider the preparation involved in a high-adventure trip. A Scout could set up a training program to teach the skills participants will need (orienteering, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, paddling technique, etc.). Or the Scout could handle the logistics for the trip, such as researching airfares and hotel rooms and coordinating the troop's selection of an itinerary for its Philmont trek. Or the Scout could plan and lead a series of shakedown activities leading up to the trip. Doing any of these things would allow the Scout to show leadership—and provide a benefit to the troop—without taking away responsibilities from other youth leaders.

Service Projects

For every Scout rank, the youth must demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in and out of Scouting. This includes helping others. A Scout's duty to others often takes the form of service projects or service hours, and these are integrated into the advancement program beginning with the Tenderfoot rank.

Service Requirements by Rank

Tenderfoot	1 hour
Second Class	2 hours
First Class	3 hours
Star	6 hours
Life	6 hours (at least half conservation-related)
Eagle	"While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, school, or community."

For Tenderfoot through Life, a Scout must participate in one or more service projects totaling the required number of hours. A troop project could be counted, such as a highway cleanup or an event helping the chartered organization. Work that the Scout has done on a project undertaken by the patrol may also be counted. With the Scoutmaster's approval, it could even be something a Scout does alone. Often, the service requirement for a rank will be fulfilled by assisting with an Eagle Scout candidate's project. The only limitation on the type of project is that at least three of the service hours for Life must be related to conservation.

Note that at Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, the Scout must also explain how their service relates to the ideals of Scouting. That reflection can be as valuable as the service itself.

The requirements do not say that the service time or the projects must be approved beforehand, but a discussion with the Scoutmaster may prevent any issues at a board of review. Note that no council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add a planning requirement to the Tenderfoot through Life service project requirements. It's perfectly fine for the Scout to be a worker, not a leader, on these projects.

See chapters 13 and 14 for service project ideas.

The Eagle Scout project is a different story. Here, the Eagle Scout candidate must plan, develop, and give leadership to a service project benefiting any religious institution, school, or community. There's no minimum number of hours required, because the key to evaluating this requirement comes in looking at its impact. That said, many Eagle projects far exceed the number of service hours Scouts have previously amassed.

Chapter 15 discusses the Eagle project in more detail, as does the *Guide to Advancement*.

One of the most common questions Scouts ask is whether they can count service hours they've earned outside Scouting or double-count the service hours required for Citizenship in the Community merit badge. Project approval is up to the

Scoutmaster, but it's worth encouraging the Scout to ask: "Do I really want to get double credit for helping others this one time, or do I want to undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people? "To reach an ethical decision, each Scout should follow familiar guideposts found in some of those words and phrases we live by, such as "helpful," "kind," "Do a Good Turn Daily," and "help other people at all times."

As Scout leaders, we should ask ourselves an even more pointed question: "Is it our goal to produce Scouts who check a task off a list or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities?" To answer our own question, we should consult the same criteria that guide Scouts.

It's also worth pointing out that Scouts in many active troops easily exceed the service-hour requirements. If you regularly include service projects in your troop program and produce even one or two Eagle Scouts per year, Scouts will have no trouble finding the number of hours they need.

Service projects don't have to be long to be meaningful. For example, you could spend an hour during a campout returning an abused campsite to its natural state or devote a troop meeting to assembling flood buckets or personal-care kits for a disaster response agency. Such micro-projects demonstrate that community service should be a way of life—not necessarily something we stop our normal lives to do.

Scout Spirit

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Members incorporating these ideals into their daily lives at home, at school, in their religious life, and in their neighborhoods, for example, are said to have Scout spirit. In evaluating whether a Scout has fulfilled this requirement, it may be best to begin by asking what Scout spirit and living the Scout Oath and Scout Law mean to the Scout. Young people know when they are being kind or helpful or are being a good friend to others. They know when they are cheerful, or trustworthy, or reverent. All of us, young and old, know how we act when no one else is around.

Scout spirit refers to ideals and values; it is not the Scouting equivalent to school spirit. Troop and patrol spirit are good things to develop; they just aren't tied to the advancement program.

A leader typically asks for examples of how a Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law. It might also be useful to invite examples of when the Scout has not. This is not something to push, but it can help with the realization that sometimes we fail to live by our ideals and that we all can do better. This also sends a message that Scouts can admit they have done wrong, yet still advance. In a serious situation—such as alcohol or illegal drug use—it can help the Scout understand why advancement might not be appropriate at that time. This is a sensitive issue and must be treated carefully. Most Scout leaders do their best to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, but any one of us may look back on years past and wish that, at times, we had acted differently. We learn from these experiences and improve and grow. We can look for the same in our youth.

For each rank from Tenderfoot through First Class, the Scout must discuss how they have lived out four points of the Scout Law, which they record in their Scouts BSA handbook. By the time a Scout has reached First Class, all 12 points will have been discussed. Keep in mind that a Scout's understanding of—and ability to live out—the points of the Law may differ or change based on age and maturity. (For an 11-year-old, bravery might be taking a swim test; for a 15-year-old, it might be standing up to a friend who is making a poor moral or ethical choice.)

For each rank from Tenderfoot through Eagle, the Scout must also discuss how they have lived out their duty to God. Remember that the focus is on the Scout's understanding of duty to God, not the leader's. If a Scout comes from a faith tradition different from yours, consider first asking how the Scout, their family, or their faith group defines duty to God and then asking the Scout to describe how they are living up to that definition or their own developing understanding. Even if you and a Scout come from the same faith tradition, your role is not to impose your view of duty to God on the Scout but to help the Scout live out their own and their family's view of duty to God.

Evaluating Scout spirit will always be a judgment call, but we can get a feel for it by getting to know a Scout and by asking probing questions. It's safe to say, however, that we do not measure Scout spirit by counting meetings and outings attended. It is indicated, instead, by the way Scouts live their lives.

Merit Badges

One of the most visible parts of advancement in Scouts BSA, the merit badge program introduces Scouts to more than 130 different topics, from citizenship and fitness to careers and hobbies. Countless Americans today pursue vocations and avocations they first encountered when they earned a related merit badge.

Merit badges combine the best elements of a textbook, an introductory class on a topic, and an apprenticeship with an expert in the field. In this section, we'll discuss some common issues related to the merit badge program.

***Advancement News,* a free bimonthly newsletter, includes a section of on merit badge counseling, new merit badges, and counselor resources. To subscribe, send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text. For archived issues of *Advancement News,* visit www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news. For archived issues of a previous newsletter, *Counselor's Compass,* visit www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/counselor-compass-news.**

Merit Badge Counselor Qualifications

There are generally no specific requirements as to the training or certification merit badge counselors must have in their fields. However, a merit badge counselor should have a special expertise in the merit badge area, as well as the ability to work with youth to develop a genuine interest in the merit badge topic. Additionally, special qualifications or certifications are required for these badges: Archery, Canoeing, Climbing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Rifle Shooting, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Shotgun Shooting, Snow Sports, Swimming, and Whitewater. See the *Guide to Advancement* for details. Local council advancement committees can also establish higher minimum standards for counselors of a given badge.

Merit Badge Worksheets

Do a quick internet search on any merit badge, and you'll find fill-in-the-blank worksheets a Scout can use while working on that badge. You won't find these on the BSA website, however, because the BSA strongly discourages their use.

Why? When merit badge requirements are developed, they are meant to challenge a Scout's thought process, to cause the Scout to learn and practice skills; explore areas of interest; dispel misconceptions; and bring about interaction with others—especially positive adult role models. Worksheets are a shortcut. They present on paper what should be arrived at through thought and interaction—through asking questions and trial and error. They often create or support an atmosphere where Scouts are encouraged to get the merit badge finished as efficiently and quickly as possible, when the objective should be a significant learning experience that builds character, citizenship, and physical or mental fitness.

Worksheets can prevent struggling with requirements, but it is the struggle that can lead to retention of lessons learned. It would be far better for Scouts to start each badge with an old notebook from school or a three-ring binder full of blank paper than with a readymade worksheet.

That said, worksheets are permitted for fulfilling requirements where something is to be done in writing. However, merit badge counselors are not allowed to require their use—which would be adding to the requirements—and may refuse to accept them.

Merit Badge Classes, Fairs, Colleges, and Similar Events

There was a time when most Scouts earned most merit badges directly with merit badge counselors—the main exceptions being badges earned at summer camp. Today, some troops offer merit badge classes regularly as part of their program, and some districts and councils offer merit badge fairs or colleges, often in conjunction with universities or other partners. Done well, these classes and other programs spur advancement and introduce Scouts to badges they might not have otherwise pursued. Done poorly, they shortcut the advancement process and rob Scouts of the chance to learn valuable life skills and even the skills specific to the badges offered.

The Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide, a new resource with detailed guidelines on this subject, can be found at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-066_WEB.pdf. A careful reading of section 7 of the *Guide to Advancement,* No. 33088, will provide further information and support compliance with BSA merit badge policies and safety guidelines. Additional resources, such as information on how to be an effective merit badge counselor, are available online at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide, and through local district and council advancement committees.

Merit Badge Work in the Troop Setting

If you want to offer a merit badge within your troop, consider these guidelines:

- **Pick a badge that works well in a group setting.** For example, Chess and Game Design require multiple players for certain requirements, while Cycling and Hiking require daylong activities that are more enjoyable and easier to plan with groups of Scouts. Family Life and Personal Management, on the other hand, require a lot of individual work over several months, which makes them a poor fit for a group setting.
- **Limit badge work during troop meetings.** Some progress on skill-related badges such as First Aid, Camping, and Pioneering will naturally flow out of troop meetings, but it would be more appropriate to offer other badges as optional preopening activities (or special weekend sessions) for just those Scouts who are interested. (Unless you are working with a small troop of Scouts who are close together in rank, you will find few badges that interest every Scout or that some Scouts haven't already earned.) You could also have a counselor introduce a badge during one troop meeting—maybe doing enough that Scouts complete a requirement or two—and then offer a class before the next few meetings.
- **Look for field-trip options.** Some badges require Scouts to go places, whether that's attending a city council meeting for Citizenship in the Community or visiting a physician's office for Medicine. Taking such a field trip can add variety to your program, especially when there's a long gap between outings, and give Scouts a head start on a new badge.
- **Be happy with "partials."** Remember that earning merit badges is the Scout's responsibility, not the troop's. It's OK—in fact, it's preferable—if the Scout completes half the requirements in a group setting and must work with a counselor outside the troop setting to finish the badge.

  There is no limit on the number of "partials" a Scout may have at any point in time. For example, the Scout may have decided that some merit badges aren't that interesting after all, and has no intention of completing them (at least at that time).

Partial Merit Badges

Once a Scout has begun a merit badge, they may take as much time as needed to complete it. Partials have no expiration date except the Scout's 18th birthday, and troops, districts, and councils are not permitted to establish other deadlines. If the badge requirements change after the Scout begins work, the Scout has the option to continue using the old merit badge requirements and the old pamphlet or to switch to using the new requirements and the new pamphlet. If a badge a Scout has begun is discontinued, the Scout may complete it and count it for advancement. (Presentation of the cloth badge will be dependent on availability.)

A Scout may also complete a merit badge with a different counselor than they started with. The Application for Merit Badge has a place to record what has been finished: in the center section on the reverse of the blue card, the counselor initials for each requirement passed. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be a rare occurrence.

Merit Badge Fairs and Colleges

As a troop leader, you'll encounter plenty of group merit badge opportunities, from classes at summer camp to university-sponsored merit badge fairs to merit badge days at museums. In instances where group instruction is necessary or attractive as part of the learning process, care must be taken to ensure that each Scout still receives personal counseling to support their individual efforts. To help your Scouts evaluate which programs are worth the time and money, consider these questions.

- **Is this the best setting for the badges in question?** Summer camp is a great place to earn badges like Rifle Shooting and Lifesaving that require facilities, equipment, and expertise most local troops don't have. It's not such a great place for more academic badges like Citizenship in the World that require a lot of reading, research, and writing—activities most Scouts don't want to do at camp.
- **Is significant badge work feasible in this setting?** Review the requirements organizers say Scouts can complete to make sure they aren't taking shortcuts, such as showing a video of a city council meeting for Citizenship in the Community merit badge instead of taking Scouts to an actual meeting.
- **Are the merit badge counselors and instructors qualified?** Connecting Scouts with experts in various fields is a real advantage of many merit badge events. Taking the Chemistry or Digital Technology merit badges in a computer lab with a college professor or graduate student could make an already interesting badge even more interesting.

Instructors vs. Counselors

It is permissible for guest speakers, guest experts, or others who are not merit badge counselors to assist in the counseling process. Those providing such assistance must be under the direction of a registered and approved counselor who is readily available on-site and provides personal supervision to assure all applicable BSA policies and procedures—including those related to Youth Protection—are in place and followed.

- **Does the setting add value to the badge?** If your local zoo offers classes in Mammal Study or Reptile and Amphibian Study, Scouts might be able to go behind the scenes and learn more than the badge sets out to teach. While counselors aren't permitted to add requirements, few Scouts would turn down the chance to feed the camels or take an after-hours tour of the reptile house.
- **Is there a cost involved?** Charging fees for merit badge events is not prohibited. However, any fees charged should be limited to recovering the costs related to presenting the opportunity. Such costs could include supplies and the wages an organization or business pays to employees who present classes. The BSA does not endorse merit badge opportunities where fees are paid directly to individuals or to groups of individuals. Merit badge events should not be presented as fundraisers.

Advancement Reporting

In order to purchase badges your Scouts have earned, you must, of course, report their advancement to your local council. Reporting after every board of review is highly recommended so the recognition items can be picked up and presented as soon as possible after Scouts have earned their awards.

Beyond that, the BSA recommends that troops report advancement monthly, but at least quarterly. Because advancement should be a natural outcome of a well-rounded unit program, the BSA uses advancement as a measure of the successful delivery of the Scouting program to youth. It is important, therefore, to keep advancement records up to date with your local council.

The more frequently you report advancement, the easier the process is. Moreover, when your records at the council are up to date, you don't have to worry about your PC crashing or your advancement chair moving out of town unexpectedly.

Accurate advancement reporting makes membership transfers and reinstatements easier. It also facilitates the process of completing the Eagle Scout application. (The day before an Eagle board of review is not the best time to discover that the council has no record of one of the Scout's merit badges.)

Like most processes in the world today, advancement reporting has gone digital. Reporting advancement electronically is more accurate and efficient than submitting paper records and ensures that records are updated more quickly.

With Internet Advancement, units select an advancement processor who is granted access with a council-provided unit ID. Internet Advancement is accessed through the local council's website or from My.Scouting.org. Units may choose to enter information manually or upload advancement files generated from Scoutbook, which the BSA acquired in 2015, or a third-party troop-management program.

Because of documentation requirements, the Eagle Scout rank and nominated recognitions (such as meritorious action awards) are not entered electronically.

Most councils have also established "help desk"-style assistance. Staff members there can answer questions, provide unit access IDs, monitor activity, change passwords, reset profiles and data, and create reports requested by council management for staff and volunteer use.

Board of Review Signatures

As part of the board of review process, some councils recommend that you print, complete, and sign a copy of the blank Unit Advancement Report (UAR) form and then provide the form to the unit advancement coordinator for entering into Internet Advancement. The signed UAR is then attached to the Internet Advancement-generated Unit Advancement Report and submitted to your council service center. In this way, there is no need to chase signatures after the fact.

Scout Transfers

A Scout's BSA identification number (BSA ID) is unique only to each council, so a Scout's advancement information cannot be transferred to their new council without the originating council's "release." This is why it is important to obtain the Scout's name and current BSA ID on the youth application, as it is registered in the previous council, so that the transfer can take place properly. Nicknames and other differences will only delay the transfer. Attaching a copy of the member summary (one of the reports) from the old unit to the youth application helps with the transfer process.

Dual Registration

You may find that some Scouts have multiple registrations with units in different councils—for example, when divorced parents live in different states and share custody. In a situation such as this, the Scout's advancement records should be maintained in only one of the units. As the Scout passes requirements in any other unit, the information should be relayed to their primary unit so only one advancement record is maintained. It is not possible to electronically consolidate data across different units in different councils.

Scoutmaster Conferences

At some point before each board of review, a Scout must participate in a Scoutmaster conference. As described in volume 1, this is not a meeting the Scout must "pass," nor is it an opportunity for the Scoutmaster to test the Scout on what has been learned. Instead, it is simply a conversation between the Scoutmaster and the Scout. During the conference, the two can discuss the Scout's ambitions and life purpose, set goals for future achievement (both in Scouting and beyond), review the Scout's participation in the troop, and explore the Scout's understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. The conference also gives the Scoutmaster an opportunity to solicit feedback on the troop program and any challenges the Scout is facing. In some cases, work left to be completed—and perhaps why it has not been completed—may be discussed just as easily as that which is finished.

The Scoutmaster conference is a good time to sign off the Scout spirit requirement for each rank, although that requirement can be completed at a different time.

Ultimately, conference timing is up to the troop. Some leaders hold more than one along the way, and the Scout must be allowed to count any of them toward the requirement.

While it makes sense to hold a Scoutmaster conference after other requirements for a rank are met, the conference is not required to be the last step before the board of review. This is an important consideration for Scouts on a tight schedule to meet requirements before age 18. Last-minute work can sometimes make it impossible to fit the conference in before then, so scheduling it earlier can avoid unnecessary extension requests.

Scoutmaster conferences are meant to be face-to-face, personal experiences. For this reason, the conferences should not be held in an online setting. They relate not only to the Scouting method of advancement, but also to the adult-association method. Scoutmaster conferences should be held with a level of privacy acceptable under the BSA's policies regarding Youth Protection. Parents and other Scouts within hearing range of the conversation may influence the Scout's participation.

Adult leaders do not have the authority to deny a Scout a conference that is necessary to meet the requirements for rank advancement. If a Scoutmaster conference is denied, a Scout who believes all the remaining requirements have been fulfilled may still request a board of review. If an Eagle Scout candidate is denied a conference, it may become grounds for a board of review under disputed circumstances.

As the name implies, Scoutmaster conferences should be handled by the Scoutmaster, not an assistant Scoutmaster. However, if the troop is so large that the Scoutmaster can't handle them all, he or she might delegate some of them to a knowledgeable assistant Scoutmaster. Delegation would also make sense if the Scoutmaster is absent for a long period, such as during a military deployment. Keep in mind, however, that if a Scout meets with different leaders along the trail to Eagle, the Scout won't have the chance to develop a relationship with the Scoutmaster, and the conferences can't build on what has been discussed previously.

Boards of Review

After a Scout has completed the requirements for any rank (starting with Tenderfoot), the Scout appears before a board of review. Its purpose is to determine the quality of their Scouting experience and to decide whether they have fulfilled the requirements for the rank. If so, the board not only approves the advancement but also encourages the Scout to continue the quest for the next rank. (This encouragement could include a tally of requirements the Scout has already completed for that next rank, such as merit badges already earned that haven't been counted for rank advancement yet.)

The specific process for Eagle Scout boards of review is determined by the local council.

Board of Review Scheduling and Composition

Because the board of review date becomes the effective advancement date, boards should be scheduled promptly as Scouts are ready, or set up on a regular basis that assures Scouts are not delayed in beginning time-oriented requirements for the next rank. It's a good idea to develop a list of identified troop committee members and other adults who are willing to serve on boards.

A Scout shall not be denied the opportunity for a board of review. When a Scout believes all the requirements for a rank have been completed, including a Scoutmaster conference, a board of review must be granted. Scoutmasters—or councils or districts in the case of the Eagle Scout rank—for example, do not have authority to expect a Scout to request or organize one, or to "defer" the Scout, or to demand performance beyond the stated requirements in order to be granted one. In a case where there is concern the Scout has not fulfilled the requirements for a rank as written, it is appropriate to advise the Scout that they might not pass the board and to make suggestions about what they might do to improve the chances for success. It is, however, the Scout's decision whether or not to go ahead with a board of review.

Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review may also be held for Scouts who are not advancing. These can be valuable for identifying any stumbling blocks Scouts are experiencing. Consider setting up a schedule to ensure that every Scout has at least one conference and one board each year.

A board of review must consist of no fewer than three members and no more than six, all of whom must be at least 21 years of age. Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters shall not serve on a board of review for a Scout in their own troop. Parents, guardians, or relatives shall not serve on a board for their own children. Neither the candidate nor the candidate's parents or guardians shall have any part in selecting any board members.

Boards of review for any rank are meant to be face-to-face, personal experiences. From time to time, however, as Scouts go off to college or the military, or live in very remote locations, for example, it may be virtually impossible to hold in-person boards of review. In those rare situations where it is unreasonable to expect a Scout to travel long distances, or to wait several months, it is permissible to use videoconferencing.

What Happens at a Board of Review

Most adults would admit to nervousness if told they were to appear before a "board of review." Imagine how a Scout must feel. A certain level of formality and meaningful questioning should exist, but it is important that the atmosphere be relaxed and that the review be conducted with the Scout Law in mind. It may help if the unit leader introduces the candidate and if a few minutes are spent getting acquainted.

The unit leader may remain in the room, but only to observe, not to participate unless called upon. The number of "observers" at a board of review should otherwise be minimized. The members of the board of review, however, have the authority to exclude the unit leader or any other observers if they believe their presence will inhibit open and forthright discussion. Youth observers are not permitted in boards of review for another Scout's advancement.

It is strongly recommended that the Scout's parents, relatives, or guardians should not be in attendance in any capacity—not as members of the board, as observers, or even as the unit leader. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics. In

cases where parents or guardians insist on attending a board of review, they should be counseled that their presence can change how their child addresses questions and that the opportunity to further self-reliance and courage may be lessened. However, if parents or guardians still insist on being present, they must be permitted to attend as observers.

In situations where—before a board is held—one or more members are of an opinion the Scout should be rejected, they should discuss their reasoning with the Scoutmaster or others who know the Scout. Generally, a unit leader is closer to the youth; he or she may be able to present a different perspective and prevent an uncomfortable or unfair scenario.

The BSA discourages mock or practice boards of review. "Practice" reviews may imply that board members will ask predetermined questions or that the board of review is not anticipated to be a positive experience. The best boards of review are conversations, not inquisitions.

Though one reason for a board of review is to help ensure the Scout has met the requirements as written, it shall become neither a retest or "examination," nor a challenge of the Scout's knowledge. In most cases it should, instead, be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. A badge recognizes what a Scout has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth. It is thus more about the learning experience than it is about the specific skills learned.

A Scout must not be rejected at a board of review for reasons unrelated to advancement requirements. For example, a Scout must not be rejected just because the Scout did not bring their Scouts BSA handbook to the board of review, or because the Scout was tardy for a board of review—although the reason for the tardiness may certainly be a topic for discussion.

Board of Review Discussion Topics

During the review, board members may refer to the Scouts BSA handbook, *Scouts BSA Requirements,* volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* and other such references. The *Troop Committee Guidebook* has examples of appropriate questions. Board members may ask where the Scout learned the required skills, who taught them, and what the Scout gained from fulfilling selected requirements. The answers will reveal what the Scout did for the rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what the Scout was supposed to do. Discussion of how the Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law at home, in the troop, the school, and the community should be included. Remember, however, that though we have high expectations for our members, as for ourselves, we do not insist on perfection. It is most important that a young adult has a positive attitude, accepts Scouting's ideals, and sets and meets good standards in life.

A board is not required to keep minutes, but that is a good idea. Any such notes must remain confidential to the members of the board or to administrators with a need to know. They may be used in preparing a follow-up letter, should a Scout be turned down, and they can be helpful in an appeal process. In any case, once a review or appeal is completed, all notes must be destroyed.

After the board of review, the Scout is asked to wait outside the room or out of hearing range while the board deliberates. To approve awarding a rank, the board must agree unanimously. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each member's perspective, and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Scout shall not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place. As indicated below, the Scout is told only how improvement can be achieved.

After the Review

If the members agree a Scout is ready to advance, the Scout is called in and congratulated. The board of review date—not that of a subsequent court of honor—becomes the rank's effective date.

If a board does not approve, the candidate must be so informed and told what they can do to improve. Most Scouts accept responsibility for their behavior or for not completing requirements properly.

How Boards Can Lead to Program Improvement

Boards of review are about the Scout—but they are also about the Scout's experience in the troop. Board members are likely to hear about areas where the troop could improve, whether that means giving youth leaders more latitude or redoubling efforts to pursue high adventure. While Scouts should feel comfortable sharing their concerns with the Scoutmaster and his or her assistant Scoutmasters, some are more willing to open up to board members. The Scoutmaster and committee chair should encourage board members to offer suggestions based on what they've heard from Scouts.

Promoting Advancement and Awards

While much advancement work is a natural outgrowth of an active troop program, it also makes sense to promote specific badges and to encourage Scouts to pursue other awards, such as religious emblems, the World Conservation Award, and the Nova Awards (which are described in chapter 12). As section 5 in volume 1 demonstrates, there are dozens of badges a Scout may earn. Each badge earned teaches a Scout new skills, offers tangible goals to pursue, and helps the Scout grow in ways that will be beneficial in adulthood.

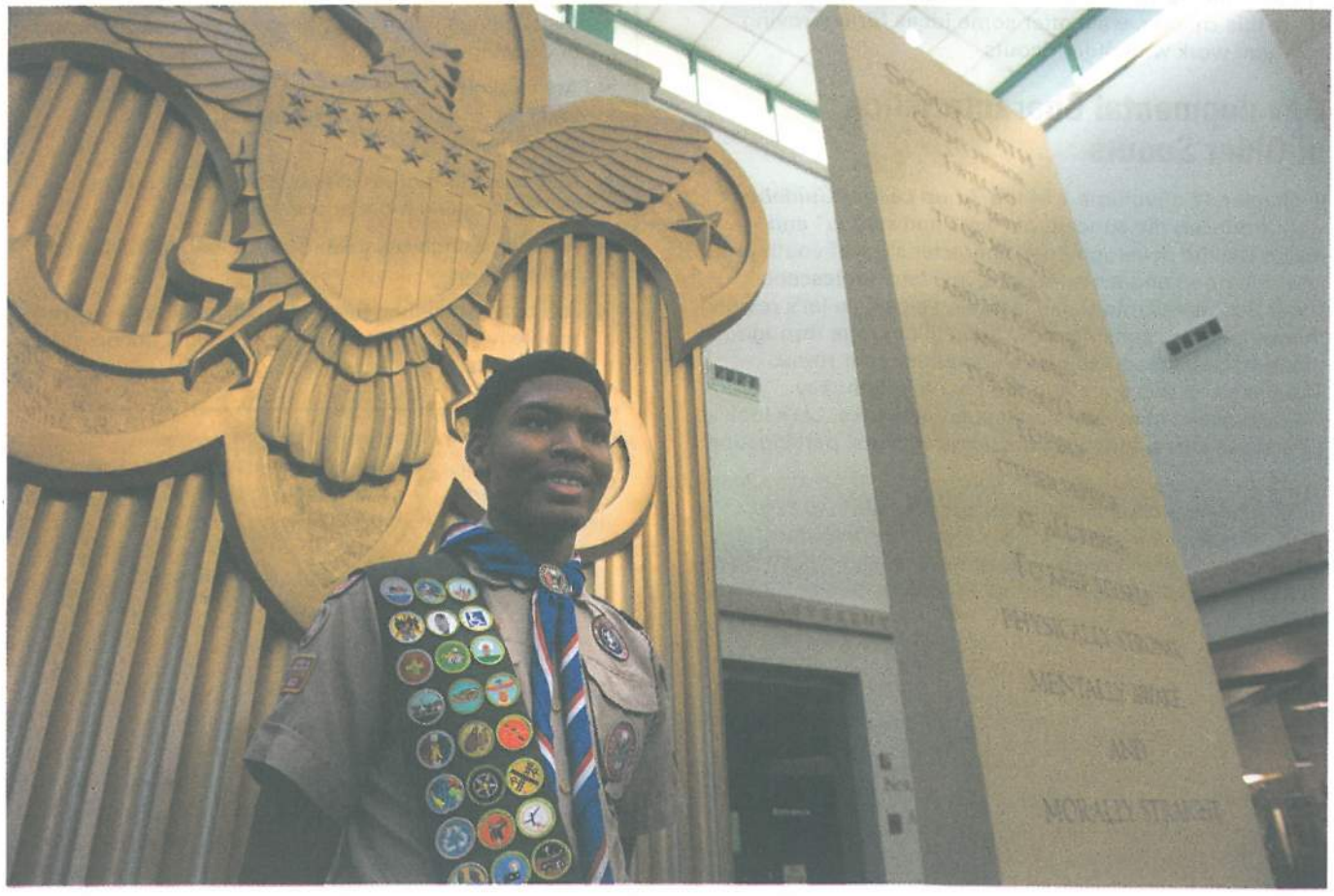
Here are some ways to promote advancement and awards in your troop.

- Develop a troop library that includes merit badge pamphlets, copies of the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book, and the applications for special awards.
- In Scoutmaster's Minutes and troop communications, highlight badges related to each month's theme or unrelated "badges of the month."
- Regularly schedule optional merit badge classes before troop meetings. You could alternate between elective and

Eagle-required badges or choose badges that correspond with monthly themes.

- Occasionally invite merit badge counselors to give 10-minute previews of their badges during troop meetings.
- At courts of honor have Scouts who've earned unusual badges tell the troop what they learned.
- Encourage the patrol leaders' council to include carefully selected merit badge events in the annual troop program.
- Hold regular courts of honor (three or four per year) to recognize Scouts.
- Work with your district or council to develop an up-to-date list of merit badge counselors.
- Survey troop parents, leaders, and members of the chartered organization to find out what badges they could counsel. Keep in mind that the Merit Badge Counselor Information form lets prospective counselors specify whether they want to work with all Scouts or just those from your troop or district. (This can be reassuring to someone who fears being overwhelmed with badge candidates.)
- Check with nearby Venturing crews for names of consultants they have used for their activities. Consultants, who are usually recruited on a one-time basis, would probably be qualified to counsel merit badges related to their expertise, although they must still register and be approved by the council advancement committee.
- Make it easy for Scouts to request Scoutmaster conferences. Remember that the conference doesn't have to be the last requirement done before the board of review.
- Make it easy for Scouts to receive boards of review. Some troops regularly convene boards of review—during the first troop meeting each month, for example. Scouts or adults should also be able to request a board at other times with minimal delay.

It might be tempting to recognize Scouts who earn the most badges in a given period. Doing so, however, takes the focus off the learning advancement is designed to foster. It's better for a Scout to earn one badge that introduces them to a lifelong hobby or career than to rush through five badges just to fill their merit badge sash. Look for ways to promote advancement that emphasize quality over quantity.



CHAPTER 17
Working With Older Scouts

A youth who spends the maximum possible time as a Scout joins the program as a child and departs as an adult. The Scout enters a troop during elementary school and leaves it (or becomes an adult leader) about the time of graduating from high school and beginning the next phase of life, whether that's higher education, military service, or a full-time job. In other words, the young adult who leaves the program at 18 years of age is vastly different from the child who joined it as a 10- or 11-year-old.

Yet, too often, troop leaders treat Scouts who are in high school similarly to those who are in middle school. They think the same activities will interest them, the same badges will motivate them, and the same leadership styles will inspire them. As a result, many older Scouts leave Scouting altogether and pursue activities that they think are more age-appropriate.

Adult leaders shouldn't write off older Scouts, however. In fact, troops across the country retain high percentages of Scouts well into their high school years and convert many of them into assistant Scoutmasters as soon as they turn 18. In this chapter, we'll offer some ideas for improving how you work with older Scouts.

Developmental Characteristics of Older Scouts

In chapter 12 of volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, we introduced the concept of "ages and stages" and discussed the developmental characteristics of youth in late childhood and early, middle, and late adolescence. Older Scouts fall into those last two stages, so let's review them—and also consider how Scouts' passage through those stages affects their involvement in your troop. The boxes on this page and the next highlight key characteristics of middle and late adolescence. Let's look at how those characteristics affect older Scouts' participation.

A key to working with Scouts of any age is to treat them as if they were just a little older and more mature than they really are.

Middle Adolescence (ages 14 and 15)

Teenagers of 14 or 15:

- Are in the early years of high school
- May be struggling academically for the first time as courses become more challenging and homework increases
- Are in the full throes of puberty
- May be as tall as many adults
- Are dating or at least interested in dating
- Are spending significant amounts of time away from home
- Are loosening their ties with their parents and relying more on a peer group as a sort of second family
- Yearn for the independence that they perceive will come with a driver's license and a job
- May be engaging in risky behavior such as smoking or drinking alcohol
- Are continuing to experiment with their identity and may seem to be a different person in different settings
- May seem to regress in maturity and show less self-control and more egocentricity
- Are increasingly aware and critical of hypocrisy and adult failings
- Are better able than before to think abstractly, solve problems, and plan ahead, although still not on par with adults

If you've never spent much time around teenagers—perhaps your own kids are just now reaching early adolescence—consider shadowing a Venturing or Order of the Arrow adviser or someone who works with high schoolers at your place of worship.

Late Adolescence (ages 16 to 18)

Young adults of 16 to 18:

- Are nearly full-grown physically and look more like adults than adult-size children
- Are in the latter years of high school
- Are already thinking (and worrying) about life after high school
- Are painfully aware that the decisions they're making now—such as whether to attend college, join the military, or enter the workforce—will affect the rest of their lives
- Want to prove to their parents and themselves that they're ready to be independent
- May have a job and access to a car, which gives them spending money, mobility, and a measure of independence
- Are spending more time than ever on homework, athletics, school activities, and dating
- Are more comfortable with their academic and social status (honor student, jock, band nerd, party animal, Scout) as peer pressure evolves
- May have a steady romantic interest and a smaller but tighter group of friends than before
- Can reason abstractly and think analytically nearly as well as adults, although they lack the life experiences that guide adult decision-making
- Are beginning to think about politics, social issues, and global causes
- Have a relatively stable identity, which is consistent across different settings

Working With Scouts in Middle Adolescence

Middle adolescence is an appropriate term because young people at this stage (typically ages 14 and 15) are stuck in the middle. They're no longer children, but they're still a long way from adulthood. Depending on outside influences, they can be easily pushed in either direction, much like a person walking on a balance beam.

Scouts of all ages will rise or fall to meet your level of expectation.

When you treat middle adolescents as being more mature than they actually are, they tend to respond well; when you treat them as children, they tend to act as children. What does that look like in a troop context? Here are some suggestions:

- Eliminate the words *boy, girl,* and *kid* from your vocabulary. Use *youth, young man, young women, young adult,* or *older Scout* instead. (Note that the BSA describes Venturing as a program for young men and young women, not teenagers and certainly not boys and girls or kids.)
- Set high—but achievable—expectations for their behavior.
- Remind Scouts of their status. If an older Scout does something that's inappropriate for their age, call them on it and ask if it's something a high schooler should be doing.
- Acknowledge Scouts' identity with their high school. Know which schools your Scouts attend. Keep up with how their sports teams are faring. Accommodate scheduling conflicts by, for example, not planning a campout on the weekend of the state basketball tournament.
- Help Scouts build strong peer groups in the troop. Youth in middle adolescence view their peer groups as a second family and often begin forming new peer groups as middle school friends are left behind. Building a strong older-Scout patrol is a good way to help Scouts foster positive peer relationships.
- Encourage them to use their brains. Give older Scouts a chance to use their newfound abilities to think abstractly, solve problems, and plan ahead. Pose an ethical dilemma for them to discuss. Introduce the sort of problem-solving games common in COPE. Put them in charge of planning outings and service projects.
- Understand that each Scout is different. While Scouts share many interests and activities with their peers, they don't conform in every area. In fact, as they establish their own identities, many wear nonconformity as a badge of honor. Be sure to let each Scout contribute thoughts regarding activities.
- Encourage their participation in the wider world of Scouting by taking advanced training, working on day camp staff, or joining a Venturing crew.

Working With Scouts in Late Adolescence

Young people in late adolescence are living in two time zones: the now and the next. They are intent on experiencing all that the high school years have to offer—including Friday-night football games, proms, after-school jobs, driving, dating, relaxed curfews, and spending money—but they're also focused on what's next. Those who are bound for college may be especially intent on building résumés that will attract the attention of college admissions counselors or varsity coaches (continuing a process that began in middle school or even before for many of them). Here are some suggestions for setting your Scouting watch to the time zones of the now and the next.

- Treat older Scouts as the 20-somethings they're becoming. Strive for a collegial relationship—not a leader/follower relationship—with 16- and 17-year-old Scouts, especially the senior patrol leader and junior assistant Scoutmaster. (Of course, all Youth Protection policies apply, even if your junior assistant Scoutmaster is 17 years, 11 months, and 29 days old.)
- As with middle adolescents, acknowledge and accommodate your Scouts' high school identity. Planning a campout on homecoming weekend or the night of the senior prom virtually guarantees that older Scouts will skip the campout. That has at least two negative consequences: It deprives the troop of experienced youth leaders on the campout, and it subtly communicates that Scouting is a childhood pursuit, one they should be leaving behind.

- Acknowledge special efforts Scouts make to participate. If a Scout comes to a troop meeting straight from soccer practice, don't criticize the Scout for being out of uniform; thank them for skipping dinner so they can fulfill their responsibilities as a youth leader.
- Celebrate your Scouts' scholastic and athletic achievements. Post the honor-roll list in your meeting place. Announce at a troop court of honor that a Scout earned all-district honors in football. Like adults, Scouts want to be around people who celebrate their accomplishments.
- Teach skills that are relevant to their stage in life. Many older Scouts have driver's licenses, for example, and would be more interested in earning the Automotive Maintenance and Traffic Safety merit badges than in reviewing knots and lashings for the umpteenth time.
- Harness teens' interest to tackle big topics and global issues. Many teens want to save the planet, fight injustice, or tackle nagging social problems. Challenge them to plan service projects that focus on the root causes of these issues.
- Show them connections between the merit badge program and what they're doing in school. A Scout who's in the band is well on the way to earning the Music merit badge; playing team sports makes the Athletics and Sports merit badges pretty easy; more academic badges like Citizenship in the Nation and Reading have obvious analogs in the high school curriculum. When Scouts advance in Scouting because of things they're doing in school, they see Scouting as a worthy pursuit at their age.
- Show them connections between Scouting and the next stage in life. Remind older Scouts that the Eagle Scout Award can help them earn college scholarships and lets them enter the military at a higher pay grade. Talk to them about how their Scouting experiences could provide the basis for effective college-entrance essays. Introduce them to adults in your community who can talk about how Scouting prepared them for success in later life.
- Figure out what their needs are and help to meet those. Invite college counselors and military recruiters to visit troop meetings. Incorporate college visits into troop road trips. Offer to write recommendation letters for college applications.
- While older Scouts are an incredible resource for teaching younger Scouts, avoid the trap of always using them as instructors to teach basic skills without also giving them opportunities to set themselves apart. Older Scouts will quickly lose interest if they spend all their time around younger Scouts.
- Take their skills to a higher level. If they have been around for a while, they probably already have the skills you can teach them. To help them grow, it's essential that you engage consultants who can teach advanced skills. (As an added benefit, you will likely learn something as well.)
- The most important action a leader can take with older youth is to listen to them. This age is all about discovering who they are. They are seeking feedback, but in order to help them, you have to hear where they are coming from. This is a good time to remember that you have two ears and only one mouth.
- Show them how they can remain active in your troop while also participating in Venturing, Sea Scouts, camp staff, and other activities. Connect them with advanced training opportunities such as the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) and Powder Horn, or help them lead a Kodiak Challenge.

"What's in it for me?" is a question every Scout asks. For younger Scouts, the answer is often fun, camping, and outdoor skills. For older Scouts, the answer is often adventure, adult association, and life skills.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage are ceremonies or rituals that mark the transition from one stage of life to the next, often after a period of intense preparation. Once you've completed a rite of passage, there's no going back to the previous stage. The most common rites of passage occur as young people come of age during adolescence. Formal examples include bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs, confirmation or first communion services, debutante balls, "sweet sixteen" parties, and high school graduations; informal examples include things like getting a driver's license, taking a parent-teen road trip, or even staying home alone overnight.

Young people need rites of passage—so much so that they will invent them where they don't exist. They might create hazing rituals in their groups or engage in sexual activity or underage drinking to "prove" that they're all grown up.

Scouting, of course, has its share of rites of passage: the crossover ceremony for Webelos Scouts; the Ordeal and other ceremonies in the Order of the Arrow (discussed in the next chapter); Scoutmaster conferences; and the courts of honor where Scouts receive recognition for the ranks and badges they have earned, are recognized for other achievements, and are publicly installed as new troop officers. When an Eagle Scout court of honor occurs around the Scout's 18th birthday, it effectively doubles as a ritual marking transition into adulthood.

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

One way to meet the needs and retain the interest of older Scouts is to develop additional rites of passage in your troop. These shouldn't be elaborate activities—and they can't in any way resemble hazing. Instead, they should be simple ways to mark a Scout's growth and maturation. Here are a few examples:

- Create a special troop neckerchief that is only worn by the current senior patrol leader and predecessors. Make a big deal of presenting each new senior patrol leader with this neckerchief. (Given that neckerchiefs may be worn with nonuniform clothing during Scouting activities, the SPL neckerchief can take on extra significance.)
- Find a special location, such as a troop family's lakefront cabin, and hold patrol leaders' council retreats (and

nothing else) there. Emphasize that PLC members have earned the privilege of being there and of leading the troop through the next six months.

- Give each Scoutmaster conference from First Class through Eagle a specific focus. For example, the focus at First Class could be duty to self, the focus at Star could be duty to others, and the focus at Life could be duty to God and country. That leaves the focus at Eagle about honor and how an honorable young adult lives out duties to God and country, others, and self.
- Develop a special ceremony for inducting Scouts into the older-Scout patrol.
- Establish a servant-leader society within the troop and induct Scouts who excel as servant leaders. Have adults select inductees initially but quickly switch to having past inductees, including those who have moved on to college and careers, vote on each new class.
- On outings where you're camping by patrol—which should be most outings—give the older-Scout patrol that choice campsite next to the lake. Or let them camp next to the adults and share the adults' meals.
- Create a tradition of an annual "super activity" that only older Scouts may attend. This should be something they look forward to all year and that requires a certain level of proficiency; possibilities include a special rafting trip, a shooting event, or even something like a 20-mile hike or a cycling tour. Be sure younger Scouts know about the event so that they can begin anticipating the time they can participate.
- When a Scout turns 18 and becomes an assistant Scoutmaster, hold a brief ceremony where you present the assistant Scoutmaster patch, a camp coffee mug, or other tokens of the Scout's new status.

Other Suggestions for Working With Older Scouts

Here are a few more suggestions for working with older Scouts:

- Make your troop a place older Scouts feel at home. Instead of criticizing them for less-than-regular attendance, celebrate them when they do attend. If they play sports, let them know that you'll still be there once the season ends. (That said, you may counsel a football player not to run for a troop office during the fall semester, or you may discourage a student who's taking five Advanced Placement classes from coordinating a big troop fundraiser.)
- Find ways that older Scouts can flourish. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that older Scouts are just there to serve as youth leaders or to finish up their Eagle Scout requirements. Help them find their next challenge, whether that's serving on summer camp or National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) staff, attending NAYLE, doing an individual high-adventure program at a national high-adventure base, or attending a national or world jamboree. Much like teachers take continuing-education courses and sabbaticals to renew and refresh, older Scouts who are serving as youth leaders need opportunities to learn and grow.
- Depending on their personal interests, your older Scouts' needs may be better met in a Venturing crew, Sea Scout ship, or Explorer post. Even though they aren't in your troop, they will still be progressing toward BSA's mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Remember this: You are going to lose your older Scouts sooner or later, either because they turn 18 or because they decide to pursue other interests. The only questions are when they will leave and where they will go.

CHAPTER 18
Working With the Order of the Arrow, Venturing, and Sea Scouts

Remember this: You are going to lose your older Scouts sooner or later, either because they turn 18 or because they decide to pursue other interests. The only questions are when they will leave and where they will go.

"I'm bored" has been a constant refrain for generations of kids. Today, however, it's hard to see how any young person could really be bored. Between Scouting, year-round sports, martial arts, robotics clubs, religious youth groups, school activities, and staggering homework loads—not to mention TV, digital devices, and social media—kids have plenty of activities to keep them occupied each day. And the busyness only increases as kids grow older, gain more independence from their parents, and, in many cases, start building résumés they hope will help them get into their dream colleges.

As a troop leader, you probably feel like you're constantly competing for your Scouts' time and attention, and you may view the soccer coach and band director as adversaries intent on stealing Scouts away from your troop. You may even feel that way about other parts of Scouting, specifically the Order of the Arrow, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. Often, OA, Venturing, and Sea Scout activities can seem more attractive to older Scouts, pulling them away from troops. But when understood and used correctly, those programs for older youth can benefit your troop in powerful ways while encouraging older Scouts to remain engaged. We'll explain how in this chapter.

The Order of the Arrow

Before we can discuss how the Order of the Arrow can benefit your troop, we need to discuss what the Order is and is not.

To begin, it's not a separate program like Venturing and Sea Scouting. Instead, it is Scouting's national honor society. Its purpose is to:

- Recognize those Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Scout Law in their daily lives and, through that recognition, cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
- Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
- Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit, and ability to advance the activities of their units, the OA, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
- Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Established in 1915, the OA emphasizes service to the unit. In this way, Arrowmen (as members, whether male or female, are called), give back to their troops with the leadership skills and values of service learned through the Order. The Order's program complements the troop's, providing valuable leadership training programs, world-class high adventure opportunities, and exciting national conferences.

"Let it be remembered that the Order of the Arrow was created to help the unit—to help it present its membership a better ideal of the inner qualities of the good Scout camper. Qualities of character, such as cheerfulness and service, are hard for a boy or a man to understand in the abstract. They come easier when seen in human life.

"Let us realize the significance of the Order in the unit—for the unit is our best hope in Scouting."

—Dr. E. Urner Goodman, founder of the Order of the Arrow

The Mission of the Order of the Arrow

The mission of the Order of the Arrow is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

The History of the Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow was founded in 1915 by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson at Treasure Island, the Philadelphia Council Scout camp, located on a 50-acre wooded island in the Delaware River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Goodman, then 24 years old, was the camp director, and Edson, also 24, was an assistant camp director. They determined to start a camp society to provide recognition for those Scouts in their camp who best exemplified the spirit of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in their daily lives. Because the Delaware Valley was rich in American Indian tradition, and the island had been used in early times as an Indian camping ground, it seemed only natural to base this honor society on the legends and traditions of the Delaware Indians. From the beginning, a unique custom was established in that members were to be elected by nonmembers. That tradition continues today.

By 1917, news of the organization had spread to other Scout camps, and inquiries began. Goodman spoke to many interested Scouts and Scouters, and as a result, lodges were established in New Jersey, Maryland, New York, and Illinois. In 1922, the Order of the Arrow became an official program experiment of the BSA. In 1934, the Order of the Arrow program was approved by the National Council, and in 1948, the Order, recognized as the BSA's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the Boy Scouts of America. In 1998, the Order was officially recognized as Scouting's national honor society when it expanded its reach beyond camping to include a greater focus on leadership development, membership extension, adventurous programming, and broader service to Scouting and the community.

Today, the Order of the Arrow's service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich, support, and help extend Scouting to America's youth. An estimated 3 million Boy Scouts and Scouters have been inducted into the Order since 1915. There are now more than 150,000 active members in lodges affiliated with nearly 270 local BSA councils.

Order of the Arrow Structure

The Order of the Arrow has three distinct organizational levels: lodges, sections, and regions. Lodges carry out the Order of the Arrow program at the local level and are closely tied with BSA councils; in most cases, a lodge covers the same territory as a council. Sections consist of several lodges within a geographic area, and regions in turn consist of a group of sections. Lodges, sections, and regions each have a distinct set of responsibilities which ensure that the OA program runs smoothly.

At each level, the Order relies on youth leaders who are guided and supported by adult advisers who are in turn supported by staff advisers (professional Scouters). The Order considers a youth to be someone under the age of 21, so many youth leaders, especially above the local level, are 18, 19, or 20 years old.

At the local level, lodges exist to serve BSA councils and individual units. The key leaders in a lodge are the youth lodge chief, a volunteer adult lodge adviser appointed by the council Scout executive, and a staff adviser. The lodge chief presides over the Lodge Executive Committee, which is responsible for executing the annual program of the lodge. While each lodge is different, many lodges have one or more vice chiefs, a secretary, and a treasurer, as well as committee chairs responsible for various aspects of the lodge's program, such as service, ceremonies, and camping promotion. Many lodges, especially large ones where additional structure is necessary, have chapters. If a lodge has chapters, there is generally one chapter for each district of the council. Each chapter has its own officers and advisers, the officers being elected by the youth OA members within the chapter, and the advisers being appointed by the Scout executive, often with the consultation of the lodge adviser and the district executive.

OA members age 18 through 20 must register as adults, complete Youth Protection training, undergo criminal background checks, and follow the same Youth Protection policies as older adults.

An Order of the Arrow section consists of the lodges within a geographic area of a BSA region. Each section is led by a chief, a vice chief, and a secretary, who play a crucial part in organizing the annual section conclave (a weekend event that includes training, service, competitions, and fellowship). The section may lead training seminars, promote national programs of emphasis, and provide resources to local lodges. The section chief presides over the Council of Chiefs, which is attended by delegates of each member lodge.

The Order of the Arrow, like the Boy Scouts of America, is organized into four geographical regions: Central, Northeast, Southern, and Western. Each region is led by a youth region chief, a volunteer region chair, and a region staff adviser. The region leadership helps execute the national program on a more local level, implements the National Leadership Seminar and National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar (described below), provides its member sections with resources, and facilitates communication between local organizations and the National Order of the Arrow Committee.

At the national level, the Order of the Arrow is governed by the National Order of the Arrow Committee. This committee sets policy, directs the national program of the Order, and broadly manages the organization above the local lodge level. The committee is composed of the national chief and national vice chief (and their immediate predecessors), who are elected annually at the national planning meeting; the chair, who is appointed annually by the chair of the National Outdoor Adventures Committee; other volunteer members, appointed by the chair; and two staff members, the director and associate director of the Order of the Arrow.

Order of the Arrow Membership Levels

There are three levels of membership in the Order of the Arrow.

Ordeal Membership. Once a Scout has been elected to the Order of the Arrow by unit members (or a Scouter has been selected by the lodge adult selection committee), the Scout or Scouter is formally recognized as a candidate for induction into the Order. This is done at a call-out ceremony, usually conducted by the lodge ceremonies team in an outdoor setting at an event like a camporee or summer camp. The candidate then takes part in a brief pre-Ordeal ceremony, and later an actual weekend-long Ordeal (series of tests) to prove sincere dedication to the principles of the Order of the Arrow. Finally, if qualified, the candidate is accepted as a member in an Ordeal ceremony. The new Arrowman is expected to strengthen their involvement with the troop and encourage Scout camping.

Brotherhood Membership. From the beginning of the Order in 1915, all members have been equal. There are no ranks. An Ordeal member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the Order. Brotherhood membership is sought by Arrowmen seeking to reaffirm their belief in the high purposes of the Order, and it marks

the completion of induction into the Order of the Arrow. Before becoming a Brotherhood member, each Arrowman makes a special effort to serve their troop. After at least 10 months of active service to the unit, an Ordeal member will be eligible to seal membership by completing additional requirements and participating in the Brotherhood ceremony. Each Brotherhood member commits to even more service to Scouting through the Order.

Vigil Honor. The Vigil Honor is a high mark of distinction and recognition reserved for those Arrowmen who, by reason of exceptional service, personal effort, and unselfish interest, have made distinguished contributions beyond the immediate responsibilities of their position or office to one or more of the following: their lodge, the Order of the Arrow, Scouting, or their Scout camp. Any member of the Order of the Arrow registered in Scouting and in good standing in a lodge is eligible for recommendation to the National Order of the Arrow Committee for elevation to the Vigil Honor, provided that, at the time of the recommendation, the Arrowman has been a Brotherhood member for a minimum of two years. Because the Order of the Arrow is primarily an organization for youth, preference in selection is typically given to those who became members of the Order as Scouts rather than to those who were inducted into the Order as adult volunteers or professional Scouters.

How OA Members Are Identified

Arrowmen wear white sashes with a red arrow to signify their membership in the Order of the Arrow. Sashes indicate an Arrowman's membership level in the OA: Ordeal, Brotherhood, or Vigil. The Ordeal sash shows an unadorned arrow; the Brotherhood sash adds bars above and below the arrow; the Vigil sash includes the Brotherhood bars and a triangle superimposed over the center of the arrow.

It is appropriate for an Arrowman to wear the sash when he is doing official OA business or attending an OA ceremony. It is not appropriate to wear the sash at non-OA functions, such as troop meetings, campouts, courts of honor, or Friends of Scouting presentations; or at training programs such as Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST), National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), or Wood Badge. However, a sash should be worn at such functions if the Arrowman is representing the Order of the Arrow in an official capacity, such as when leading a unit election. The OA sash should always be worn over the right shoulder (under the shoulder loop); it is not appropriate to wear the sash draped or folded over the belt or at the same time as a merit badge sash.

Arrowmen also wear a patch (a "pocket flap") on the flap of the right front pocket on the official Scout uniform; this patch signifies their membership in the Order and distinguishes the lodge to which they belong. Arrowmen should wear the pocket flap of their current lodge—the lodge of the council in which they are registered in Scouting and to which their OA dues are paid.

Unit Elections

To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a Scout is chosen by vote of the youth members in the Scout's unit. This is a unique feature of the Order, given that the majority of those who select their candidates for this honor are not members of the lodge. (Note that lodge members in the unit have a vote as well as nonmembers.) In this way membership is controlled by the youth in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen. Because the Order of the Arrow is for Scouts ages 11–20, elections are not held in Cub Scout packs.

The Order of the Arrow lodge is responsible for conducting unit elections in every troop in the council every year. In advance of the election period, the lodge provides information to all Scoutmasters regarding membership in the OA and the election procedures. Typically, the lodge will send an email or letter announcing unit elections to the troop adult leader with a copy to the unit's OA troop representative and adviser. (These roles are described later in this chapter.) The email or letter sets out the time of the year when elections will be held, describes the purpose of the elections, provides the election rules and procedures, outlines the membership requirements for youth and adults, and advises unit leaders how they can schedule an election. All elections must be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop is chartered. No unit that visits outside its council may hold an OA unit election under the auspices of the OA lodge of another council.

Unit elections are held at a troop meeting, and every effort should be made to have 100 percent attendance of both youths and adults at this meeting. At least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership must be present. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. Units may not conduct their own elections (although the OA troop representative should certainly be involved). Every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote in an Order of the Arrow unit election; this includes assistant Scoutmasters who are 18, 19, or 20 years old. A Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, an assistant Scoutmaster away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as campouts, camporees, or occasional unit meetings, should be considered a registered active member. A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Immediately prior to the election, the unit leader provides a list of registered active youth members of the unit who have his or her approval for nomination. The unit leader has no authority to change the requirements for election to

the Order of the Arrow, just as he or she has no authority to change the Eagle Scout or other rank requirements. The unit leader must certify Scout spirit (i.e., adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law and active participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that each nominee meets all of these qualifications at the time of this annual election:

1. A Scout who holds the First Class rank or higher, is under the age of 21, and is registered as an active member of the troop may, with the approval of the unit leader, be nominated for election. Prior to the annual election, the unit leader must certify the nominee's Scout spirit and youth membership qualifications.
2. The youth must have experienced 15 nights of Scout camping while registered with a troop within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement. The balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each.

If you withhold a Scout's name due to Scout spirit, you should tell the Scout so ahead of the election. Scouts should also have the option not to put their names up for election if they are not interested in joining the Order.

Voting for youth candidates will be based on their spirit of brotherhood, cheerfulness (no matter how tiresome their duties), and a willingness to give unselfish and wholehearted service to others at all times. All youth members of the troop present at the meeting may vote for any or all of the candidates, and all eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected as candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow. If no one is elected, a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of the second vote will be final for that year's unit election.

Developing an Informed Electorate

Younger Scouts, especially in large troops, may not know all the candidates and may be hesitant to cast votes, making it harder for worthy candidates to be elected. Campaigning is not allowed in OA elections, but it is permissible for the unit leader to provide additional information about the candidates, such as their rank, merit badges earned, number of nights camping, service hours completed, and leadership positions held. This information could be announced prior to the vote or included on printed ballots.

Adult Candidate Nominations

Each year, upon holding a troop election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection committee. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. Recommendations of the lodge adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, will be candidates for induction, provided the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose and is not for recognition of service, including current and prior achievements and positions.
2. The individual will be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
3. The camping requirement set forth for youth members is fulfilled (although it may be waived for district/council Scouters as explained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers).*
4. The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

A Scout who had gone through the Ordeal is a member of the Order of the Arrow for life. That means an adult who was an Arrowman as a youth can restart active membership at the same level (Ordeal, Brotherhood, or Vigil) upon registration as an adult leader. This could be a good avenue for getting an uninvolved former Scout more active in your troop.

Order of the Arrow Membership Requirements

Youth	Adult
Under the age of 21	Age 21 or older
First Class rank or higher	Able to help the Order fulfill its purpose
Active member of a troop	Would provide a positive example to youth members of the lodge
Experienced 15 nights of Scout camping within past two years, including one long-term camp	Experienced 15 nights of Scout camping within past two years, including one long-term camp
Elected by other youth members	Nominated by the unit committee and selected by the lodge adult selection committee
Must complete the Ordeal	Must complete the Ordeal

As soon as the unit election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of youth members who have been elected. Newly elected youth candidates and adult candidates selected by the lodge adult selection committee will be called out in a public call-out ceremony at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony. Candidates for induction have one year to complete the Ordeal.

Additional information concerning OA unit elections, including answers to frequently asked questions, can be found in the *Order of the Arrow Guide to Unit Elections,* which can be obtained from the local lodge, the unit's OA troop representative, or the Order of the Arrow website at https://oa-bsa.org/uploads/publications/GTUE-201905.pdf.

OA Troop Representative

Perhaps the biggest challenge in working with the Order of the Arrow is keeping up with what's going on in the lodge, especially if your troop doesn't have adult leaders who are active Arrowmen. Meeting this challenge is the role of the Order of the Arrow troop representative.

The Order of the Arrow troop representative is a youth serving a troop as the primary liaison to the lodge or chapter. This youth leader serves as a formal communication and programmatic link to both Arrowmen and nonmembers in the troop, making sure they are aware of chapter and lodge news and activities and helping to avoid scheduling conflicts with troop activities. The OA troop representative also teaches Scout skills, promotes Scout camping and spirit, sets the example, and encourages Arrowmen in the troop to be active in the lodge and to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members. These efforts are meant to assist the troop and its members in achieving the mission of the Boy Scouts of America, and at the same time fulfilling the lodge's role of being an integral part of the council.

Any Scout who is under the age of 18 can serve as the troop OA representative, provided that Scout is a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow. The OA troop representative is appointed by the senior patrol leader with Scoutmaster approval, serves as a nonvoting member of the patrol leaders' council, and attends OA lodge and chapter meetings. Like other youth leadership positions in the troop, the OA troop representative is eligible to wear the appropriate badge of office. The OA troop representative is an official youth leadership position that can be used for rank advancement. (Note that other OA positions, such as chapter chief and lodge chief, do not count toward rank advancement.)

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Position Description

- Serve as a communication link between the lodge or chapter and the troop.
- Encourage year-round and resident camping in the troop.
- Encourage older-Scout participation in high-adventure programs.
- Encourage Scouts to actively participate in community service projects.
- Assist with leadership skills training in the troop.
- Encourage Arrowmen to assume positions of responsibility in the troop.
- Encourage Arrowmen in the troop to be active participants in lodge and/or chapter activities and to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and OA Obligation.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Position Patches and OA Youth Officers

The OA troop representative is the only youth member who wears an OA-related position patch. The OA doesn't provide or authorize position patches for positions like chapter chief, lodge chief, or even national chief, a subtle way to emphasize that OA officers must be members of troops and that their first duty is to their home units.

OA Troop Representative Adviser

As with all positions in the Order (and in the troop), the OA troop representative should have an adult adviser. This adult must be over the age of 21, must be a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow, and must be appointed by the Scoutmaster. The adviser assists the youth representative to be successful as the communication and programmatic link between the troop and the lodge or chapter. The adviser helps to include Order of the Arrow ideals and activities in the program of the troop. By setting a good example, the adviser enhances the image of the Order as a service arm to the troop. The OA troop representative adviser may wear an OA assistant Scoutmaster position patch.

A good candidate to serve as the adviser to the Order of the Arrow troop representative could be a troop parent who was an Arrowman as a Scout but who isn't currently active as a leader.

Adviser to the Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Position Description

- Support the youth he or she advises, helping the youth to fully understand the needs of the troop and the elements of the lodge and chapter structure that are responsible for support to the unit.
- Promote the incorporation of OA ideals into the advancement program of the troop, in Scoutmaster conferences, boards of review, and courts of honor. Promote recognition of troop members who have completed their Ordeal, achieved Brotherhood, or been inducted into Vigil Honor membership.
- Attend lodge and chapter meetings with the youth he or she advises. (Be sure to follow the BSA's two-deep leadership policy.)
- Ensure that the OA troop representative has the necessary transportation.
- Help the lodge or chapter in ensuring that messages and documents regarding the achievement of Brotherhood reach Ordeal members in the troop, and work with the OA troop representative to assess their impact.
- Assist the OA troop representative in providing feedback to the lodge or chapter on OA programs that affect the troop, including Ordeals, troop elections, call-outs, camp-promotion visits, meetings, and service projects.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Order of the Arrow Obligation.
- Show Scout spirit.

Additional resources for OA troop representatives and advisers, including an *Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Support Pak,* can be found on the Order of the Arrow website at https://oa-bsa.org.

OA Unit of Excellence Award

The Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award identifies those troops, and the leaders within them, who excel at incorporating the OA into their annual planning. This award is intended to provide a tool for OA lodges to recognize and encourage unit-level participation in Order of the Arrow programs. The OA Unit of Excellence Award criteria recognize units that invite the lodge to conduct quality unit elections, participate in lodge events and meetings, and operate a complete OA troop representative program. Units that complete all of the requirements each year for recognition as an Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence receive a ribbon for their troop flag.

The award criteria for troops are as follows:

1. **Leadership:** Implement the OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser programs in your unit.
   - Every six months, ensure that the senior patrol leader appoints or reappoints one Scout to serve as OA troop representative and that the Scoutmaster appoints one adult to serve as OA troop representative adviser.
   - Feature an annual presentation at a court of honor by the OA troop representative on the Order of the Arrow, with a focus on the accomplishments of troop members.
2. **Participation:** Promote lodge events and provide transportation to all Arrowmen wishing to participate.
   - Have at least 50 percent of the troop's OA members attend at least one lodge event in addition to their Ordeal.
3. **Elections:** Schedule a unit election with the lodge or chapter election team annually.
   - Hold an election and have 100 percent of the unit's elected Scouts complete their Ordeal.
4. **Planning:** Maintain an active planning process that prevents overlap between lodge or chapter events and troop events.
   - Review the local OA calendar with the patrol leaders' council during annual program planning, and schedule troop events so that 100 percent of troop programs do not overlap with any full-lodge events.
5. **Conversion:** Demonstrate the depth of your unit's OA program through Brotherhood conversion.
   - Have at least 30 percent of eligible troop members who are Arrowmen seal their membership in the Order by converting to Brotherhood membership.

In addition to the ribbon, the award system includes recognition for the key players responsible for creating a strong Order of the Arrow culture in the unit. These awards are available for the Scoutmaster, the OA troop representative, and the OA troop representative adviser. The Scoutmaster receives a certificate, while the OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser receive recognition patches. (These are temporary patches designed to be worn on the right pocket of the uniform; a separate patch, the OA assistant Scoutmaster position patch, may be worn by the adviser whether or not they have earned the Adviser of Excellence award.)

The award criteria for troop leaders are as follows:

Order of the Arrow Scoutmaster of Excellence. Lead your troop in earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award three times during your tenure as Scoutmaster.

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative of Excellence. Lead your troop in earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award during your tenure as OA troop representative (six months of service minimum).

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Adviser of Excellence. Advise at least two OA troop representatives toward earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award during your tenure as OA troop representative adviser.

Order of the Arrow Leadership Training

Perhaps the strongest benefit the OA offers your troop is the array of leadership training programs youth and adult Arrowmen can take. These programs teach important skills that Arrowmen can bring back to the troop. Here's an overview.

Jumpstart. The OA offers introductory training to new members through its Jumpstart website, which provides additional orientation at home after the Ordeal. There, new members find helpful information as they continue the path to Brotherhood membership. New Arrowmen are encouraged to visit the Jumpstart website to learn more about the Order of the Arrow.

Lodge Leadership Development. LLD is a local training program presented by the lodge to train lodge and chapter leaders. LLD keeps members' knowledge of OA policies, procedures, and traditions fresh, and provides an avenue through which lodges can strategically focus on preparing their leaders for success in achieving lodge Journey to Excellence objectives. Arrowmen also learn leadership skills and program ideas that they can put to use in their units.

Section Training. The OA offers a variety of training opportunities at the section level. Training is an important part of the annual section conclave. Among the training offerings at a section conclave is a nationally developed Conclave Training Initiative (CTI). CTI provides annual opportunities for Arrowmen to engage in learning about specific training topics outlined in syllabi from the National Order of the Arrow Committee. The process allows every section in the nation to deliver consistent messages and is designed to augment sections' own conclave training programs.

National Leadership Seminar. NLS is the Order's premier leadership training program. The weekend seminar, held about four times per year in each region, provides an in-depth look at how leadership traits are developed and used in everyday life. The weekend format complements the more detailed Wood Badge and National Youth Leader Training programs, focusing on service within the OA toward Scouting.

National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar. NLATS enhances an adult adviser's knowledge of and connectivity with the OA's strategic plan, program, and resources. Advisers also develop personal skills that are essential to the development of effective youth leadership and ultimately the OA's service to the council. The seminar fosters openness to new ideas and sharing among advisers in attendance, while delving into the details of numerous areas of OA operations.

National Order of the Arrow Conference. NOAC is a six-day adventure designed to get Arrowmen excited about their servant-leadership roles within the Order. Scouting's second-largest national program event (after the National Jamboree), NOAC is held every two or three years at a major university and brings together thousands of Arrowmen to enjoy training, fun, and fellowship.

The OA provides additional training and substantial information concerning its programs, events, and awards through its website at https://oa-bsa.org.

OA High-Adventure Programs

The Order of the Arrow provides unique opportunities for Arrowmen to experience Scouting's four high-adventure bases at a substantially reduced cost compared to regular troop or council treks. Here's an overview.

Order of the Arrow Trail Crew at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico was the OA's first high-adventure program. OA Trail Crew participants build trails that other Scouts will use at Philmont for years to come. The crew then designs its own unique Philmont trek and spends a week in the backcountry. The OA Trail Crew program has become an important and admired part of Philmont's traditions.

Order of the Arrow Wilderness Voyage and Canadian Odyssey take place at the Northern Tier High Adventure Bases. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Canadian government, crews repair centuries-old portage trails first used by American Indians and European explorers and trappers. They then chart their own course for a canoe adventure in the boundary waters along the Minnesota-Canada border.

Order of the Arrow Ocean Adventure is based at the Florida Sea Base. Participants perform service projects that benefit Big Munson Island and the delicate ecosystem of the Florida Keys. Their service is followed by a sailing adventure with fishing, snorkeling, paddle boarding, and other activities.

Order of the Arrow Summit Experience, the OA's newest high-adventure program, takes place in and around the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia. Crews build trails for the New River Gorge National River and then enjoy the many exciting activities that the Summit has to offer.

These programs combine challenging service with leadership training and special high-adventure opportunities for the Arrowmen who attend. Participants in these programs live the principles of servant leadership, experience some of Scouting's greatest adventures, and return home with lifelong friends and a renewed dedication to Scouting and the Order. Most of the programs are for Arrowmen ages 16 to 20, except for the OA Summit Experience, which is for Arrowmen ages 14 to 18. Programs fill up early in the year. Applications and additional information are available on the OA High Adventure website at **https://oa-bsa.org/high-adventure.**

Harnessing the Power of the OA for Your Troop

You can harness the power of the OA to benefit your troop, but only if you take concrete action. If you treat the OA as just another activity competing for your Scouts' time, you'll miss some great opportunities. Here are a few suggestions.

Your OA lodge has a vested interest in supporting your troop. Among the items on the Journey to Excellence scorecard for lodges are unit elections, unit visits, the Unit of Excellence Award, and camping promotion.

Fill positions of responsibility. As you might expect, the best first step is to ensure that your troop has an active OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser. These individuals can help the troop avoid calendar conflicts with the lodge, ensure that the troop has annual elections, and identify lodge resources that can benefit the troop.

Hold annual elections. Regular elections are critical for a couple of reasons. First, they can help you develop a critical mass of Arrowmen in your troop, which will make their participation in lodge activities more likely (and carpooling to those activities easier). Second, you create more opportunities for adult leaders to be selected for OA membership, since the number of adults who can be nominated is based on the number of Scouts who are elected. The more Scouts and Scouters in the troop who are active Arrowmen, the better the relationship between troop and lodge is likely to be. Having adults involved in the lodge can make transportation to lodge events easier for your Scouts and can also help ensure better communication between the troop and the lodge.

Coordinate with the older-Scout patrol. While youth Arrowmen can be any age (assuming they've reached First Class rank), active Arrowmen are often much older, especially if they are serving as lodge or chapter officers. For that reason, your OA troop representative and adviser should work closely with the patrol leader of the older-Scout patrol. These groups—Arrowmen and the older-Scout patrol—will typically have overlapping membership and similar interests, so coordination is important. For example, it might not make sense to promote the OA Trail Crew program if the troop is planning a Philmont trip.

Recognition works in both directions. At the OA's Unit, Chapter, and Lodge Support Web page (https://oa-bsa.org/resources/ucl-support/eagle-scout-congratulatory-letter), you can find downloadable Eagle Scout congratulatory letters from the national chief and the national chair.

Recognize OA accomplishments. At troop courts of honor and in troop communications, make it a point to recognize new Arrowmen and those Scouts and adults who have become Brotherhood or Vigil Honor members. These are significant accomplishments and are worthy of recognition.

Discover what they've learned. After troop members attend OA training sessions such as NLS, sit down with them and talk with them about what they've learned, just as you would after Scouts attend NYLT or NAYLE. While some training topics are specific to the OA, many apply to the troop as well, such as understanding people or building a social media platform. Find ways for them to share what they've learned with their peers (and with adult leaders), perhaps by taking a few minutes at a PLC meeting to share a new leadership technique.

Promote OA high-adventure programs. If your troop struggles to put together crews for high-adventure trips, these programs can be a great way to give your older Scouts a mountaintop experience with little effort on the troop's part. What's more, participants are likely to come home as passionate advocates of high adventure.

Learn about lodge resources. Many lodges have camping promotion committees that develop extensive "where to go camping" directories and websites. Others have ceremony teams that can assist with Webelos Scout crossover ceremonies. Some provide leadership in planning district camporees and other events. Those with strong service committees could help you find places to do meaningful service projects. Your OA troop representative and adviser should be able to identify the resources your lodge has to offer.

Venturing and Sea Scouts

Unlike the Order of the Arrow, Venturing and Sea Scouts are distinct, standalone programs of the BSA. Someone can join Venturing or Sea Scouts without having had any previous Scouting experience and in fact may be only dimly aware that there's a connection to the Scouts BSA.

As programs of the BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts share the BSA's mission: "to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law." How they achieve that mission varies from Scouts BSA in ways both large and small.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is that Venturing and Sea Scouts serve young adults—both male and female youth ages 14 through 20. (Youth who are 13 may join if they have completed the 8th grade.) Recognition in Venturing and Sea Scouting, and the aims and methods of these programs, are different from those in Scouts BSA, although they share key similarities.

Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scout Terms

Program	Unit	Top Youth Leader	Assistant Youth Leader	Adult Leader	Assistant Adult Leader
Scouts BSA	troop	senior patrol leader	assistant senior patrol leader	Scoutmaster	assistant Scoutmaster
Venturing	crew	president	vice president	Advisor	associate Advisor
Sea Scouts	ship	boatswain (pronounced "BO-sun")	boatswain's mate	Skipper	mate

A Scout can register with a crew or ship (or both) while retaining membership in a troop. The Scout only needs to pay the BSA registration fee in their primary unit.

Venturers and Sea Scouts who are 18, 19, or 20 years old are considered adult participants. They may hold youth offices and pursue youth awards, but they must register as adult leaders, complete Youth Protection training, and follow the same Youth Protection policies as older adults. That means, for example, that an 18-year-old could not share a tent with a 17-year-old even if both individuals are youth officers.

The History of Venturing and Sea Scouts

Venturing and Sea Scouts share an intertwined history. Together, they are among the oldest and newest programs of Scouting.

In 1912, just two years after the founding of the BSA, Sea Scouts was launched. That year, Arthur A. Carey of Waltham, Massachusetts, created a Sea Scout program using the schooner *Pioneer,* while Charles T. Longstreth organized a Sea Scout patrol on his yacht in Philadelphia.

In 1913, Secretary of the Navy G.V.L. Meyer encouraged the development of Sea Scouts and extended the Navy's cooperation. Two years later, the first Sea Scout manual, *Handbook on Nautical Scouting,* appeared. By the time of the 1937 National Scout Jamboree, thanks to the work of James Austin ("Kimo") Wilder and Thomas J. Keane (Sea Scouts' first full-time director), Sea Scout ships were active across the country; in fact, a separate subcamp at the jamboree consisted of contingent ships from all 12 BSA regions.

With a membership of more than 27,000, Sea Scouts served the country well in World War II. At the outset of the war, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox issued an appeal for all Sea Scout leaders to join the service as commissioned officers. Thousands did, so many that entire ships ceased to exist for the duration of the war. Sea Scouts made a tremendous impression on Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, who believed that Sea Scouts were better trained and better equipped than other sailors to help the Navy beat the enemy and the elements.

Sea Scouts was joined by a land-based alternative, Explorer Scouts, in 1935 and by the aviation-focused Air Scouts in 1942. Seven years later, the BSA made sweeping changes to its older-boy programs, designating all Scouts who were 14 years of age or older as Explorers, including what became known as Sea Explorers and Air Explorers. (A boy could be an Explorer in his troop or join a standalone unit called an Explorer post.)

Although many Sea Explorers went into the Navy, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine, Exploring didn't focus on career preparation in its early decades. That changed in 1959, when the BSA created a new Exploring program that focused explicitly on vocational exploration. Similar changes came to Sea Exploring in 1966.

By the 1960s, Exploring was addressing six experience areas: citizenship, service, social, vocational, outdoor, and personal fitness. The program gradually developed a split personality, with some posts emphasizing high-adventure activities and others emphasizing career exploration. As a result, the BSA divided Exploring in two in 1998. Career-oriented posts kept the Exploring name and became part of Learning for Life (an affiliated organization launched in 1991 to oversee the BSA's in-school programs). Everything else became known as Venturing. Initially, Sea Scouting was a specialized segment of the Venturing program, but the programs have been administered separately since 2008.

Today, Exploring is a career education program for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) or 15 through 20 years old. Exploring's purpose is to provide experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Explorer posts can specialize in a variety of career skills, and all focus on five areas of emphasis: career opportunities, life skills, citizenship, character education, and leadership experience. For more information, visit www.exploring.org.

Venturing's Aims

Venturing has four aims that carry over from Scouts BSA: character development; citizenship; mental and physical fitness; and developing leadership skills. In addition to these defined aims, Venturing has two desired outcomes: developing leadership skills and adventurous programming.

Character Development. The first aim of Venturing is character development. Character can be defined as the collection of core values by an individual that leads to

moral commitment and action, and encompasses a young adult's personal qualities, values, and outlook. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law summarize the Venturing vision of character.

Citizenship. Venturing also seeks to encourage active citizenship among Venturers. In Venturing, citizenship addresses the young person's relationship with others. Crew members come to learn of their obligations to other people, to society, and to the government that presides over that society—and develop skills that will help them be effective participants in the process.

Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Fitness. The third aim of Venturing is to develop physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual fitness among Venturers. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect), and spirit (faith in God and respect for beliefs of others).

Developing Leadership Skills. Developing skills of leadership is critical in helping young adults move from being spectators in life to being individuals who make a difference. Scouting provides opportunities for young adults to develop leadership skills and to guide others as servant leaders.

Adventurous Programming. For Cub Scouts and Scouts, the outdoor program is a learning laboratory where the other aims of Scouting find their expression. In Venturing, adventurous programming is not limited to the outdoor program. The adventure may be indoors or outdoors, but in all cases, it safely helps young adults to move beyond their known comfort zone to confirm for themselves that they can accomplish more than they once believed possible. Through this process, Venturers develop not only life skills and relationships of trust with other crew members and their adult Advisors but also courage and self-confidence, which are vital to success in life.

Venturing's Methods

The Venturing methods provide the process through which the Venturing aims and the mission of the Boy Scouts of America are accomplished. The methods are presented in no particular order, as there is no hierarchy among them. Consistent application of each of these methods is at the core of delivering the Venturing program.

Leadership and Mentoring. All Venturers are given opportunities to learn and apply leadership skills. A Venturing crew is led by elected crew officers. Venturing's program model provides explicit training experiences to help youth lead and mentor as well as opportunities to test and refine their skills during youth-led and youth-mentored adventures.

Group Activities and Adventure. Venturing's emphasis on adventure helps provide team-building opportunities, new meaningful experiences, practical leadership application, and lifelong memories to young adults. Venturing activities are interdependent group experiences in which success is dependent on the cooperation of all. Learning by doing in a group setting provides opportunities for developing new skills.

Recognition. Personal growth comes through the Venturing recognition program and through the acknowledgment of a youth's competence and ability by peers and adults. The recognition program is more than just earning awards. As a Venturer progresses through the four levels of the Venturing recognition program, he or she will learn valuable skills and competencies that have been identified as vital to achieving success in education, in a work environment, and in life.

Adult Association. The youth officers lead the crew. The officers and activity chairs work closely with Advisors and other adults in a spirit of partnership. The adults serve in a "shadow" leader capacity. The Advisor is there to support and challenge youth officers to make the best decisions as they learn to lead their colleagues on adventures of ever-increasing challenge and sophistication.

Ideals. Venturers are expected to know and live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law and commit to serving God and country, other people, and themselves. A Venturer measures himself or herself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and Venturers reach for them, meet the challenge, and answer the question of how these statements of personal value guide their life path.

Group Identity. Peer groups are essential for the growth and development of young adults. Group identity is the shared sense of belonging to a group with common values, and it serves as a means to build positive group interactions and self-confidence. Some crews use outward signs of group identity, such as a uniform or jacket, but a crew may decide to form an identity that is more focused on shared commitments.

Service. Service encourages young people to identify a community need and to take action to address that need. Service helps Venturers make a difference in the world beyond themselves and in the process develop the disposition to put the needs of others first.

Venturing's Areas of Emphasis

Most Scout troops follow a familiar pattern of weekly meetings, monthly outings built around camping skills, and longer-term activities like summer camp and high-adventure trips. The advancement program and the uniform are important tools for measuring Scouts' growth.

Venturing, on the other hand, is often described to participants as "anything you want it to be." While some crews offer activities similar to a Scout troop, others focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), community service, or faith development. Some crews never go camping; others focus on high-adventure activities so strenuous that few troops would undertake them. A crew may or may not emphasize recognition, and the uniform could be anything from a crew T-shirt and jeans to the traditional spruce-green uniform shirt with charcoal-gray pants.

Despite this diversity in approach, all crews use adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service as explicit ways of exploring the interests of the crew members. Venturing's program combines these four areas of emphasis with the levels of programming to form a program matrix. The areas of program emphasis provide a framework for youth-led adventure and fun, as well as benchmarks of progress for the Venturing recognition program.

Venturing's Areas of Emphasis

Award Level	Adventures and Activities	Leadership	Personal Growth	Service
Venturing	Initial participation, orientation to the crew, Personal Safety Awareness training, induction into the crew			
Discovery	Participation	Preparing to lead	Goal-setting and personal growth	Participating in service
Pathfinder	Leading and participating	Leading others	Goal-setting and personal growth	Participating in service
Summit	Mentoring and participation	Ongoing leadership development	Goal-setting and personal growth	Leading others in service

Venturing Recognition Program

The Venturing recognition program is a tool to help give structure to a Venturer's experiences and learning. While recognition is one of the methods of Venturing, this method is best approached as an outcome of a balanced annual program plan developed by the members of the crew. Details and guidance on developing and implementing an annual crew program plan are presented in the *Handbook for Venturers.*

The four Venturing awards (or "Trail to the Summit") constitute a pathway that guides a Venturer from participant to leader to mentor for others. The requirements for each award fall into each of the areas of program emphasis. The requirements can be found in the *Handbook for Venturers,* the *Venturing Advisor Guidebook,* and *Venturing Awards and Requirements.*

Venturing Award. The Venturing Award is designed to be earned within a month of a Venturer joining a crew. (The rough equivalent in Scouts BSA is the Scout rank.) Its requirements focus on learning about Venturing and its values, learning about personal safety, and forming a commitment to further participate. A crew's leadership should seek to make this a natural process for all new members.

Discovery Award. The Discovery Award is designed to help a new Venturer benefit from full and active participation in crew activities. He or she will learn skills and basic competencies in preparation for assuming leadership roles in the crew while on the Trail to the Summit. The purpose of the Discovery Award is to move past the orientation provided by the Venturing Award and shift the Venturer into action. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

Pathfinder Award. The Pathfinder Award is designed to solidify basic and intermediate leadership skills by providing the Venturer with opportunities to lead crew activities, adventures, and service projects and to focus on personal leadership development. The four areas of program emphasis continue to form the foundation of the program, with the Venturer now taking a more active part in the leadership of the crew and the crew's activities. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

Summit Award. The Summit Award, the highest Venturing award, is designed to provide advanced leadership skills and experience and to help focus the Venturer on working diligently to make a difference in the lives of others, including those in the crew and in the community, through a significant service project and advanced leadership opportunities. You can think of it as the Venturing counterpart to the Eagle Scout Award. The Summit Award moves the experience of Venturing to become more "others-directed." The experiences grounded in the four areas of program emphasis focus more on the Venturer's impact on other people. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

You may occasionally see references to Venturing's Bronze, Gold, and Silver awards. These awards were discontinued with the introduction in 2014 of the Trail to the Summit.

Venturing Skills-Based Recognition: TRUST, Ranger, and Quest Awards

For Venturers seeking additional challenges in outdoor adventure, sports and physical fitness, or spiritual life, three optional awards are available. The Ranger Award (outdoor adventures) has eight core requirements and a wide variety of electives from which a Venturer chooses four to excel in to help him or her become a master of the outdoors. The Quest Award (sports and physical fitness) requires 12 projects, four core requirements, and an elective that all promote excellence in sporting and physical fitness. The TRUST Award (religious experiences) has five categories of requirements that involve learning more about one's own faith tradition and those of others.

TRUST is an acronym that stands for Tending your beliefs/faith, Respecting the beliefs of others, Understanding other cultures, Serving your community, and Transforming our society.

These optional awards serve as tools to help a crew develop a dynamic and exciting program that leads to adventures, leadership, personal growth, and service, but some crews may find that these specialty awards also

provide a pathway to adventure that can be incorporated into the larger, core awards trail. For example, a crew based around outdoor adventures may find that the Ranger Award provides a structure for a one- to two-year sequence of adventures that, as a byproduct, lead to crew members earning the Discovery or Pathfinder awards. Crews focused on sports could similarly use the Quest Award, and crews focused on religious life could use the TRUST Award.

Venturing Beyond the Crew

Each council has a Venturing Officers Association that brings together crew officers, council-level Venturing officers, and adult advisors to support individual crews, plan council-wide Venturing activities and training courses, and give Venturers a voice in the council. Similar groups function at the area, regional, and national levels (where top Venturers form the National Cabinet). The mission of all VOAs is to promote and support the Venturing program, utilizing a standard organizational structure that enables growth by advancing leadership opportunities through communication, program, and administration. If you are looking for ways to connect with Venturing, your council VOA is a great place to start.

Venturing has developed an array of training courses that are tailored to the needs of Venturers, including Personal Safety Awareness, Goal Setting and Time Management, Project Management, and Mentoring for Venturers. Venturers can also participate in NYLT, NAYLE, and Powder Horn, which are described in chapter 13 of volume 1.

The Purpose and Program of Sea Scouts

Sea Scout ships focus on sailing, cruising either sailboats or power vessels, and participating in paddle sports and other aquatic activities. During the boating season, Sea Scouts learn to maintain and operate a vessel, with a focus on learning the safe and proper methods of handling boats. Sea Scouts also learn the meaning of buoys and lights, how to take advantage of wind and tide, and how to drop anchor or approach a dock. Through partner organizations, they take training in first aid, lifesaving, sailing and seamanship, and other topics.

Many ships participate in rendezvous and regattas with other units. The most prestigious is the biannual William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup, which brings together two-person teams from around the world for a week of sailing competition.

Although Sea Scouting has a maritime focus, many strong and active ships are located far from any coastline. Some focus on activities like scuba diving or paddle sports instead of boating. As in Scouts BSA, the activities are simply a mechanism through which young people learn lifetime values.

Sea Scouts Aims, Methods, and Traditions

The aims and methods of Sea Scouts mirror those of Scouts BSA, which is no surprise given that the programs were founded just two years apart. The biggest difference, of course, is that Sea Scout activities focus on aquatic activities while Scout activities focus on camping and hiking. (Sea Scout leaders like to say that their bait is boats.)

That doesn't mean you can just add water to Scouts BSA to get Sea Scouts. Many factors make Sea Scouts unique, not the least of which is the program's embrace of maritime traditions. For example, Sea Scouts use a boatswain's call (whistle) during assemblies and flag ceremonies, and a double salute is required when boarding or leaving a vessel or landship (a land-based simulated ship where ceremonies are held). And, of course, Sea Scouts use nautical terms through the program: *Skipper* instead of *Scoutmaster, boatswain* instead of *senior patrol leader, bridge of honor* instead of *court of honor,* etc.

Sea Scout Advancement

Sea Scouts has its own advancement track. The four ranks in Sea Scouts are described below.

Apprentice. Striving for the Apprentice rank, Sea Scouts learn ideals, courtesies, procedures, and responsibilities, and how members of a ship are organized and uniformed. Basic swimming and beginning seamanship skills are required, as is knowledge of safety, emergency procedures, and Safe Swim Defense. Sixteen hours of service in ship projects, activities, or equipment maintenance fill out the requirements.

Ordinary. Sea Scouts attain the Ordinary rank through additional service, knowledge of the Sea Scout emblem, U.S. flag etiquette, and land and sea protocols. Successful candidates will participate in strengthening ship membership, serve as an event chair, complete quarterdeck training, pass the Swimming merit badge requirements, and qualify on various safety and emergency procedures, drills, communication methods, and Safety Afloat. They learn about the galley, build on seamanship and boat-handling skills, and learn about anchoring, piloting and navigation, and related regulations. Overnight cruise planning and participation provides for skills application, and completing three electives broadens horizons.

Quarterdeck training is conducted after ship elections for youth officers and their adult counterparts. The quarterdeck meeting is a ship's monthly business meeting, roughly equivalent to a patrol leaders' council meeting.

Able. To achieve the Able rank, Sea Scouts master ceremony presentation and demonstrate knowledge of maritime history. They also teach others—perhaps Scouts or Venturers—about the program and fulfill leadership responsibilities. They must pass the Lifesaving merit badge requirements and develop further expertise in safety and first aid. There is a continued progression in seamanship, boat-handling skills, anchoring, and piloting and navigation, as well as a deeper understanding of maritime environmental issues. The Sea Scout Long Cruise badge, earned by making a two-week cruise (or shorter cruises totaling 14 days), is required for Able, as is completion of three electives.

Since 2015, paddle sports activities have been integrated into the Sea Scout advancement program.

Scout Advancement in Venturing and Sea Scouting

Venturers and Sea Scouts who earned First Class rank as registered Scouts are qualified until their 18th birthdays to continue with Scout advancement. If desired, they may maintain multiple (dual) registration in a troop and in a crew or ship and work on ranks in either unit. Wherever the member is registered, the Scoutmaster works with the Advisor or Skipper and the Scout to decide who will oversee the advancement.

With the exception of the Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit Award service projects, any work done while a Venturer or Sea Scout can count toward both Scout and Venturing or Sea Scout advancement at the same time. The Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit Award projects must be separate and distinct from each other.

Quartermaster. The highest award for Sea Scouts presents a challenge that, when met, will affect a young person through their life. It's the Sea Scout counterpart to the Eagle Scout Award. The Quartermaster candidate must think analytically about how the program is delivered and supported, while developing a deeper understanding of Scouting ideals. Most requirements represent intensification of what was learned for previous ranks, but with significant additions in the Quartermaster service project, cruise, and study of weather and forecasting. The cruise involves taking long-term command of a vessel and crew and conducting critical drills.

Harnessing the Power of Venturing and Sea Scouts for Your Troop

Much like the Order of the Arrow, Venturing and Sea Scouts can benefit your troop—if you ensure that they do. Here are some ways to harness the value of these programs to benefit your troop.

Build a relationship with a companion crew and/or ship. When you have a crew or a ship associated with your troop—especially as part of the same chartered organization—you establish natural paths for Scouts to follow when they get older (and for younger Scouts to anticipate). Rather than lose your older Scouts to another program, as you might with sports, you gain the involvement of their Venturing and Sea Scout friends, who can help out your troop from time to time.

You might think of Venturing and Sea Scouts as somewhat akin to the Scoutmasters' lounge at summer camp: a place to renew and refresh before diving back into the work of leading a troop.

Use Venturing and Sea Scouts to combat the idea that Scouting has nothing to offer once a Scout earns the Eagle Scout Award. If the members of your troop mistakenly think that earning the Eagle Scout Award is equivalent to graduating from Scouting, Venturing and Sea Scouts can show them there is life after Eagle. Moreover, involvement in Venturing or Sea Scouts tends to slow Scouts' advancement so that they earn Eagle closer to age 18. And if they do earn Eagle at 13, there are plenty of additional awards they can pursue in Venturing and Sea Scouts.

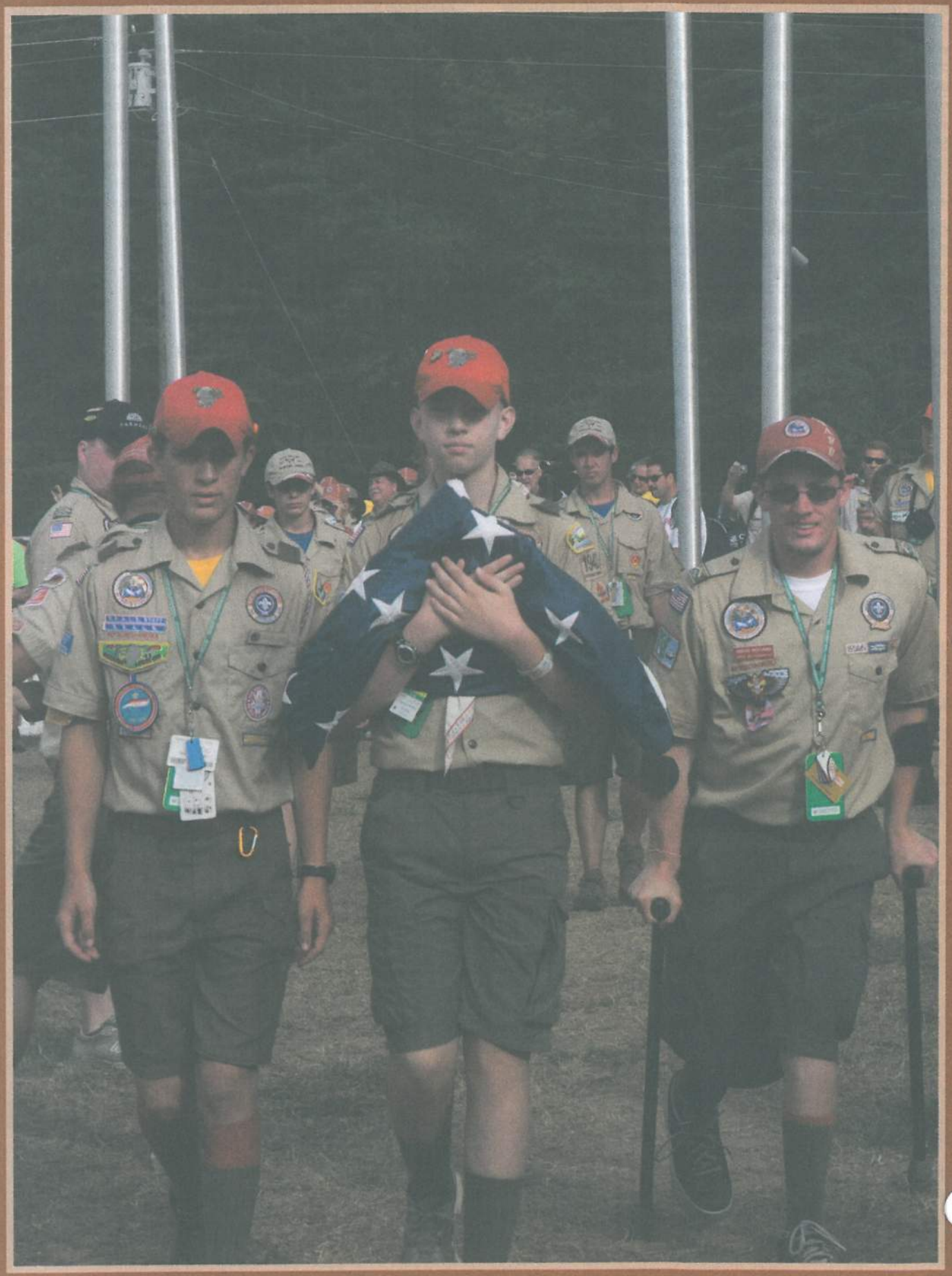
Capitalize on common requirements. Review the requirements for Venturing and Sea Scout awards, and you'll find plenty of instances where skills overlap with Scouts BSA. To earn the Ordinary rank, a Sea Scout must pass all the requirements for the Swimming merit badge. To earn the Discovery Award, a Venturer must complete first-aid and CPR training, which helps with First Aid and Lifesaving merit badges. In many cases, activities can count toward both Scout and Venturing advancement; for example, the work a dual-registered Scout does to earn the Backpacking merit badge would also count toward the Ranger Award's Backpacking elective. By helping your Scouts identify these overlaps, you can encourage their advancement progress.

Use Venturers and Sea Scouts to teach advanced skills. Sprinkled throughout the Venturing and Sea Scouts requirements are opportunities for participants in those programs to share what they've learned with Scouts. For example, six of the eight Ranger Award requirements (and most of the electives) have the Venturer make a tabletop display or presentation about what he or she has learned. A typical requirement (from the Emergency Preparedness requirement) reads: "Make a tabletop display or presentation on what you have learned for your crew, another crew, a Cub Scout or Scouts BSA unit, or another youth group." Sea Scouts, meanwhile, become far more adept at aquatic activities than the typical troop leader. If you have a good relationship with a crew or ship, you can rely on trained Venturers and Sea Scouts to handle much of the instruction in your troop rather than using overburdened adults or instructors who may not have mastered advanced skills.

Share resources for outings. Many troops would like to get into high adventure but lack the equipment they need; your companion crew or ship may have gear you can borrow for your first trip. You could even plan a joint outing, allowing you to share leadership and planning responsibility. Like troops, many crews and ships struggle with teenagers' busy schedules; the addition of a few Scouts from your troop could help a crew or ship fill its contingent for one of the BSA's high-adventure bases, thus letting your troop offer a high-adventure option with little investment on your part.

Convert Venturers and Sea Scouts into assistant Scoutmasters. As discussed earlier, Venturing and Sea Scouts consider a youth to be anyone through age 20. Because the cutoff age for Scouts BSA membership is 18, Venturers and Sea Scouts who are 18, 19, or 20 can be great candidates to serve as assistant Scoutmasters in your troop. If they want to be treated as adults (albeit with some limitations), Scouts BSA offers them that chance.

Leverage Venturing and Sea Scout training to benefit your troop. Venturers and Sea Scouts follow the same training sequence as Scouts, including NYLT and NAYLE. However, they have access to additional training courses, including Kodiak Challenge, an adventure-based leadership development course; SEAL (Sea Scout Experience Advanced Leadership), which uses the sea as a medium for teaching leadership; and proficiency-development courses on topics like goal setting, time management, project management, and mentoring. As with the OA training described earlier, these courses teach skills that can be valuable in the troop setting.



RESPONDING TO SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Somewhere there may be a troop that looks like a Norman Rockwell painting come to life, with photogenic and perfectly uniformed Scouts flawlessly carrying out the Scouting program as Robert Baden-Powell envisioned. Chances are it's not your troop.

Your troop probably has Scouts who break the rules and get into arguments with each other. It may have members with special needs or disabilities or whose circumstances create barriers to full participation. The troop itself may face challenges due to its size, its age, or the populations it serves. We'll explore these and other challenges in this section and discuss how every troop, regardless of circumstances, can deliver the promise of Scouting.

CHAPTER 19
Discipline

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent—except when the Scout isn't. As every experienced Scout leader knows, the words of the Scout Oath and Scout Law perhaps better describe what Scouts are becoming than what they are today. From time to time, most Scouts will misbehave in ways both small and large. You probably won't go many months before you hear a Scout using profanity or talking back to a youth leader; you probably won't go many years before you catch a Scout doing something more serious, such as stealing another Scout's belongings.

Because misbehavior is a given, your troop needs to be prepared to discipline Scouts. That's the focus of this chapter.

Defining Discipline

In thinking about discipline, it's important to remember the word's literal meaning: to teach. Discipline teaches someone to do the right thing rather than penalizing them for doing the wrong thing. Consider these attributes of constructive discipline:

- Instead of focusing on past misdeeds, it focuses on future good behavior.
- Instead of inflicting an arbitrary penalty, it imposes natural consequences.
- Instead of creating an adversarial relationship, it strengthens a caring relationship.
- Instead of teaching pain avoidance, it teaches self-control.
- Instead of growing out of the authority figure's anger, it grows out of the authority figure's care and concern.

Will the consequences a misbehaving Scout faces be unpleasant? Perhaps. But those consequences should be limited, appropriate, and a clear result of the misbehavior. As the *Guide to Safe Scouting* mandates, "Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted."

Like everything else we do in Scouting, our goal in disciplining Scouts should be to strengthen character, which grows from within rather than being imposed from without. In the words of the BSA mission statement, we want to prepare Scouts "to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law." That's a far loftier goal than teaching them how to avoid punishment.

Positive reinforcement is usually more powerful than punishment. As Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "Discipline is not gained by punishing a child for a bad habit, but by substituting a better occupation that will absorb his attention and gradually lead him to forget and abandon the old one."

To see the power of constructive discipline, consider the old summer-camp tradition—now forbidden—of having Scouts sing at a meal in return for a lost item. Here are some lessons this tradition might teach a Scout who must sing for a lost Scout cap:

- "My friends don't have my back." (The other troop members are probably laughing as loudly as complete strangers.)
- "Camp is not a safe place." (It's not unheard of for campers to steal items and turn them in so other campers have to sing for them.)
- "Rather than claim my cap and be embarrassed, I will just tell my parents I lost it and let them buy me a new one." (In other words, the Scout would rather lie than sing "I'm a Little Teapot" in front of a hundred other Scouts.)

Now, imagine that the lost cap is returned to the Scoutmaster—no singing involved—who in turn gives it back to the careless Scout and starts a talk about strategies for keeping up with one's belongings. The Scoutmaster might even tell a personal story about struggles with losing things. (Perhaps the Scoutmaster, as a young Scout, lost a pocketknife on a campout and had to be driven back to the campsite by a parent the next weekend to look for it. Or perhaps the Scoutmaster, remembering that experience, has learned to use the packing list in the Scouts BSA handbook when leaving camp as a way of making sure nothing has been left behind.)

Clearly, the latter approach would be more effective at teaching a Scout to keep up with belongings. What's more, it would show the Scout that Scouting is a safe environment and that the Scoutmaster is supportive.

A good watchword is, "Praise in public; correct in private." Keep in mind, however, that any private meetings in Scouting must be conducted with the knowledge of and in view of other adults and/or youths.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* and Discipline

These excerpts from the *Guide to Safe Scouting* offer important context related to behavior and discipline.

Youth Member Behavior Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America is a values-based youth development organization that helps young people learn positive attributes of character, citizenship, and personal fitness. The BSA has the expectation that all participants in the Scouting program will relate to each other in accord with the principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

One of the developmental tasks of childhood is to learn appropriate behavior. Children are not born with an innate sense of propriety and they need guidance and direction. The example set by positive adult role models is a powerful tool for shaping behavior and a tool that is stressed in Scouting.

Misbehavior by a single youth member in a Scouting unit may constitute a threat to the safety of the individual who misbehaves as well as to the safety of other unit members. Such misbehavior constitutes an unreasonable burden on a Scout unit and cannot be ignored.

Member Responsibilities

All members of the Boy Scouts of America are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and drugs and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the unit.

If confronted by threats of violence or other forms of bullying from other youth members, Scouts should seek help from their unit leaders or parents.

Unit Responsibilities

Adult leaders of Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. Parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance.

The BSA does not permit the use of corporal punishment by unit leaders when disciplining youth members.

The unit committee should review repetitive or serious incidents of misbehavior in consultation with the parents of the child to determine a course of corrective action including possible revocation of the youth's membership in the unit.

If problem behavior persists, units may revoke a Scout's membership in that unit. When a unit revokes a Scout's membership, it should promptly notify the council of the action.

The unit should inform the Scout executive of any violations of the BSA's Youth Protection policies.

For extensive information on bullying, see the "Bullying Prevention Guide" in the appendix.

Troop Codes of Conduct

If your troop is going to discipline Scouts who misbehave, it stands to reason that you need to define misbehavior—to have a troop code of conduct, in other words. In some troops, the code of conduct consists of nothing more than the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and perhaps the Outdoor Code. Other troops create codes of conduct that run dozens of pages and codify every imaginable offense, along with the consequences for each action down to the third or fourth repeat offense.

"The Scout Law is our binding disciplinary force, and with ninety-nine out of a hundred it pays. The boy is not governed by DON'T, but is led on by DO. The Scout Law is devised as a guide to his actions rather than as repressive of his faults. It merely states what is good form and expected of a Scout." —Robert Baden-Powell

The best approach lies somewhere in the middle. It's a good idea to make clear, for example, that Scouts can't bring alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, firearms, and fireworks on outings and that hazing is prohibited. But if you have an extremely rigid code of conduct, you may find yourself taking actions you never intended, such as expelling a good senior patrol leader from the troop because of a "three strikes and you're out" clause. What's more, detailed codes of conduct tend to focus on things that happened in the past, not things that are likely to happen in the future. (The same situation exists in the legal system, where laws must constantly evolve to address actions like computer hacking, sexting, and cyberstalking that weren't issues in past generations.)

Assuming you choose to develop a troop code of conduct, be sure to include the patrol leaders' council in the process or, even better, delegate the task to them. As Cub Scouts, they may have helped write a den code of conduct, so this is a natural progression. Scouts instinctively know the difference between right and wrong, and they are generally capable of policing themselves. Moreover, they're probably more likely than adults to lean toward simplicity in crafting a code of conduct.

Some troops have all Scouts—and their parents—sign their code of conduct each year, perhaps at the time of charter renewal. Doing so ensures that everyone in the troop knows the rules. You should also consider having adult leaders agree to the same code of conduct; most, if not all, of the rules should apply to them as well as to the Scouts. But don't just look at the code of conduct once a year; publish it on your website and display it prominently in your meeting place.

It's also a good idea to review and perhaps revise your code of conduct annually, much like the *Guide to Safe Scouting* gets regular updates. For example, as the list of possible uses and misuses of technology on outings continues to grow, it's important to document how and when electronic devices may be used and who is responsible for loss or theft.

2017 Jamboree Code of Conduct

Participants in national Scout jamborees agree to obey the following code of conduct, which can serve as a good model as your troop develops its own rules. While some of the items are specific to a national-level event, reviewing this code of conduct will help you think about what topics your rules should cover.

1. The units' adult leaders are responsible for the supervision of its membership in respect to maintaining discipline, security, and the Jamboree Code of Conduct.
2. Leaders will be guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law and will obey all U.S., local, and state laws.
3. Participants will set a good example by being neatly dressed and presentable. (The official BSA uniform and/or Jamboree identifying items are the only acceptable apparel as deemed appropriate for the activity.)
4. Participants will attend all scheduled programs and participate as required in cooperation with other unit members and leaders.
5. In consideration of other unit participants, participants agree to follow the bedtime and sleep schedule of the unit, unless otherwise directed by the Jamboree program.
6. Participants will be responsible for keeping their tent and personal gear clean and neat. All personal gear will be labeled with appropriate name and unit information. Participants will adhere to all Jamboree recycling policies and regulations. All participants will do their best to prevent littering of the Jamboree grounds.
7. Participants understand that the purchase, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs is prohibited on BSA/Summit property.
8. Serious and or repetitive behavior violations including cheating, stealing, dishonesty, swearing, fighting, and cursing may result in expulsion from the Jamboree or serious disciplinary action and loss of privileges. The Jamboree headquarters must be contacted for the expulsion procedure to be invoked. There are no exceptions.
9. Participants understand that gambling of any kind is prohibited.
10. Participants understand that possession of lasers of any type, and possession or detonation of fireworks, is prohibited unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Boys Scouts of America.
11. Participants will demonstrate respect for unit, Jamboree, and Summit property and be personally responsible for any loss, breakage, or vandalism of property as a result of their actions.
12. Neither the unit leaders nor the Boy Scouts of America will be responsible for loss, breakage, or theft of personal items. Theft will be grounds for expulsion.
13. Participants will obey the safety rules and instructions of all supervisors and staff members.
14. In accordance with U.S., local, and state laws, firearms and weapons are prohibited in the possession of all Jamboree participants unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Boy Scouts of America.
15. All leaders must complete Youth Protection training prior to the pre-Jamboree training and follow the guidelines therein.
16. Hazing has no place in Scouting; nor do running the gauntlet, belt lines, or similar physical punishment.
17. Patch and souvenir trading should occur only between your peers except when otherwise permitted.
18. Participants and staff members may only bring items specified on the equipment list provided by the Jamboree Department and National Council.
19. Violation of this Code of Conduct, or any conduct deemed to be inconsistent with the values of Scouting, may result in expulsion from the Jamboree at the participant's own expense; and could result in revocation of BSA membership.
20. All participants (with the exception of minor children accompanied by a parent or guardian) will have a current photo ID in their possession.

Crafting Consequences

Whether you enshrine consequences in a troop code of conduct or craft them on a case-by-case basis, it's important to come up with consequences that are proportional to the misbehavior involved. You shouldn't expel a Scout from the troop for telling a dirty joke, nor should you simply assign extra dishwashing duties to a Scout who pulls a knife on a leader.

It may be helpful to think of a scale of consequences that starts with a verbal apology and ends with expulsion from the troop. Strive to choose the least severe consequence that still can be effective at changing the Scout's behavior.

In many cases, the best way to craft a response may well be to ask the offending Scout what consequence might be appropriate. The Scout may surprise you by suggesting a harsher consequence than you had in mind.

As you craft consequences, remember that the BSA strictly prohibits corporal punishment and hazing. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are also prohibited, and any enforced physical action such as doing push-ups should be avoided.

Finally, once a Scout has been disciplined, both the Scout and the troop should move on. If you bring up the past misbehavior at a future Scoutmaster conference or board of review, it should only be so you can compliment the Scout on making progress since that time.

According to the *Guide to Advancement*, misbehavior is not a sufficient reason to deny a Scout a Scoutmaster conference or a board of review (assuming the Scout has met the requirements for the next rank). See sections 4.2.3.5 and 8.0.0.2.

So what consequences can you impose? Here are some possibilities, roughly in order of severity:

- An apology to the offended person
- A conference with the Scoutmaster
- A written statement explaining how the actions in question violated the Scout Oath or Scout Law
- Restitution (such as paying for damaged troop or personal gear)
- A conference with the Scout's parents
- Removal from the current activity (either by taking a temporary time-out or being sent home)
- Not being allowed to participate in a future activity or activities
- Removal of special privileges
- Assignment of additional tasks
- Required parental participation in activities
- Removal from a position of responsibility
- Suspension or expulsion from the troop

Be careful not to craft consequences that make positive actions seem like punishment. For example, requiring a Scout to complete a certain number of service hours as a consequence for misbehavior can give the impression that community service is a chore, not something Scouts should enjoy doing or that, as the Scout slogan says, they should be doing every day.

Your unit commissioner can be a good resource for crafting consequences for misbehavior. His or her experience and arm's-length relationship to the troop can lend valuable perspective to the situation. He or she may also be able to suggest additional resources for dealing with problematic behavior.

Ideally, your youth leaders will be trained and trustworthy enough to handle minor infractions with adult oversight. Just as consequences should escalate as misbehavior gets more serious, so too should the people involved. Strive to let the patrol leader and then senior patrol leader handle a situation before escalating it to the Scoutmaster and ultimately the troop committee. This is a great opportunity to support the youth-leadership method.

"Responsibility is largely given through the patrol system by holding the leader responsible for what goes on amongst his boys."

—Robert Baden-Powell

Say, for example, that a Scout is acting up at a troop meeting and the senior patrol leader asks the Scout to sit out the game. That simple disciplinary action will (we hope) solve the problem while strengthening the SPL's status as a leader—which may forestall future issues with that Scout. If, on the other hand, an adult intervenes and imposes the same consequence, two things happen. First, a bit of the SPL's authority will be lost, making it harder for this youth to lead in the future. Second, you lose the ability to escalate discipline to the adult level if the behavior continues or worsens.

Involving Parents and the Local Council

Ideally, discipline should be handled within the troop. In the case of minor transgressions, there's little reason to involve people beyond the PLC, Scoutmaster corps, and troop committee.

That situation changes, however, when transgressions are serious or repeated. In those cases, the parent of the Scout must be informed of the situation. The parent of the Scout should also be involved in crafting a solution.

While informing a Scout's parents of their child's misbehavior may lead to additional consequences at home, it can also clear the way for you and the parents to work together to help the Scout. For example, you may discover that a Scout's behavior improves significantly if you require a parent to attend a few campouts. Or you may discover that the behavior you're seeing in Scouting is the result of problems at home that require professional intervention.

There are also times when the council Scout executive should be informed. The following must be reported to him or her for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

You should also involve the Scout executive if you plan to expel a Scout from the troop. Ideally, that will be a rare occurrence, especially if you have provided positive discipline throughout the Scout's time in your troop.

CHAPTER 20
Counseling

As a Scout leader, you may conduct Scoutmaster conferences or sit on boards of review where Scouts discuss difficult issues—or where you feel compelled to raise such issues. For many Scouts, you will become a trusted adult, sometimes taking on the role of a lifelong mentor. From time to time, you will watch as your Scouts struggle with homesickness, disappointment, strained relationships, and problems at school. As fatigue sets in and tempers fray on outings, you may see Scouts arguing over issues both real and imagined. You may even be called on to mediate arguments between two adults.

Because of situations like these, you should develop some basic counseling skills. This chapter won't prepare you to take on the role of a professional counselor. It will, however, give you the skills to help Scouts and Scouters with minor issues—and to know when it's appropriate to suggest guidance from a professional.

Defining Counseling

Some people think that counseling is the same thing as giving advice. It's not; that's the job of advice columnists (who are safely removed from the consequences of people following their often-bad advice). Counseling is simply the art of helping others arrive at the right answer by their own analysis of the situation and the facts. It requires an ability to listen and react in a way that helps others solve their own problems and involves far more questions than statements. When it's done skillfully, those being counseled may not even know they have been guided.

Good counseling is like a person listening to a friend's problem and helping the friend figure out what to do.

Counseling can occur in a sit-down session like a Scoutmaster conference, but it can also occur in a more casual setting, such as when a patrol cook has just dumped a pot of soup in the fire or when a Tenderfoot Scout simply refuses to hike up one more hill. You should counsel whenever someone needs encouragement with a difficult task or help in solving a problem, interpreting facts, or resolving indecision or confusion.

In Scouting, we offer what might be called first-aid counseling. If the wound is minor, we treat it and move on. If it is serious or has the potential to become serious, we leave the job to the professionals. You'll probably know instinctively when to suggest to a Scout and family that they seek help from a school counselor, religious leader, or community-based counselor. There are a few cases when professional intervention is required, including:

- When a Scout is at risk of inflicting self-harm
- When a Scout is at risk of hurting someone else
- When you suspect child abuse
- When you suspect drug or alcohol abuse
- When you see signs of depression, withdrawal, or hallucination
- When a Scout's problem relates to sexuality or sexual or gender identity

For detailed information on reporting suspected child abuse, see chapter 26 in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*.

Elements of Good Counseling

Effective counseling can't happen in a crowded place or a noisy environment. Carefully select a time and place where there will be few interruptions. When counseling a Scout, observe Youth Projection policies by meeting with the knowledge of and within the sight of other adults or Scouts. At summer camp, for example, you might sit at a picnic table near the dining hall or in camp chairs in front of the Scoutmaster's tent.

- *Provide a relaxed atmosphere.* The middle of a hectic troop meeting is obviously not such a time.
- *Listen more than you speak.* You may need to check out your understanding with the Scout. Say things like, "Sally, are you saying that ...?" and "Miguel, is that how you really feel about ...?" (This not only helps you understand what the person is saying but helps both of you frame the issue more clearly.)
- *Try to understand* what the Scout is telling you. Listen for hidden meanings and watch body language.
- *Acknowledge* what the Scout is saying and that you *really hear* the message.
- *Do not minimize or contradict what the Scout is saying.* When you say things like "You don't really mean that," you discourage the Scout from further confiding in you.
- *Do not give quick, easy advice.* People need to be guided as they find ways to solve their own problems.
- *Summarize* the problem and help the Scout organize their thoughts about it.
- *Support the Scout's thinking with further information and data.* You may suggest several possibilities, but let the Scout select the one they think might work. Provide facts. Know the difference between information and advice.

- *Encourage* the Scout to review verbally several possible solutions to the problem.
- *Reflect feelings.* Restating feelings indicated by the Scout helps you clarify the meaning or intent of what the Scout has said and show sympathy for their point of view.
- *Use positive body language.* Leaning forward, good eye contact, and hand gestures indicate interest. (How would you feel if the listener's eyes were closed or if they were checking their phone while you were talking?)
- *Be aware of your biases.* You are likely to have conversations that test your own prejudices. Try to remain open in a conversation where prejudice might make you a poor counselor.
- *Avoid making judgments.* A warm, sympathetic listener creates a spirit of openness, especially for emotions. If you criticize each statement and each feeling expressed, the person you're counseling will likely clam up.
- *Avoid anger.* Some Scouts (and Scouters) can be very trying. They may accuse or criticize you or even use ethnic or sexual insults. Anger is the worst defense. Remain cool and professional.

Often it's better to offer a suggestion in the form of a question. Sometimes suggestions are more acceptable when they come as open-ended questions. Good questions relate directly to what the speaker is saying. (An abrupt diversion in the direction of conversation may be a turnoff to the other person.)

The SOLER Approach to Listening

The acronym SOLER can help you remember the attributes of active listening.

- Sit **squarely** facing the other person.
- Maintain an **open** posture, instead of crossing your arms or legs.
- **Lean** slightly forward.
- Maintain **eye** contact.
- **Relax.**

Steps in Decision Making

As you help someone move from problem to solution, offer these steps as a suggestion:

1. Determine the real problem.
2. Examine the facts.
3. Consider possible solutions.
4. Reach a decision on the best solution.
5. Move toward action.

Additional Counseling Tips

These additional tips may help you do a better job of counseling.

- Allow at least 30 to 40 minutes to discuss a major issue.
- Try to spend two-thirds of your time in supportive behavior and one-third of your time in solving the problem.
- Don't try to cover more than two key issues in a single session.
- Rehearse the session in your mind before the visit.
- State things in a gentle, nonaggressive, and nonthreatening way.
- Convey a "let's resolve this together" attitude.
- Don't get frustrated; change often takes time.

Confidentiality

One issue every counselor deals with is confidentiality, especially when working with minors. On the one hand, minors can expect reasonable discretion from counselors; on the other hand, they are minors whose parents are ultimately responsible for their health and wellbeing. Overlapping, and perhaps contradictory, federal and state laws, ethical guidelines, and agency policies can sometimes complicate the matter for professional counselors (and others who work with youth) who are dealing with life-and-death issues.

As a Scout leader, you should be leery of promising confidentiality and should make clear that you must consult with a Scout's parents, other trusted adults, or legal authorities in cases such as suspected child abuse or potential self-harm. In general, you should err on the side of informing and involving the parents.

Never say yes if a Scout asks, "Can I tell you something if you promise not to tell?" Instead, explain that you promise to act in their best interest—which could mean involving the Scout's parents.

That doesn't mean you need to announce a Scout's problems to the world. Imagine, for example, that a Scout complains to you that they have no friends in the troop. Beyond working through the problem with the Scout, you might share the Scout's concerns with key adult leaders and perhaps suggest to the senior patrol leader to make sure the Scout is not the odd one out when buddy pairs are formed—all without revealing how the Scout broke into tears while talking with you.

While you as a counselor should offer a reasonable measure of confidentiality, the Scout has no responsibility to maintain confidentiality. The Scout is perfectly free to tell a parent or anyone else they choose what you've talked about.

Seeking Professional Help

If a Scout needs more than first-aid counseling, the Scout's family should seek professional help. Your only role would be to suggest resources in the community, if appropriate, and then continue to offer support to the family in accordance with BSA policies. Ideally, they would work with a licensed marriage and family counselor, a psychologist, a social worker, or a medical doctor.

A good starting point could be your chartered organization. If it is a school or religious institution, it undoubtedly has counselors on staff or has connections in the community. The family could also consult its pediatrician or school counselor for other resources.

CHAPTER 21
Conflict Resolution

When Benjamin Franklin said, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," he was forgetting a few other inevitabilities, including conflict. That's perhaps surprising given that the American Revolution had ended just a few years earlier!

Anyone over the age of 3 or 4 knows that conflict is bound to happen when people get together. Siblings fight, spouses bicker, lawmakers debate, and nations go to war. And you don't have to be a 50-year Scouting veteran to know that conflict happens in Scouting as well. Patrol members might argue over who forgot to clean the Dutch oven. A parent might argue with the Scoutmaster over why their Scout didn't make First Class. The Scoutmaster might argue with the troop committee over the need to buy new backpacking stoves. There could even be conflict about conflict resolution, as when adults disagree over whether and how to mediate disagreement within the patrol leaders' council.

We'll talk about ways to deal with conflict in this chapter. Before diving in, however, it's perhaps worth reflecting on another quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "If we don't hang together, by Heavens we shall hang separately." While the stakes aren't as high in your troop as they were during the American Revolution, unresolved conflict can chase families and leaders away and even, in extreme cases, tear a troop apart.

Types of Conflict

In Scouting, conflict can occur among Scouts, among adults, between Scouts and adults, and between different groups of people (different patrols, different troops, the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee, the troop and the district, etc.). The root causes can be personalities, priorities, power, and a host of factors that don't begin with the letter P.

In simplest terms, however, there are only two types of conflict: self-resolving conflict and conflict that requires some sort of mediation or intervention.

As you might expect, a self-resolving conflict is a situation that, if given time, will work itself out without confrontation or argument. A good example might be when it's long past time for lights out but a group of Scouts won't settle down in their tents. If that means the adult leaders also can't get to sleep, you have a recipe for conflict. Often, however, this conflict will resolve itself before an adult has to intervene because the senior patrol leader or a fellow Scout convinces the noisy Scouts to settle down. Another example is when the members of a patrol can't seem to motivate themselves to get dinner cooked on time. If the senior patrol leader is expecting to eat with them, the SPL might be inclined to yell at them. A better strategy might be for the SPL to eat with the adults, allowing the Scouts to work out their own problem. (What happens if they don't get dinner done before bedtime? They could always borrow granola bars or fruit from a later meal to tide them over. Remember that no Scout ever died of starvation on a weekend campout.)

Of course, the situations described above could potentially escalate. If you're in close quarters at a camporee, for example, those chatty Scouts after lights out may disturb neighboring troops. If you're camping in bear country, it's important to finish dinner and get bear bags hung before dark. Generally speaking, however, you can stand back and watch when self-resolving conflict occurs.

Most conflict that won't resolve itself can be resolved cooperatively through mediation, as we'll discuss in the next section. Sometimes, however, you must take a more a directive approach. If a fistfight occurs, the only correct response is to break it up immediately. Once the fighters have retreated to their corners, you can explore the issues that led to the conflict.

Mediating Conflict

A good way to resolve conflict is to bring the parties together to work through their issue. Listening to people and paying attention to them is an essential step for establishing a relationship in which cooperation can occur.

While you can probably think of plenty of questions to ask—such as "What were you thinking?" and "What's the matter with you?"—some questions are more effective at moving situations toward resolution.

Questions for Conflict Resolution

1. What do you want?
2. What are you doing to get it?
3. Is it working?
4. Do you want to figure out another way?

The most important question to ask is, "What do you want?" At its heart, most conflict is about not getting what we want, so start by figuring out what the parties to the conflict are looking for. (Note that this doesn't mean they will actually get it!)

Asking this question is empowering because it's not a question we often hear. It focuses people's attention on what their real needs are and helps you and the parties see more clearly other people's points of view. Moreover, asking it demonstrates that you have each party's best interests at heart.

Discernment is important here. What people say they want may be masking what they really want.

Once you have determined what the parties want, ask two follow-up questions: "What are you doing to get it?" and "Is what you are doing working?" These questions put responsibility on others to examine where they stand. Give the parties the time and encouragement to figure out the answers and to understand their own paths.

Finally, ask, "Do you want to figure out another way?" This question gives the parties the responsibility and power to find pathways to reach where they want to be. It gives them a way to invite you to help them explore other approaches to a problem. It encourages a cooperative effort—working together to help everyone get what they want.

Too often as leaders we skip questions 2 and 3. We ask, "What do you want?" and then jump immediately to a variation of question 4, telling someone what we think they should do. Effective mediation, like effective counseling, is about helping other people solve their own problems, not imposing solutions on them.

Work on issues in the present and the future, not in the past. Rather than let the parties wallow in blame and recrimination, steer the conversation toward seeking solutions. Any time you feel that you aren't making progress or that you don't know what to do next, return to the basic four questions.

When you must take a more directive approach, as in the case of breaking up a fistfight, the four questions above become four statements:

1. This is what I want.
2. This is what I understand you are doing.
3. This is why that isn't working for me.
4. Here's what I need for you to do.

While the end result is an immediate change in behavior, this approach gives you tools to explain yourself and provide a basis for a decision. It allows you and the group members to interact on a healthy level, and it provides the opportunity for direct decisions to evolve into arrangements developed through a more cooperative approach.

If the source of conflict between two or more troop leaders is a disagreement on the troop's mission, it's worth revisiting chapter 1, "Troop Vision." A clear troop vision can help unify leaders around a common set of priorities.

Deciding Who Should Mediate Conflict

Who's the best person to resolve conflict? Generally speaking, it's someone who's close enough to the situation to understand what's going on but far enough removed from the situation to be (and to be perceived to be) impartial.

Like most other situations, conflict resolution is a good opportunity for youth leaders to practice their leadership skills. If two patrol members are arguing, their patrol leader may be the best mediator, for example. Next in line would be the senior patrol leader or the patrol advisor. Try to avoid making the Scoutmaster or other adults the default mediators.

When the conflict involves adults—a disagreement between the Scoutmaster and the troop committee chair, for example—you may need to look to your chartered organization representative or your unit commissioner for help. These volunteers should be able to serve as honest brokers to help you resolve the situation.

Whoever is working to resolve the situation will be most effective if he or she is trusted by the parties involved. People are much more likely to cooperate when:

- They trust you.
- They have experience with you and have found you to be a reliable leader and ally.
- They understand that you are making decisions for the good of the group.
- They sense that you care about them.

Effective Communication in Conflict Situations

As with any sort of leadership, being able to step in, if necessary, and set certain boundaries is easier to do if leaders have already established a relationship of trust and understanding with those they are leading. Leaders who have taken the time to listen and learn and care for people in their groups will have a much easier time negotiating with group members and individuals to establish the needs and solutions of everyone, leaders included.

You can be open with your Scouts about your understanding of your responsibilities and what you expect from them. At its most basic, the contract between leaders and those who are led is as follows.

My responsibility is:	Your responsibility is:
• To do all I can to ensure your safety	• To tell me when you don't feel safe
• To help you get the most out of this experience	• To help me ensure your safety
• To be honest with you and treat you with respect	• To be honest with me and treat me with respect

Listening is the most important skill in resolving any conflict, whether the conflict involves you as a participant or as a mediator. Remember that you have two ears but only one mouth. Unless you make a conscious effort to listen, you will miss vital facts and beliefs that could lead to a satisfactory resolution.

But communication is about more than just speaking and hearing. Body language sends powerful messages, as does tone of voice.

Professional conflict mediators are trained to manage their emotions so that they can be as objective as possible. That allows them to view a situation for what it is rather than to allow their anger or excitement or some other emotion to dictate their reactions.

Most Scouters haven't had that kind of in-depth training. However, simply being aware of the need to step away from our emotional responses can help us react more effectively when a situation involves conflict.

One trick is to pay attention to your breathing for a few moments. When we are under stress, we often take rapid, shallow breaths. A few slow, deep breaths can refresh your brain with oxygen and help you focus more clearly.

If anger or frustration or some other emotion is clouding your ability to see an issue as objectively as possible, it's probably wise to step back for a minute or an hour—or even a day or more. Allow time to collect yourself before going forward. You may also need to defer to another mediator who can approach the situation with more objectivity.

Conflict can be distressing and discouraging, especially in a program like Scouting where everyone should be working toward a common goal. But that common goal can actually offer a way out of conflict. After all, when the parties in conflict realize they all want the same thing, they should be able to figure out a way to get there.

CHAPTER 22
Special Troop Situations

How big should a Scout troop be? In *Aids to Scouting,* the first handbook for Scoutmasters, Robert Baden-Powell suggested that troops should not exceed 32 members. That number represented twice the 16 Scouts he felt he could handle, because, he joked, "I allow for other people being twice as capable as myself." Most contemporary Scouters would probably acknowledge that the ideal troop size falls somewhere between what B-P said he could handle and what supposedly more-capable people can handle. In fact, the average troop size today—about 22 Scouts—falls near the middle of that range.

But many troops don't fall within the 16-to-32-Scout range. A good number of troops are very small (patrol-sized) or very large (with 100 or more members). Troops of every size can be effective, provided you take into account the special opportunities and challenges of being very small or very large. We'll look at some of those opportunities and challenges in this chapter and also discuss another special situation: the new troop.

Very Small Troops

Being a small troop has its advantages, perhaps the most important of which is nimbleness. But there are disadvantages as well, particularly in relation to the availability of youth and adult leaders. Let's look at the key advantages and disadvantages and how to manage them to deliver an effective program.

Nimbleness. In a small troop, program planning becomes more flexible. If your 20-mile hike gets rained out, for example, you can easily reschedule it. In fact, the senior patrol leader could probably poll the entire membership in 15 minutes to set a new date. That said, you shouldn't use your nimbleness as an excuse for not doing good long-range planning. Events that don't get planned generally don't happen, and your Scouts won't learn planning skills without practice. Do all the long-term and short-term planning larger troops do; just realize that you have some flexibility if plans need to change.

Ease of Travel. With four Scouts and a couple of adults, you can probably travel to outings in a single vehicle, especially if you have a luggage rack or can pull a small trailer. You also won't have to worry about exceeding size constraints for backcountry groups or finding space in crowded campgrounds. You may also discover opportunities that aren't available to larger troops. For example, a wildlife management agency might let your troop participate in a bird-banding activity or camp next to its headquarters building—things a larger troop wouldn't get to do.

Speed. One thing you'll notice about small troops is that things tend to happen faster than in larger troops. It takes less time to assemble the Scouts for opening ceremonies, skills instruction goes faster, and group discussions may peter out fairly quickly. Take the speed factor into account as you plan activities so you avoid running out of things to do.

Focus on the Individual. When you only have a few Scouts, it's easier to tailor a program to meet individual needs and interests. For example, everyone could choose a merit badge to work on together, or the whole troop can vote on where to go camping next. It's also much harder for a Scout to fall through the cracks because any absence will be very noticeable. That positive can also become a negative, however. If one Scout out of 50 misses any outing, you won't notice much effect; if one Scout out of five misses an outing, the other four will find themselves having to work much harder to handle tasks on the duty roster. Be sure to emphasize that every Scout's participation in meetings, outings, fundraisers, and service projects is critical to the troop's success.

Focusing on the individual extends beyond troop activities. In a small troop, it's easier for the Scoutmaster—or the whole troop—to attend a member's soccer game or band concert as a show of support.

Programs for All Ages. It can be hard in a small troop to meet the needs of new, experienced, and older Scouts; the program tends to cater to the needs of the predominant age group. Outside resources are useful here. For example, you could seek out a summer camp with a strong new-Scout program and strong high-adventure opportunities for older Scouts. You could also encourage older Scouts to participate in the individual programs offered by the BSA's high-adventure bases or find slots for them in high-adventure trips organized by your council or nearby troops.

Equipment. The smaller the troop, the less gear you need. A single patrol box or tote, a single backpacking stove, and a single set of pots and pans will usually suffice. You may even be able to get by with a leader's personal group-camping gear. Just be aware that if and when your membership grows, so too will your equipment needs.

Youth Leadership. One thing adults in small troops worry about is not having enough Scouts to cover all the standard leadership positions. But there's no rule that says you have to use every position. In fact, it probably doesn't make sense to name a senior patrol leader, a patrol leader, and a troop guide when you only have one patrol's worth of Scouts. You could also combine roles—scribe and historian, for example—and give every Scout a job (even those Scouts who don't need leadership time for advancement).

Adult Leadership. When it comes to adult leaders, small troops face several challenges. The most obvious is finding enough trained adults. If you only have a Scoutmaster and one assistant Scoutmaster, for example, they can get stretched pretty thin. It's a good idea to establish an expectation that every parent of every Scout take on some role with the Scoutmaster corps or troop committee and to encourage parents to serve as extra adults on outings. Another issue with adults is that you're less likely to have volunteers who are experienced in specialized skills like backpacking, pioneering, or cycling, so you may need to reach outside the troop for consultants who can teach those skills. (These could be leaders from other troops or Venturing crews, people from local outdoor clubs, or employees of camping retailers.) Paradoxically, you can also find yourself with too high a ratio of adults to Scouts on outings if every Scout's parent goes along, so it may be necessary to ask parents to occasionally skip outings.

In a very small troop, you may need to look to the chartered organization and troop alumni for additional adult leadership. Through your unit commissioner or district executive, you may also be able to identify adult Eagle Scouts or other Scouting alumni who live in your community or experienced Scouters who've transitioned out of other roles and might be willing to lend a hand.

Patrol Method. Perhaps the biggest challenge small troops face is implementing the patrol method. While you could form two patrols of three or four Scouts, patrols that size are really too small to function effectively. A better strategy is to function as a single patrol and form a partner-troop relationship with one or more other small troops; these same troops could meet or camp together occasionally for interpatrol competitions or could take turns teaching each other skills they've mastered. Events like district camporees that feature patrol-based competitions also give your troop the chance to practice the patrol method.

District and Council Support. With small troops, district and council support can be crucial. Take advantage of district and council events, district roundtables, and the support offered by your unit commissioner. By networking with other adults in your district and council, you will discover a wealth of resources you can use to strengthen your troop.

Planning for the Future. It's perfectly fine to stay small forever, either because you live in a sparsely populated area or because your chartered organization is small. However, if you want to get bigger, plan your growth carefully. Operating a 20-Scout troop like a six-Scout troop is a recipe for failure. To grow successfully, you'll need to recruit additional adults, overcome any limitations imposed by your meeting space or your troop gear, and probably make troop processes a little more formal. Review section 1 of this book for ideas on evaluating your troop's current condition and charting a course for the future.

If you want to grow, don't establish policies or traditions that make growth difficult. For example, it would be relatively easy to provide troop tents when you only have six Scouts but quite expensive to do the same thing for a 25-Scout troop.

Very Large Troops

A very small troop is something like a sailboat. It's small, nimble, and easily steered by a skeleton crew, but it's also reliant on external forces for much of its propulsion. A very large troop, on the other hand, is more like a battleship. It's formidable and self-sufficient and requires a large, well-organized crew to accomplish its mission. Although it's less dependent on external forces, it can be hard to steer in new directions. What special opportunities and challenges do large troops experience? Here are a few.

Patrol Method. Nowhere is the genius of the patrol method more evident than in a very large troop. Having strong patrols lets you divide and conquer and break tasks into manageable sizes. You can see that strong patrols are important when you consider the difference between planning a menu for eight Scouts versus 80 Scouts or getting the attention of 10 Scouts versus 100 Scouts during a meeting. In many large troops, patrols function almost as mini-troops with patrol advisors (assistant Scoutmasters) who serve as quasi-Scoutmasters and keep up with what their Scouts are doing both within Scouting and beyond. Large-troop patrols are more likely than those in smaller troops to plan their own outings or to choose whether to attend troop outings as a group.

Adult Leadership. Large troops tend to build up large cadres of adult leaders with many years—or even decades—of Scouting experience. It's not unheard of to have assistant Scoutmasters or committee members who are former Scoutmasters of the troop, former Wood Badge course directors, or both. Having such a deep bench can be both a positive and a negative. On the upside, veteran leaders bring expertise in a wide variety of areas and may even hold certifications (for example, BSA Level II climbing instructor) that can let the troop undertake activities most troops can only do at summer camp. On the downside, they can crowd the troop's youth leaders and give the false impression that there's no room for new parents to get involved. It's important that adult leaders have clearly defined roles, that only key adults attend patrol leaders' council meetings, and that the troop regularly cultivates new leaders.

The Role of the Scoutmaster. Serving as Scoutmaster of a very large troop can begin to seem like a full-time job. Typically, large-troop Scoutmasters serve more as CEOs than hands-on leaders; they manage the vision for the troop but rely on key assistant Scoutmasters and troop committee members to handle day-to-day operations. When the role is structured properly, the Scoutmaster has time to get to know all the members of the troop and even handle all Scoutmaster conferences.

Succession Planning. In large troops (and in smaller troops, for that matter), it's helpful to think about long-term leadership needs. You could designate a primary assistant Scoutmaster who is being groomed to take over as Scoutmaster someday and even assign leaders-in-training to shadow other key positions. It can also make sense to set up staggered terms of service so key leaders—the Scoutmaster and committee chair, for example—don't rotate out at the same time.

Multiplying Leadership Roles. On both the youth and adult sides, you can divide leadership responsibilities by multiplying leadership roles. You might have two or three quartermasters, for example, or an adult whose only role is to keep up with health forms. Doing so keeps people from becoming overwhelmed and creates additional entry points. Just make sure everyone understands who is responsible for which tasks.

A good rule of thumb is that no leader should have to coordinate the efforts of more than five other leaders. If you have 10 patrols, for example, you might name two assistant senior patrol leaders, each of whom works with five patrol leaders.

Focus on Administration. As your troop size approaches or exceeds triple digits, administrative tasks can become overwhelming; just imagine making a trip to the council service center to pick up badges for a court of honor or collecting medical forms for 90 summer-camp participants. Large troops function best with large administrative staffs that handle details like these so the Scoutmaster corps can concentrate on program.

Program. When a troop has dozens of Scouts at each level (new, experienced, and older), it's important to provide activities that meet the needs and interests of all three age groups. That could mean holding single outings that include a variety of activities or scheduling multiple outings during the month. Some very large troops offer outings nearly every weekend—and sometimes multiple activities at the same time—allowing patrols or individual Scouts to choose which they will participate in. (This is also important because the backcountry and many frontcountry campgrounds simply can't accommodate groups of 50 or 100 people.)

Communication. Effective communication becomes especially important in very large troops. It's essential to have multiple communication channels, including email newsletters, social media, group texting, and a robust website. A troop handbook that outlines troop policies and procedures is also a good idea. At the same time, it's important not to bypass the senior patrol leader and the patrol leaders, who should be the primary communicators to rank-and-file Scouts.

Independence. If your troop is very large, you may feel that you don't need the support of your district and council. While that's true to some extent, you should still participate in activities beyond the troop; your Scouts will benefit from interacting with other Scouts and you will discover opportunities to share your resources with other troops. You could even offer to lead a district camporee or to partner with a new or struggling troop that needs more resources. Imagine the good you could do if you loaned a few "extra" adult leaders to a startup troop in an urban neighborhood for six months.

Focus on the Individual. In a very large troop, it's easy for individual Scouts to fall through the cracks. Patrol leaders and patrol advisors have an added responsibility for keeping up with the Scouts in their care, which could include attending band concerts and sporting events, sending birthday cards, and following up on repeated absences. At the same time, size gives large troops the ability to better cater to the needs of individuals. They often have in-house counselors for every common merit badge and can offer a broader array of activities than smaller troops.

Integrating New Members. Very large troops tend to bring in several dens of Webelos Scouts at the same time. Successfully and quickly integrating these new Scouts into the troop is essential if they are to continue in Scouting. Chapter 14 of volume 1 offers some suggestions.

Deciding When Enough Is Enough. Success tends to breed success, so a highly effective large troop is likely to continue growing. Eventually, you could run out of space in your meeting place or simply decide that you can't serve any more Scouts effectively. Before you reach a crisis point, think about options such as splitting the troop, spinning off a new troop, or scaling back your recruiting efforts. Your district executive can be a good resource for exploring these options.

Esprit de Corps. Building a sense of unity can be difficult with a large and diverse membership. You can build esprit de corps by coming up with a troop slogan and a troop logo and developing unique troop traditions. Also, be sure there are plenty of opportunities throughout the year for all troop families to gather; these could include a court of honor after summer camp, a fall-kickoff picnic, or a family feast on Thanksgiving weekend.

New Troops

As America's first president, George Washington was acutely aware that every action he took would set a precedent. From delivering his State of the Union report in person to insisting on being called "Mr. President" instead of "Your Excellency," Washington created traditions that have been followed by every subsequent chief executive. In fact, the example he set when he declined to seek a third term in 1796 was so strong that it took an extraordinary man at an extraordinary time—Franklin Roosevelt in the midst of World War II—to break it.

In the months after his first election, Washington often said, "I walk on untrodden ground." The same could be said by the leaders of a new Scout troop. If you have the privilege of working with a brand-new troop, you have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to make sure the trails you blaze run straight and true.

For extensive information on starting new troops, see the *Unit Performance Guide,* No. 522-025.

Focus on the Essentials. According to BSA research, new troops have the best chance for success when they start with at least 10 Scouts, five adults, a functioning unit Key 3 (Scoutmaster, committee chair, and chartered organization representative), a unit commissioner with new-unit expertise, and an engaged chartered organization. If one of these elements is lacking, focus on shoring it up.

Develop a Vision. As chapter 1 describes, a troop vision explains what your troop is and what it's not. Work with your initial group of Scouts and adults to develop a vision that can guide the troop for years to come.

Develop a Long-Range Plan. The Scoutmaster corps and troop committee should work together to develop a long-range plan, detailing where the troop should be in one, five, and 10 years. How big do you want to get? When do you want to take your first high-adventure trip? Do you envision a major purchase like a troop trailer? You'll get discouraged if you try to do too much too soon; you'll be encouraged if you can start checking off items on your to-do list. And when you experience success, share it with the entire troop.

Develop a Short-Range Plan. As a new troop, your only real selling point is the future. When you're meeting with prospective Scouts and their parents, you can't talk about all the great trips you've taken in the past; you can only talk about what you plan to do in the future. Having a solid plan for the first year lets you demonstrate what the troop will accomplish. What's more, as with all other troops, you're more likely to do things you've put on the calendar rather than just dreamed about.

Plan Key Transition Points. At first, your troop may only be big enough to have one patrol; decide ahead of time how big it should be when you divide it into two patrols. At first, you may rely heavily on adults to teach skills; decide ahead of time when adults will step back from deep involvement in planning and running activities. At first, your key adults may sign on for unlimited terms; decide ahead of time when and how they will rotate to new positions. And when you get to these transition points, celebrate; they demonstrate key steps in becoming a strong, sustainable troop.

Borrow Expertise. If none of your adult leaders has Scouting experience and all of your Scouts are 11 years old, try to borrow expertise from another troop. It would be better to start off with a "loaner" senior patrol leader than to get in the habit of being adult-led.

Find a Partner Troop. As described in the section above about very small troops, building a relationship with another troop gives you an easy way to implement the patrol method when you have only a handful of Scouts. Your partner troop may also have gear you can borrow, which can greatly reduce the upfront cost of starting a new troop.

Insist on Training. Create an expectation that every registered leader will complete training in his or her position before beginning service. Any shortcuts you take now will result in a poorer-quality program and will send the message for years to come that training is optional. One way to promote training is to have the troop or chartered organization pay for it; another is to cover registration fees and outing expenses for trained leaders but not for untrained volunteers.

Build Up Your Bank Account. Even if you don't want to buy a trailer or lots of high-end backpacking gear, startup costs can mount up quickly. As soon as possible, hold a strong, short-duration money-earning project and/or seek financial support from your chartered organization.

Connect With Your Chartered Organization. Make sure the organization understands that your troop is part of its youth ministry or community outreach. Invite organization representatives to courts of honor, recruit organization members as merit badge counselors, include troop information in the organization's newsletter or on its website, and participate in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath observances (for religious chartered organizations) or plan annual state-of-the-troop reports (for other chartered organizations).

Emphasize Uniforming. Uniforms are important in every troop, but they are perhaps most important in a new troop because they create cohesiveness among members and leaders. What's more, people who put on uniforms tend to act in a more Scout-like manner.

Buy a Troop Flag. Perhaps nothing symbolizes more that your troop is real than a troop flag. Display it proudly and work hard to festoon it with Journey to Excellence ribbons and camporee streamers.

Develop Traditions. Create simple or elaborate traditions that build a sense of troop identity. For example, you could hold a logo-design contest among the Scouts and emblazon your new logo on troop neckerchiefs. Or you could create a polar-bear club for Scouts who camp in zero-degree weather. Or you could carve a hiking stick or neckerchief slide for your first senior patrol leader and create the tradition of passing it along to the next SPL when each begins their term of office. Simple traditions like these create the sense that the troop is a vigorous community, not a fledgling organization.

Think About Scalability. When you only have five Scouts, it's easy to store all your troop gear in the Scoutmaster's garage or to meet in the chartered organization's smallest classroom. But if you quadruple in size, those spaces can become confining and can limit growth. Be sure whatever decisions you make give you the elbow room you need.

Track Your History. Charge your historian and the adult who advises the historian with keeping good records from the outset. A quarter-century from now, troop members will appreciate being able to access a list of all the troop's Scoutmasters and Eagle Scouts, a log of the outings the troop has held, and photos from the troop's very first campout. You might even consider creating a time capsule commemorating the troop's first year of operation.

Scouts and leaders are eligible to wear the Founder emblem, No. 610129, under the unit numerals on their uniforms if their names are on a troop's original charter or if they join a troop before it renews its charter for the first time.

CHAPTER 23
Working With Underserved Populations

Like many youth activities, Scouting thrives in the suburbs. Parents with disposable income and the time to devote to volunteer activities find Scouting to be an attractive program for their children. If they have an emotional tie to Scouting, perhaps because of their own youth involvement, they naturally gravitate to the program.

But Scouting can also thrive in urban neighborhoods packed with recent immigrants and in minority enclaves without a heritage of Scouting involvement, as well as sparsely populated rural areas. Regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or country of origin, parents of all backgrounds want their children to learn the values and skills Scouting offers.

That's not to say that you can work with families who are strangers to Scouting the same way you'd approach families with several generations of Scouting involvement. As we'll discuss in this chapter, it helps to tweak both your message and your program to reach and serve underserved populations.

"Our desire is to help the boy—and mainly the poorer boy—to get the fair chance, which in the past has too often been denied him, of becoming a self-respecting, happy, and successful citizen, imbued with an ideal of service for others."

—Robert Baden-Powell

For extensive resources on working with diverse populations, visit www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub.

Changes in Youth Demographics

As you know, the ethnic makeup of kids in the United States is shifting dramatically. Here are projected percentages through 2050 from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (**www.childstats.gov**).

Race	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
White	76.8	73.8	71.8	69.9	67.9	65.8
Black	15.6	15.2	14.9	14.8	14.8	14.8
Asian	3.6	4.6	5.5	6.3	7.0	7.7
American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN)	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHPI)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Two or more races	2.5	4.5	5.9	7.2	8.5	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hispanic Origin	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**2030**	**2040**	**2050**
Hispanic	17.2	23.2	25.7	27.2	29.8	31.9
Non-Hispanic White	61.2	53.7	49.9	46.6	42.5	38.8
Non-Hispanic Black	14.8	14.1	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.1
Non-Hispanic Asian	3.5	4.4	5.2	6.0	6.8	7.4
Non-Hispanic AIAN	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
Non-Hispanic NHPI	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Non-Hispanic, two or more races	2.2	3.7	4.7	5.8	6.8	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Someone is considered Hispanic if he or she is of Spanish or Latin American descent. The term refers to ethnicity rather than race. Hence, someone can be white and Hispanic, black and Hispanic, etc.

Multicultural Marketing Techniques

Marketers know that to reach multicultural communities they must show diversity in their advertising and, in many cases, create translated or bilingual materials. That's just a starting point, however. There's more that you can and should do if you want to reach underserved populations.

Here are some proven techniques for reaching low-income households, minority groups, and other hard-to-reach groups:

1. **Identify the target market.** Concentrate your efforts and resources where they are most needed, and personalize your communications for the target audience or neighborhood.
2. **Use a community-based approach.** Actively involve existing community organizations and volunteers in outreach efforts. Include community leaders in program planning and implementation so that they consider Scouting their program, too. Show a willingness to listen to them and to share leadership.
3. **Learn more about the target community.** Don't assume you know anything about the target audience. Throw out any preconceptions that are not based on extensive personal contact. Instead, learn by listening. Conduct formal or informal market research. Talk with people who have roots in the community. Identify key community organizations and activists who know the community well, and then talk to them. Ask where people go for information, which people or organizations the community already trusts, and who would make an effective spokesperson or messenger for your program.

To learn more about diverse cultures, watch TV documentaries, listen to radio stations, read magazines, attend workshops and cultural events, contact organizations, and get firsthand experience.

4. **Remember: The messenger can be as important as the message.** People are more likely to pay attention to and heed advice from people and organizations they already know and trust. A word from a minister at a worship service can be worth more than a spot on the 6 o'clock news. A flier delivered by a trusted neighbor or through a community center has instant credibility that one delivered by a stranger might not have.
5. **Understand that emergency-management officials may not always be the best emissaries.** People in some low-income neighborhoods face many day-to-day problems and may feel alienated economically, socially, ethnically, religiously, or racially. Local government, mass media, and city leaders may be perceived as unresponsive or uncaring. As a result, the fire department or emergency-management personnel might not be trusted, even if they enjoy an excellent relationship with the community as a whole. You also should consider the role and reputation of Scouting in the home countries of immigrants you are trying to reach. (In some countries, for example, Scouting is organized along religious lines, so people may be surprised to learn that Scouting in the United States encompasses many faith traditions.) Talk with people from the target community to find out whom residents trust.
6. **Build relationships with community leaders and organizations.** Identify nonprofit organizations, places of worship, clubs, tenant groups, community health centers, social service agencies, neighborhood groups, and other community-based organizations that already serve the target population. Look beyond city agencies. Ask for "focus group" meetings to identify community needs and concerns. (Focus groups allow concerned citizens to share information in an informal setting.) Be careful not to imply blame or single out the community as having a particular problem. Instead, appeal to community pride, and position the Scouting program as one that promotes community empowerment. Ask the organizations for advice, and listen. Ask these groups to take an active part in promoting your troop and its activities.

Community Organizations

To make inroads in ethnic communities, connect with groups like these.

African American Community. Black business and professional associations, fraternities and sororities, the NAACP, community churches, and other black organizations

Hispanic Community. American G.I. Forum, League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC), and your state governor's council on Hispanic affairs

Native American Community. Tribal or intertribal council, tribal chairman or president, and reservation or agency superintendent

Asian American Community. Japanese-American Citizens League, the Chinese-American Civic Council, and local groups of more recently arrived Southeast Asian population groups

7. **Make a long-term commitment.** Plan to keep the program going over a long time, and repeat this intention often. Understand that you may have to build credibility first, which can take time. You may have to make several contacts—and demonstrate results—before many community organizations will get on board.
8. **Encourage volunteer participation.** While it might be easier to staff an urban troop entirely with outside volunteers, be sure to also utilize volunteers from the community. Not only can these volunteers provide valuable service, but they can also develop a personal stake in the program that can be shared with family, friends, and neighbors. Remember that involvement always precedes commitment.

Are Local Leaders the Best?

Sometimes Scouters get into a debate over the relative merits of recruiting local, inexperienced unit leaders or more experienced unit leaders from "outside" to work with kids. Some will say that "imported" leaders are better because they:

- Are more confident
- Have more Scouting experience
- Can give Scouting a higher priority
- Have more time
- Reflect traditional Scouting

Others will point out that insiders are best because they:

- Feel more comfortable in the area
- Better understand the young people and families served
- Are more personally motivated
- Can more easily get additional help
- Know the real opinion leaders and influence groups

Try to avoid the debate. Recognize that you need both—you need all the help you can get. Learn to use both types of leaders, building on the strengths and compensating for the weaknesses of each. And deal with individuals, not labels. An outsider could be just as personally motivated as an insider; an insider could make Scouting just as high a high priority.

9. **Be culturally sensitive.** Make sure people can identify with images used in publications and media. For example, depict African American people if your target audience is primarily African American. Avoid stereotypes and ensure that text and other materials are acceptable by testing them before you distribute them.
10. **Test all materials with people from the target audience.** Before using any printed or broadcast materials, be sure you are communicating the right message. Have people representative of the target audience evaluate graphics and text for appeal, message communicated, readability, and overall effectiveness. Even educators or other experts and community leaders might not be good substitutes for those for whom the materials are intended. However, it might be wise to have community leaders also evaluate materials if you are asking them to help disseminate the materials for you.

For additional marketing resources, go to
www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub.

11. **Make people feel that you are talking to "people like me."** Use appropriate images for your materials. For example, Spanish-speaking spokespeople will be listened to in Hispanic communities. Community-oriented people, such as Red Cross volunteers, from the target community might be suitable to serve as spokespeople or to accompany program leaders. Most importantly, show that you understand the lives of the people in your target audience.
12. **Enlist help from community organizations for making translations.** If there is a significant language-minority population in your area, there are almost certainly community-based organizations serving them. Contact these organizations, and ask for help with translating and reviewing draft materials.
13. **Use bilingual materials rather than separate single-language versions.** In many households, some members may be comfortable speaking English, while others are more comfortable speaking in their native language. Also remember to use only two languages on your materials—English and the language of your target audience.
14. **Use community-based and neighborhood media outlets.** Local community media, including neighborhood newspapers, can be more effective in reaching a particular target audience than the city daily or even television. Don't overlook radio, particularly foreign-language stations or programs.
15. **Increase reach by using a variety of dissemination methods.** Do not rely on a single organization, media outlet, or dissemination method for publicizing your message. Send the message using several methods. A door-to-door canvass can focus attention on your message, reach every household, and involve volunteers. Religious institutions can make effective and credible messengers.
16. **Show goodwill by supporting small businesses in the target area.** Advertise your troop in a neighborhood newspaper and ask the paper to contribute additional space for a public service announcement. Try to purchase groceries and equipment from vendors within the target area. Small gestures can show your commitment to the community and can help you gain credibility for your efforts.

Increasing Visibility

- Have Scouts wear Scout T-shirts during service projects and money-earning projects.
- Post "Scouts at Work" signs at service projects.
- Participate in local festivals and community activities (e.g., handle the flag ceremony at a community festival, distribute water at a local 5K run/walk, set up a booth at a cultural fair).
- Provide in-language advertising.

Barriers to Participation

Even when kids from underserved populations want to participate in Scouting, there can be significant barriers to participation. Here's how to address the major challenges.

Cost

Some Scouting units in low-income urban neighborhoods have big problems in paying for the program. Districts can help in a variety of ways. Talk with your district leaders about unit funding methods used in your district.

Some low-income families are turned off by what they have heard about Scouting costs. Some parents with limited financial means do not let their children join at all, rather than eventually having to tell them they can't go to camp or can't have a uniform. They feel their child's lack of such things as uniform or equipment will be a bad reflection on themselves or their family.

Some strategies that can work:

- Keep fees and requests for money to a bare minimum.
- Give plenty of notice in advance when fees are due, especially for big events like summer camp. Don't assume that every family can pay $25 or $50 on the spur of the moment.
- Avoid the image that Scouting costs a lot of money.
- Protect people's pride. Provide help quietly and confidentially.
- Be careful when paying deposits and reservation fees to avoid losing money unnecessarily. While an early-bird discount for summer camp can be nice, you should weigh the possibility of losing deposits if you pay for Scouts who aren't fully committed to attend.
- Plan money-earning projects to defray the cost of activities. Few people would be unwilling to help send a Scout to camp. Seek support from the council's campership program.
- Be aware that door-to-door selling of items may be viewed as begging in certain cultures, and won't be successful as a unit fundraiser. Check with trusted community leaders to determine socially acceptable money-earning methods.
- Enlist the support of the chartered organization. While chartered organizations are not required to help fund troop operations, those that serve disadvantaged Scouts would doubtless be happy to do so if they are able.
- Create camp savings cards for summer camp. Encourage Scouts to bring $1 or $2 to each troop meeting to help pay for summer camp. Keep a tally of what each Scout has paid, and highlight the progress made.

Some councils have a special urban assistance fund to help provide:

- Essential program literature
- Training course scholarships, transportation, and equipment
- Campserships (scholarship for camp)
- Loaned equipment

Uniforms

A Scout does not have to have a uniform to be a good Scout. Most will want one, however, and uniforms can erase the difference between the haves and have-nots in a troop. If your Scouts need help with uniforming, try these ideas:

- Have troop members start with only a Scout T-shirt or neckerchief.
- Ask your council if it has a used uniform closet that can donate shirts to your Scouts or resell shirts at a low cost. If not, then consider the following ideas: Start a uniform closet by collecting uniform parts from used clothing stores, former Scouts, and used uniform drives. Recruit people to clean and repair uniforms collected. Ask a laundry and dry cleaning association to help.
- Have an individual or organization adopt the troop to match funds earned by troop members through troop work projects.

Equipment

Like uniforms, buying equipment can be a challenge for low-income Scouts. Fortunately, there's no need for them to rush out and buy the latest high-tech gear, especially for the kinds of outings they're likely to participate in as new Scouts. Here are some strategies for dealing with equipment challenges:

- Borrow gear from a partner troop. (The loans may end up being permanent if the other troop is awash in old but serviceable gear it no longer uses.)
- Encourage Scouts to make do with school backpacks and other items they already have. In warm weather, for example, a blanket works just as well as a sleeping bag.
- Enlist the chartered organization's help.
- Plan a money-earning project to pay for troop gear.
- Ask a local veterans' organization to supply an American flag.

Understanding Diverse Populations

If you're going to work with families from different cultures than your own, it's important to understand those families' motivations and concerns. In recent years, the BSA, like many organizations, has done extensive research to understand the populations it seeks to serve.

Before we look at characteristics of specific cultural groups, it's important to point out some general truths:

- Parents in all cultures want the best for their children. If you can show them how Scouting can help them meet their goals, they will be happy to partner with you.
- Parents in all cultures want a safe place for their children, and they seek out programs that reinforce their values and build self-esteem—things Scouting has been doing for more than a century.
- Cultures are not monolithic. Although Asian Americans (for example) may share some cultural characteristics, there's a world of difference between second-generation Chinese Americans in Silicon Valley and refugee families from Myanmar in Salt Lake City.

Within most ethnic groups in the U.S., people may be at any point along a continuum on which one end represents total absorption in their ethnic culture and the other represents complete adoption of mainstream U.S. culture. Recognize that different people may be—and may want to be—at different places along that continuum.

General Parent Characteristics

Research has shown that parents in minority cultures have a positive image of Scouting but an incomplete understanding of the program. They're less likely than white suburban parents to have a Scouting history or an emotional connection to Scouting.

Many view Scouting as a program for white or Anglo families. They don't see Scouts in their communities and don't realize that Scouting welcomes people from diverse backgrounds.

Like all parents, parents in minority communities are looking for programs that are proven to build leadership, character, and values. They want programs to enhance their children's academic skills. They trust faith-based organizations, which can often be a good entry point into new neighborhoods for Scouting.

General Youth Characteristics

Today's young people are growing up in diverse communities. They want and expect diversity to be a part of the organizations they join.

Unfortunately, ethnic youth may not see others like themselves in Scouting and may not have friends who are Scouts. Scout leaders have to work extra hard to demonstrate that Scouting is for everyone.

The table on this page lists specific results from BSA focus groups within key minority communities.

Desires of Parents and Youths in Key Ethnic Groups

	Parents Want Programs That	Youths Want to
African Americans	• Develop character • Improve academic success • Build discipline and independence • Teach leadership skills, teamwork, and physical fitness • Help their children serve the community • Emphasize values reinforced through Scouting and faith-based partnerships	• Gain recognition for their contributions • Compete with others as part of a team • Learn leadership skills • Serve the community
Asian Americans	• Help their children succeed academically • Emphasize educational benefits • Build independence • Improve physical fitness • Build leadership skills • Help their children serve the community • Preserve their cultural heritage	• Meet new people • Try new things • Learn leadership skills • Prepare for academic success
Hispanic/Latino Americans	• Preserve their cultural heritage • Teach responsibility • Emphasize values and building family bonds • Include the entire family (especially with families that have Mexican, Central American, and South American roots versus Caribbean roots)	• Try a variety of activities • Try something new

Scouting in Rural Communities

Scouting has long flourished in small towns and rural communities. The BSA created a rural department at the national office in 1916, and many early merit badges focused on agricultural topics. (Even as late as the 1970s, Scouts could earn badges in Farm Arrangement, Forage Crops, Fruit and Nut Growing, and Hog Production.) Today, Scouting continues to thrive in many rural areas—if those areas are thriving. In isolated areas with an underdeveloped or depressed economy, marginal sources of income, and a pattern of out-migration, Scout troops face many of the same challenges as they do in urban areas.

The federal government defines rural as all places of less than 2,500 population. The U.S. Census Bureau counted nearly 17 percent of the U.S. population as rural in 2007.

Isolated areas are farthest from metropolitan areas. Most have very low population density. They may be isolated because of geography or climate. People there may have less contact with the rest of the world than residents of other rural areas. Resources for adequate community services may be limited because of the distances involved. Providing Scouting for the young people in isolated areas may be difficult for the same reason and may require a great deal of creativity.

Youth Needs

Young people in low-income rural communities are much like youth everywhere, except for some needs and problems that many of us may not have experienced. The following are a few examples of too-often unmet needs of these young people that you may encounter.

Meaningful activity. Because their parents must spend so much time earning a living, low-income children may lack the opportunity for meaningful activity under adult guidance. Scouting offers a series of activities with adult guidance built around physical and outdoor adventures.

Economic opportunity. Because low-income rural communities may offer little economic opportunity, young people there may need special help in the areas of education and preparation for employment. Scouting can help with training in the personal qualities needed to survive in the job market and with providing support services for young people who have jobs.

Positive self-image. Some low-income youth have a poor self-image and lack of confidence in their future. Scouting helps young people see themselves as persons of worth. Children can take pride in their own achievement.

Status. Rural youth may have fewer opportunities to achieve and may perceive themselves as lacking status. Scouting offers a planned system of recognition for mastering useful and often lifelong skills. The uniform offers instant status. All children need to be involved in decisions affecting their lives, and Scouting offers leadership responsibilities to children through elected and appointed offices.

Communication. Scouting can help with opportunities to practice written and oral communication. Scouting helps develop positive links to a wider world of people and resources, thus helping to overcome feelings of isolation.

Understanding. Paradoxically, by fulfilling one of the greatest needs that rural youth may have—a need for understanding—Scouting also can fill a need of volunteers living outside rural areas. Their involvement helps them know and understand the importance of a healthy rural America. Scouting can help them learn to respond to people they knew little about before, and so that "other America" becomes their America also.

Keys to Success in Rural Areas

During the 20th century there was a steady shift of the United States from a rural to an urban majority. Those who stayed probably did so because they wanted to. Others, such as migrant workers, moved in the opposite direction in search of jobs and a lower cost of living.

Life in rural areas is different from life in cities and suburbs. Someone raised in a city may view a rural area's slower pace of life or smaller number of cultural choices as limiting, while to residents of that area, those same factors are seen as positive for a number of reasons. Further, an outward appearance of simplicity may be deceiving, particularly with the increased cultural choices offered by the internet and other modern communication media.

Life in rural areas is different from life in cities and suburbs, and it is also different in one rural community as compared to another. In any community, urban or rural, nothing can create more skepticism than an outsider who knows little about the people of the community but who tries to tell people there what to do and how to do it. More of your success than you may realize stems from how well you come to know this particular rural community and how well you can tailor Scouting methods for it.

If people in a rural community seem suspicious of or resistant to your efforts to introduce Scouting, it could be because of the community's history with "outsiders" coming in and trying to change things without regard for the residents' wishes. Don't make the same mistake.

Resistance to Scouting could come from a perception of Scouting as an organization primarily for urban or metropolitan youth, and a desire to protect their community from the negative aspects of urban and metropolitan life. Be sure you present Scouting as their program, tailored to meet their needs.

If the community is fairly homogenous in ethnicity and/or religion, there may be resistance due to a perception that Scouting is tied to a particular group or religion that is not their own. Emphasize the ways in which Scouting shares their goals, and the fact that it is used by many kinds of groups to further their own goals for their youth.

You are more likely to gain communitywide acceptance if you take care to deal with people individually and on a personal basis. Get to know them and let them learn about you—not by being pushy, but by being caring and interested in them. You don't have to meet every single person in the community, but only meeting and dealing with a few community leaders could hurt your cause.

In some rural communities, organizations may operate fairly informally and with a straightforward approach. Other rural communities may value formal organization. You will do well to find out and suit your style to the style that predominates in the community.

Many rural communities have a history of people helping each other in time of need or crisis and a well-developed way of organizing volunteer work, whether or not they call it that. If you encounter this type of support, count yourself lucky! By plugging into existing networks, you can earn the involvement of experienced volunteers.

In some cultures, people value the goodwill and acceptance of their group so much that they will reject any advancement or formal post of leadership that could distinguish them from others in the group. Informal leadership may exist, but one does not give appearances of being "above" one's neighbors and peers. In this case, it would be wise to emphasize the service role and de-emphasize rank in adult volunteer leader positions.

Rural Challenges

Troops serving low-income Scouts in rural communities face many of the same challenges as those serving in inner-city neighborhoods. There are also a couple of extra challenges: driving distances and lack of support from chartered organizations.

Driving Distances

In some rural areas, great distances, lower population densities, and community rivalries may require modification of conventional meeting patterns. It may make more sense to have biweekly or even monthly troop meetings rather than weekly meetings. Probably held on a weekend day, the monthly troop meeting would start with a conventional troop meeting followed by a cookout or other meal activity and an afternoon outdoor activity such as a troop hike, wide game, or service project. Later in the afternoon, parents would return for a brief parents' meeting and/or court of honor.

Under this scenario, geographically organized patrols could meet more frequently. You could even organize patrols by school-bus route. The group spirit that develops while riding the bus makes it easy to talk about Scouting, practice advancement skills, and make plans. Some school-bus patrols get off the bus to meet at the home of one of the patrol members.

Other suggestions:

- In sparsely populated areas, it may be more realistic to organize additional patrols attached to an existing troop rather than to start new units.
- In some rare instances a group of youth and leaders are simultaneously a Scouting unit and a 4-H group, carrying out both programs in their group.

Chartered Organization Support

If a rural area lacks sufficient community organizations with the resources, stability, and acceptability to have their own units, or lacks a sufficient number of available adults to complete the normal unit structure, you might consider some alternative methods of unit operation.

Multiple Units. A community organization operates several units, even in different locations, but with a single committee for all units. A person may be multiple-registered on more than one unit committee. A church might have mission outposts in more than one location. They could, if necessary, have unit leaders in each outpost but with a single committee supporting all their units. A large consolidated rural school might use this approach in operating units in several far-flung parts of its school district.

Multiple Organizations. Two or more organizations pool their resources to jointly operate one or more units. Bring the heads of the organizations together to agree on who will be the chartered organization representative and to approve the other adult leaders. Local councils can issue duplicate charters listing the multiple organizations so each may receive and display a charter.

Group of Citizens. The Scouting program is made available to a previously unorganized group of citizens. District Scouters organize a group of citizens into an organization that, in turn, provides adult leadership, a meeting place, and responsibility for units. The group of citizens acts in lieu of an already established organization.

Consider these options if the chartered organization does not have sufficient meeting space:

- Consider using the family rooms or basements of Scouts or leaders, a town hall, the fire department or police station, garages, trailers, empty store buildings, National Guard armories, barns, community rooms, council camp dining halls, store attics, and self-storage units.
- In warmer climates, some successful troops conduct all of their meetings outdoors. Some units erect a dining fly for each patrol in the event of inclement weather. Other troops use two-wheeled trailers to carry all of the troop's meeting equipment, with each patrol having a patrol box on the trailer. For the troop meeting, the unit merely brings the trailer to the meeting place.

Lone Scouts

Lone Scouting is an excellent outreach for youth who can be Scouts no other way. Traced to origins in England in 1913, Lone Scouting is just as timely in reaching isolated youth today as it was then. In 1915, William D. Boyce incorporated the Lone Scouts of America, which merged with the BSA nine years later. Today, the Lone Scout plan provides a Scouting opportunity for youth who cannot readily join a unit or attend meetings. The plan provides opportunities for:

- Youth in rural communities who live far from a Scouting unit
- Children of migratory farm workers
- Youth who attend special schools, night schools, or boarding schools that don't have Scouting
- Youth who have jobs that conflict with unit meetings
- Youth whose families frequently travel, such as circus families, families who live on boats, and so on
- Youth with disabilities that prevent them from attending regular meetings of packs and troops
- Youth who alternate living arrangements with parents who live in different communities
- Children of American citizens who live abroad in an area that doesn't have BSA units
- Exchange students away from the United States for a year or more

Every youth registering as a Lone Cub Scout or Lone Scout must have an adult, 21 years or older, who agrees to be the Scout's "friend and counselor." The Lone Scout friend and counselor should

- Guide the Scout in planning Scouting activities.
- Encourage the Scout to grow and develop from Scouting experiences.
- Instruct, examine, and guide the Lone Scout on all the steps in Scout advancement.
- Help the Scout use the resources of the BSA local council and district in which the Scout and counselor reside.
- Help the Scout get to the local council resident camp.
- Serve as a role model of Scouting ideals.

The *Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook,* No. 511-420, has complete details on Lone Scouting.

Awards for Working With Disadvantaged Scouts

While nobody works with disadvantaged populations solely to win awards, the BSA offers several awards that recognize such service. When these awards are presented in public settings and garner media attention, they also emphasize that Scouting is already at work in the community, perhaps encouraging others to get on board.

Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award. This award recognizes individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding contribution in providing Scouting for low-income rural or urban youth.

The Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award. The purpose of the Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award is to recognize outstanding service by individuals and organizations for demonstrated involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Asian American youth.

The ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Service Award. This award recognizes outstanding service by individuals and organizations for demonstrated involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Hispanic/Latino youth.

The Francis X. Guardipee Grey Wolf Award. This award recognizes American Indian or non-Indian adults for distinguished service to American Indian youth in Scouting. Guardipee, the first American Indian to become a ranger within the National Park Service, founded a Boy Scout troop in 1916 and worked with youth until his death in 1970.

CHAPTER 24
Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities

Since its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has had fully participating members with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. In fact, the first Chief Scout Executive, James E. West, had a disability (a mobility impairment that resulted from tuberculosis).

While there are troops composed exclusively of Scouts with disabilities, experience has shown that Scouting works best when youth with disabilities are mainstreamed—placed in a regular patrol in a regular troop. That's the focus of this chapter. We'll begin by discussing how you can work with Scouts with special needs and then discuss how Scouting's advancement program takes into account disabilities.

***Abilities Digest* is a free electronic newsletter that focuses on serving Scouts with disabilities. For more information or to sign up, visit www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/abilities-digest-archives.**

Council Advisory Committee

Most local councils, and many districts, have an advisory committee on youth with disabilities whose function is to better serve youth with physical and mental disabilities. This committee works with institutions that desire to have special units and with traditional units that may have a single Scout with a disability. It can be an important resource for you as you begin to mainstream special-needs Scouts into your troop.

The committee also works to make camping areas and troop facilities accessible and barrier-free. It provides resources such as sign-language interpreters for Scouts who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, tapes and Braille literature for Scouts who are vision-impaired, and adults with special skills to serve as advisors and tutors as needed. The committee should also act as the advocate that speaks on behalf of Scouts with disabilities at every opportunity. The committee will often work closely with the advancement committee to develop alternate requirements for Scouts and with the camping committee to ensure barrier-free camp facilities.

Other duties of this committee could include presenting awards and recognitions for Scouters who have performed extraordinary service in working with youth with disabilities, the organization of new units, and promoting awareness of disabilities through activities and events.

Defining Disability

A disability is a real and long-term condition that impairs functioning in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical
- Learning
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in 10 children in the United States has a disability. That number may be even higher in Scouting, where youth with disabilities can often find success that eludes them in other programs.

While physical disabilities are often obvious—no one can miss the presence of a wheelchair or thick glasses—many other disabilities are hidden. If you see a Scout who struggles with a social or life skill, look for ways to support the Scout, even if no diagnosis has been made or no one has shared a diagnosis with you.

The following list describes some disabilities that are common. This list is by no means a complete one, and the descriptions are by no means comprehensive. Keep in mind that individual Scouts will vary greatly in terms of how severe their disabilities are and what accommodations they require.

For more information about specific disabilities, contact the Center for Parent Information and Resources (www.parentcenterhub.org). This organization provides fact sheets to aid parents and Scout leaders who work with children with disabilities.

Asperger syndrome. An autism spectrum disorder that falls on the "high functioning" end of the spectrum. What distinguishes Asperger syndrome is the severity of the symptoms and the absence of language delays. Children with Asperger syndrome may be only mildly affected and frequently have good language and cognitive skills. To the untrained observer, a child with Asperger syndrome may just seem like a normal child behaving differently.

attention deficit disorder (ADD). A syndrome of learning and behavioral problems that affects concentration, impulse control, and attention. Overactive behavior is often called hyperactivity (ADHD).

autism spectrum disorder. A neurological disorder of brain function whose signs usually appear very early in childhood. The spectrum represents the range of function from low to high that an individual may manifest. Autism is highly variable and is often distinguished by multiple symptoms. The most common characteristics are difficulty with communication or social behavior, repetitive behaviors or interests, and sensory challenges. Children on the spectrum often do not understand common dangers, such as busy streets, yet may show above-normal skill in isolated areas such as mathematics or music.

cerebral palsy. A group of disorders resulting from brain damage. *Cerebral* refers to the brain and *palsy* refers to a lack of control over muscles. Any combination of physical and mental status is possible. Symptoms range from slight awkwardness of gait to more uncontrolled movements and an inability to see, speak, or learn as people without disabilities do. Cerebral palsy should not be associated with cognitive disabilities.

cognitive disabilities. People with cognitive disabilities are limited in their ability to learn and are generally socially immature. Having cognitive disabilities is a condition, not a disease, manifested before age 21. It is important to realize that people with cognitive disabilities have the same hopes and emotions as people without them. They learn, but at a slow pace.

a. mild cognitive disabilities. About 90 percent of people with cognitive disabilities have mild cognitive disabilities. They are capable of being educated and, as adults, given proper training, can work in competitive jobs, live independently, and be a part of daily community life.

b. moderate cognitive disabilities. People with moderate cognitive disabilities are less likely to be able to live independently. They can learn to care for their personal needs and perform many useful tasks in the home or, as adults, in a sheltered-workshop situation.

c. profound cognitive disabilities. People with physical disabilities and severe impairment in coordination and sensory development that make constant care necessary have profound cognitive disabilities. With special techniques, some can be taught useful simple tasks and can participate in some limited social activities.

developmental disabilities. A severe, chronic set of functional limitations that result from any physical and/or mental impairment that manifests itself before age 22.

Down syndrome. Physical and intellectual development is slow in people who have Down syndrome. They will frequently have health-related disorders such as heart defects and respiratory, vision, hearing, and speech problems.

emotional disturbance. An inability to adjust to the problems and stresses of daily life. Such disabilities can cause people to react aggressively to, or withdraw from, situations rather than attempt to adjust to them.

learning disability. A disorder in one or more of the basic physiological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. The disorder can manifest itself in, for example, the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, do mathematical calculations, etc. Even though their progress in these skills might be limited, people with learning disabilities may have average to above-average intelligence.

multiple sclerosis. This chronic, progressive disease of the neurologic system affects important functions of daily living such as walking, talking, seeing, eating, tying a shoe, opening a door, etc. There is no known cure, and the cause has yet to be found.

muscular dystrophies. A general designation for a group of chronic diseases; the most prominent characteristic is the progressive degeneration of the muscles.

physical disability. An impairment that hampers physical, vocational, and community activities.

postlingual deafness. A loss of hearing after having developed speech (usually after reaching 6 years of age). People with these disabilities have some understandable speech or at least can make speechlike sounds, might "sign," have a hearing aid, etc.

prelingual deafness. An impairment caused by being born deaf or losing hearing before acquiring speech or syntax. People with these disabilities make up 95 percent of the school-age deaf population.

seizure disorders. Not a disease, but a malfunction of the manner in which the cells of the brain release energy, characterized by sudden seizures involving muscle convulsions and partial or total loss of consciousness. Seizure disorders can sometimes be controlled through use of medication.

speech/language disorders. A communication disorder, such as stuttering, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

spinal cord injury. Paralysis of parts of the body, usually the result of an accident.

traumatic brain injury. An injury to the brain by an external physical force, resulting in the impairment of one or more of the following areas: speech, memory, attention, reasoning, judgment, problem solving, motor abilities, and psychosocial behavior. Impairments may be temporary or permanent.

visual impairment. An inability to see. An individual who is legally blind can see no more at a distance of 20 feet than a person without visual impairments can see at a distance of 200 feet. Functional blindness is generally defined as the inability to read newspaper type even with the best possible corrective lenses, or to perform ordinary tasks necessary to daily living.

The Benefits of Serving Scouts With Disabilities

We all know that Scouting is good for kids. But kids with disabilities often get more out of the program than other kids do. Here are some ways they benefit:

- Youth with special needs are often more driven to achieve, and they probably have fewer outlets to satisfy this natural desire. Scouting gives them the same chance to achieve as any other Scout.
- Youth with special needs often lack chances for socialization; even when they're mainstreamed in school, they may not be fully integrated into the school community. Scouting puts them in the middle of natural peer groups: the patrol and troop.
- Youth with special needs are often sheltered from things that may be difficult or frustrating to them. They often have parents or medical personnel around to make them content and comfortable. Scouting, however, can help them develop coping skills that may be helpful later in life. Our programs offer youth with disabilities an opportunity to tackle kid-sized challenges and to work with others of their age.

But the benefits don't end there. Scouts (and Scouters) without disabilities benefit when Scouts with disabilities are fully integrated into the troop program. They begin to see the individuals behind the labels, they learn how to work with people who are different from themselves, and they develop a more realistic view of their own abilities—or lack thereof.

Other troop members often become the strongest supporters of Scouts with special needs—and that support can extend far beyond the troop setting.

Volume 2 of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* includes a module on special-needs awareness that gives Scouts a chance to experience a variety of disabilities.

One of the most important lessons all Scouts and Scouters can learn is that disability is not a black-and-white issue. Most of us have some level of disability—whether that's nearsightedness, hearing loss, or stiff joints from old sports injuries—and some studies even suggest that 1 in 10 of us has some sort of learning disability that we may not even know about. Integrating Scouts with disabilities into Scouting gives us a better perspective on our challenges and abilities and valuable insight into the challenges and abilities of other people.

Working With Scouts With Disabilities

The best guide to working with Scouts who have disabilities is to use good common sense. It's obvious that a Scout in a wheelchair may have problems fulfilling a hiking requirement, but it might not be so obvious when it comes to the difficulties of a Scout with a learning disability. Use the resources around you, along with this chapter. Begin with the Scout and the Scout's parent(s); seek guidance from them on how best to work with the Scout. Seek help from the Scout's teacher, doctor, or physical therapist. Each Scout will be different, so no single plan will work for every Scout. If the troop is short on personnel, ask the Scout's parents to help, or assign one or more skilled older Scouts to be of assistance. It will take patience, but the rewards will be great, for the Scout, for you, and for the members of your troop.

The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities is that every Scout wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the troop. While there are, by necessity, troops composed exclusively of Scouts with similar disabilities, experience has shown that Scouting usually succeeds best when every Scout is a member of a patrol in a regular troop.

To the fullest extent possible, Scouts with disabilities should be given opportunities to camp, hike, and take part in other patrol and troop activities. Most Scout camps and public campgrounds have accessible campsites to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Most camp operations will work with the troop leadership to design a program for Scouts with disabilities if given adequate advance notice.

Many Scouts with disabilities can accomplish the basic skills of Scouting but may require extra time to learn them. Working with these youth will require patience and understanding on the part of troop leaders and other Scouts. A clear and open understanding should exist between the troop leadership and the parents or guardians of the Scout with a disability. Both will be required to give extra effort, but in both cases, the effort will be well worth it. See the section titled "Parents' Prejoining Conference" for details of items to discuss.

Troop leaders should know the limitations and strengths of the Scout and, in some cases, may need to discuss the extent of physical activity with the health-care provider in addition to the parents or guardians. Permission of the parent is required to contact the health-care provider.

Before a Scout with a disability joins a troop, the Scoutmaster (with parental permission) should explain to the members of the troop what they should expect. Explain the disability, the treatment, and any likely reactions that might occur. Stress that the new Scout should be treated like any other new Scout but that troop members should be sensitive to the Scout's needs. Experience has shown that a Scout with a disability can have a positive impact on a Scout troop, and the others in the troop take great pride in that Scout's accomplishments.

Parents' Prejoining Conference

Prior to joining a troop, parents and the Scout should meet with the Scout leader to explain the prospective Scout's special needs. The Scout should be present at the prejoining conference so that expectations for the Scout, the parents, and the troop are clearly understood by everyone. Allow the Scout to speak for himself or herself as much as possible. The following are some of the issues that should be discussed.

General Characteristics

The Scout leader should attempt to obtain a general picture of the Scout's strengths and weaknesses. The leader should be aware of special needs that might arise at meetings, campouts, field trips, etc. Because most Scout troops do not

have assistant leaders who have expertise in working with Scouts with disabilities, a parent may be required to attend troop activities, especially those activities that might require strenuous physical effort or that occur over an extended period of time.

Physical Disabilities

Physical limitations should be discussed with the parents and Scout. The Annual Health and Medical Record form should be filled out and kept on file with the unit. If you anticipate that this Scout may need exceptions made in the advancement process, then you should obtain a medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities from a licensed health-care provider and an evaluation statement certified by an educational administrator. Using these statements, you should then consult the council advancement committee about the process for requesting alternative advancement requirements.

Mental Capabilities

The Scout leader should be advised by the parents of their child's capabilities. The Scout leader should know the Scout's present grade level and reading, listening, and mathematical abilities. The Scout leader can then determine how best to help the Scout get the fullest program possible.

Medication

While it is the responsibility of the Scout and/or parent or guardian to ensure that the Scout takes all prescribed medication correctly, the Scout leader should be aware of what medication the Scout takes regularly. A Scout leader, after obtaining written permission and instructions for administering any medications, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate or encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.

Discipline

Parents should be asked about any behavioral issues. Troop rules should be discussed with the parents and the Scout. The Scout leader should determine the discipline used to maintain appropriate behavior. The Scout leader should explain disciplinary procedures (sitting out games, suspension from a troop meeting or campout, etc.) to the parents. Have rules in writing for parents and Scouts.

Diet and Eating Problems

Any special diets or restrictions and any chewing or swallowing problems should be explained to the Scout leader. If a special diet is necessary, keep that in mind for menu planning, but in some cases specialty food for campouts should be provided by the parents.

Living Skills

The Scout's ability to attend to personal needs and any special help the Scout might require in this area should be discussed with parents.

Transportation

Transportation to and from troop meetings is the parents' responsibility. Carpooling with other parents is suggested but should be arranged among parents.

Unit Operation

The Scout leader should explain the Scouting program and emphasize why advancement (at whatever rate possible) is important to the Scout. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce their child's activities.

Emergency Procedures

Parents must inform the Scout leader of the name and phone number of their child's doctor. The Scout's medical history should be discussed in full. Appropriate medical permissions should be obtained.

General Guidelines for Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Types of Disabilities

How you work with a Scout with a spinal cord injury will obviously vary from how you work with a Scout who has an autism spectrum disorder. That said, there are some general guidelines that will help you to be more effective. Not surprisingly, many of these guidelines apply equally well to Scouts without discernible disabilities.

1. Leadership Techniques

- Wise leaders expect problems but do not consider them overwhelming. Keep a confidential record of each youth for background information. Though you may view the Scout with a disability as an individual with significant differences, that isn't really the case. All youth have different needs. The wise leader will recognize this and be prepared to help.
- Leaders should make a personal visit to the parents and the new Scout with a disability to learn about the Scout, any physical limitations, abilities, and preferences, and whether the Scout knows any of the other Scouts in the troop. Some young people with disabilities will try to do more than they are capable of doing, just to fit in with others, which could result in unnecessary frustration.
- Many youth with disabilities have special physical or health needs. Parents, visiting nurses, special-education teachers, physical therapists, doctors, and other agencies can help make you more familiar with the nature of the disability. Get parent permission before contacting health-care professionals.
- Accept the Scout as a person and give the Scout the same respect that you expect to receive in return. This will be much easier to do if you know the Scout and the Scout's parents, background, and likes and dislikes. Remember, any behavior that presents difficulties is a force that can be redirected into more acceptable pathways—rather than erased and rebuilt.
- Example is a wonderful tool. Demonstrate personal discipline with respect, punctuality, accuracy, conscientiousness, dignity, and dependability.
- Become involved with the Scout's life. Let the Scout know that you care for them as a whole person. A small word of praise or a pat on the back for a job well done can mean a lot to someone who receives little elsewhere. Judge accomplishment by what the Scout can do, not by what someone says they must do or by what you think they cannot do.

- Rewarding achievement will likely cause that behavior to be repeated. Reward can be in the form of a thank-you, a recognition made by the group for helping the group perform at a higher level, a badge, a prize, or a chance to go on a trip. Focus rewards on proper behavior and achievement.
- Do not let the Scout or parents use a disability as an excuse for not trying. Expect the Scout to give their best effort.

2. Providing Encouragement

- Reward more than you criticize, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance, but be sincere.
- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral improvement.
- Find ways to encourage the Scout.
- Teach the Scout about rewarding oneself for accomplishments. This encourages the Scout to think positively.

3. Giving Instruction to Youth With Disabilities

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction (except when the Scout's culture finds this inappropriate).
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.
- Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.
- Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.

4. Providing Supervision and Discipline

- As a leader, you must be a number of things to each Scout: a friend, authority figure, reviewer, disciplinarian, resource, and teacher.
- Listening is an important technique that means giving the Scout an opportunity for self-expression. Whether as a part of the group or in private conversation, be patient, be understanding, and take seriously what the Scout has to say. Keep yourself attuned to what the Scout is saying; use phrases like, "You really feel that way?" or "If I understand you right ... "
- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember, all young people have difficulty staying in control at times.
- Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the Scout.
- Have pre-established consequences for misbehavior for all Scouts.
- Avoid saying "don't do this" and instead say "do this." We want the positive behavior to be remembered.
- When a Scout is behaving in an unacceptable manner, try the "time out" strategy or redirect the Scout's behavior.

Administer consequences immediately, and affirm proper behavior frequently.

- Make sure the discipline fits the offense and is not unduly harsh.
- Enforce troop rules consistently.
- Do not reward inappropriate behavior. Praise when the Scout exerts real effort, even if unsuccessful, and/or when the Scout shows improvement over a previous performance.
- Never praise falsely.
- Do not accept blaming others as an excuse for poor performance. Make it clear that you expect the Scout to answer for their own behavior.
- Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?).

See chapter 19 for more information on discipline.

Guidelines for Specific Types of Special Needs and Disabilities

If a Scout or Scouter has any of the following disabilities, these ideas might be helpful. Always ask if he or she needs, or wants, help. Don't make assumptions.

Mobility Impairments

- Remember that people who use adaptive equipment (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) often consider their equipment an extension of their bodies.
- Never move equipment out of the person's reach.
- Before you go somewhere with a person who has a mobility impairment, make sure facilities at the destination are accessible.
- Never pat a person in a wheelchair on the head. This is a sign of disrespect for adults.
- When helping, ask how equipment works if you are unfamiliar with it.
- Prevent strained necks by standing a few feet away when talking to someone in a wheelchair.
- Find a place to sit down for long talks.

Hearing Loss

- Make sure the person is looking at you before you begin to talk.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Use gestures to help make your points.
- Ask for directions to be repeated, or watch to make sure directions were understood correctly.
- Use visual demonstration to assist verbal direction.
- In a large group, remember that it's important for only one person to speak at a time.
- Speakers should never stand with their backs to the sun or light when addressing people who read lips.
- Shouting at a person who is deaf very seldom helps. It distorts your speech and makes lip-reading difficult.

Vision Impairments

- Identify yourself to people with vision impairments by speaking up.
- Offer your arm, but don't try to lead the person.
- Volunteer information by reading aloud signs, and pointing out changing street lights and construction zones.
- When you stop helping, announce your departure.
- If you meet someone who has a guide dog, never distract the dog by petting or feeding it; keep other animals away.
- If you meet someone who is using a white cane, don't touch the cane. If the cane should touch you, step out of the way and allow the person to pass.

Speech/Language Disorders

- Stay calm. The person with the speech disorder has been in this situation before.
- Don't shout. People with speech disorders often have perfect hearing.
- Be patient. People with speech disorders want to be understood as badly as you want to understand.
- Don't interrupt by finishing sentences or supplying words.
- Give your full attention.
- Ask short questions that can be answered by a simple yes or no.
- Ask people with speech disorders to repeat themselves if you don't understand.
- Avoid noisy situations. Background noise makes communication hard for everyone.
- Model slow speech with short phrases.

Cognitive Disabilities

- People whose mental performance is affected may learn slowly and may have a hard time using their knowledge.
- Be clear and concise.
- Don't use complex sentences or difficult words.
- Don't talk down to the person. "Baby talk" won't make you easier to understand.
- Don't take advantage. Never ask the person to do anything you wouldn't do yourself.
- Be understanding. People with below-average mental performance are often aware of their limitations, but they have the same needs and desires as those without a disability.

Social/Emotional Impairments

- People with social/emotional impairments have disorders of the mind that can make daily life difficult. If someone is obviously upset, stay calm. People with mental illness are rarely violent.
- Offer to get help. Offer to contact a family member, friend, or counselor.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Provide consistent, predictable structure. Be patient. Allow extra time for activities.
- Provide a visual schedule using words and pictures. All Scouts will find this useful. Don't put times in the schedule because a Scout with autism may expect you to follow it to the minute.
- Let the Scout know about transitions early by saying, "In five minutes we'll be ending this activity and starting another."
- Give the Scout information about new activities ahead of time.
- Break up tasks into smaller steps.
- Alert the Scout's parents if there is going to be an activity that may cause sensory difficulties for their child. Consider moving noisy activities outside where the noise can dissipate. If the Scout has issues with food taste and texture, carefully plan the menus around these issues so the Scout can eat the same things as other members of the unit as much as possible.

Attention Deficit Disorder

- Structure Scout meeting time, activities, and rules so that the Scout with ADD knows what to expect. Post a calendar of events.
- Be positive. Praise appropriate behavior and completion of tasks to help build the Scout's self-esteem.
- Be realistic about behavior and assignments. Many children with ADD simply can't sit for long periods or follow detailed instructions. Make learning interesting with plenty of hands-on activities.
- Monitor behavior through charts that explain expectations for behavior and rewards for reaching goals. This system of positive reinforcement can help the Scout stay focused.
- Test the Scout's knowledge and not just the ability to take tests. Testing orally or in several short testing sessions might help.
- Begin a formal achievement program. Weekly reports to parents could increase their involvement.
- Work closely with parents and members of the education team. People working together can make a big difference.
- Be sensitive to the Scout about taking prescribed medication. Avoid statements such as, "Go take a pill."
- Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.

Learning Disabilities

- Listen and observe carefully to find clues as to how this Scout approaches problems and what difficulties exist.
- Remember that praise and encouragement can help build self-esteem.
- Let other troop members use their friendship and support to make it clear the Scout belongs.
- Use short, direct instructions that help the Scout know what is expected of them.
- As much as possible, stay with a regular troop schedule, allowing the Scout to help with assigned duties.
- Give the Scout extra time when needed. Don't rush the Scout. Reword instructions or questions if necessary.

Advancement for Scouts With Disabilities

While advancement might seem beyond the reach of some Scouts with disabilities, most are able to advance with support. Many reach the rank of Eagle Scout and/or earn dozens of merit badges. Two forms of accommodation are available: registration beyond the age of eligibility and alternative requirements.

As always, the current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the authoritative source for advancement information.

Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

Under normal circumstances, a young person's time as a Scout ends at age 18; after that time, they may no longer work on Scout advancement. However, if a Scout has a permanent and severe disability, the council executive board may approve registration beyond age 18. This is a permanent arrangement, not an extension of time to earn a rank.

In rare cases, a Scout with a temporary disability may be granted a time extension for completing the Eagle Scout requirements. For example, a 17½-year-old Scout might qualify if the Scout is on track to complete the requirements in time but suffers an injury that requires a long hospitalization.

To register a Scout beyond the age of eligibility, the following documents must be assembled and submitted to the local council. The Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility, No. 512-935, should be used in this process.

1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence, and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility.
2. A completed youth membership application or proof of current membership.
3. A completed and signed Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A and C).
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and permanent limitations connected with it. For physical disabilities, this must be a licensed physician; for developmental or cognitive issues, a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or as appropriate, a neurologist or other medical professional in a specialty related to the disability would suffice.
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration.
6. Other supporting documentation, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc.; these are optional, but can make a difference in the decision.

The request for registration beyond the age of eligibility must be approved by the council executive board, but the board may delegate the process to a council operating committee or other group of responsible volunteers at the council level.

Modified Advancement Requirements

Many Scouts with disabilities may have difficulty completing the requirements to advance in Scouting. However, it is important that these Scouts feel as much like others as possible; completing the requirements as stated in official Scouting literature should be a primary objective. If a Scout's disability hinders them in completing a particular requirement or merit badge, then the Scout may wish to apply for alternative requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class ranks or for an alternative merit badge.

This is a separate process from registration beyond the age of eligibility. Some Scouts could complete the standard advancement requirements if they had more time; others could reach the rank of Eagle by their 18th birthdays if they could pursue alternative requirements; some might need both forms of accommodation.

Alternative requirements are primarily designed to benefit Scouts with permanent disabilities. However, Scouts with longer-term temporary disabilities—such as those related to a serious injury—may also be eligible.

Alternative Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class Ranks

A Scout who has a permanent physical or mental disability and is unable to complete all of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class rank may submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternative requirements.

To keep Scouts with disabilities as much in the advancement mainstream as possible, some advancement accommodation may be required. Thus, a Scout in a wheelchair can meet the requirements for hiking by making a trip to a place of interest in the local community. Giving more time and permitting the use of special aids are other ways leaders can help Scouts with disabilities in their efforts to advance. The substitute should provide a similar learning experience to the original requirement. Bear in mind that the outcome of the Scouting experience should be one of fun and learning, not completing the requirements for rank advancements, which might place unrealistic expectations on the Scout with a disability.

Simple modifications very close to existing requirements need not be approved. A Scout who uses a wheelchair, for example, may meet the Second Class requirement for hiking by "wheeling" to a place of interest. Modifications, however, must provide a very similar challenge and learning experience.

Below are the procedures for applying for alternative requirements.

Step 1—Do as many standard requirements as possible.

Before applying for alternative requirements, the Scout must complete as many of the standard requirements as ability permits. The Scout must do their very best to the limit of their abilities and resources.

Step 2—Gather supporting letters and statements.

In addition to supporting letters from the unit leader, a parent or guardian, and the Scout, the request must include a written statement from a qualified health professional. A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be submitted by a licensed health-care provider. It must state that the disability is permanent (or a long-term temporary disability) and outline what physical activities the Scout may not be capable of completing. In the case of a cognitive disability, an evaluation statement should be submitted by a certified educational administrator relating the ability level of the Scout.

Step 3—Prepare a request for alternative requirements.

A written request must be submitted to the council advancement committee for the Scout to work on alternative requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. The request should include the standard requirements the Scout has completed and the suggested alternative requirements for those requirements the Scout cannot complete. This request should be detailed enough to give the advancement committee sufficient information to make a decision. The request should be prepared by the Scout, the parents, and the Scoutmaster. A copy of the medical statement in step 2 should be included.

The Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936, can be used to document proposed alternative requirements. The form's location online can be found in the appendix.

Step 4—The advancement committee reviews the request.

The council advancement committee should review the request, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for people with disabilities. The advancement committee may want to interview the Scout, the parents, and the leader to fully understand the request and to make a fair determination. The decision of the advancement committee should be recorded and delivered to the Scout and the Scoutmaster.

Alternative requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle are not available. However, Scouts may request permission to pursue alternative merit badges, as described in the next section.

Alternative Merit Badges for the Eagle Scout Rank

Though individual requirements for merit badges may not be modified or substituted, Scouts with special needs may request approval for alternative badges they can complete. This is allowable on the basis of one entire badge for another. Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated. Any alternatives must present the same challenge and learning level as those they replace.

Follow this procedure to request alternative merit badges.

1. A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be made by a licensed health-care provider, or an evaluation statement must be certified by an educational administrator.
2. The candidate must earn as many of the required merit badges as ability permits.
3. The candidate must complete as many of the Eagle-required merit badges as ability permits. Where a permanent disability clearly precludes completing specific merit badges, a Scout who has earned at least First Class may apply for an alternative merit badge without waiting until all other Eagle-required merit badges are complete.
4. The Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 512-730, must be completed prior to applying for alternative merit badges.
5. The alternative merit badges chosen must demand as much effort as the required merit badges.
6. When alternatives chosen involve physical activity, the activities must be approved by the Scout's licensed health-care provider.
7. The application must be approved by the council advancement committee, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for people with disabilities.
8. The candidate's application for Eagle Scout rank must be made on the Eagle Scout Rank Application, with the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges attached.

Challenges You May Face

Ideally, youth with disabilities get more out of being in a typical Scout unit. This exposes them to a wider variety of people, and other youth can become a support system. On the other hand, youth with severe disabilities and those significantly older, chronologically, may fit better and receive a more helpful program in a special unit of individuals in similar circumstances. For help in organizing such a unit, you should work with your district executive or Scout executive.

Parental assistance is very important, but there are some who don't want to acknowledge a disability or simply choose not to help. Parents usually understand behavioral patterns, they know about medications, and they're often needed to help with communication and reminders. Their support and involvement is essential. If you encounter an unhelpful parent, diplomacy is critical and you may want to request help from the council disabilities awareness committee.

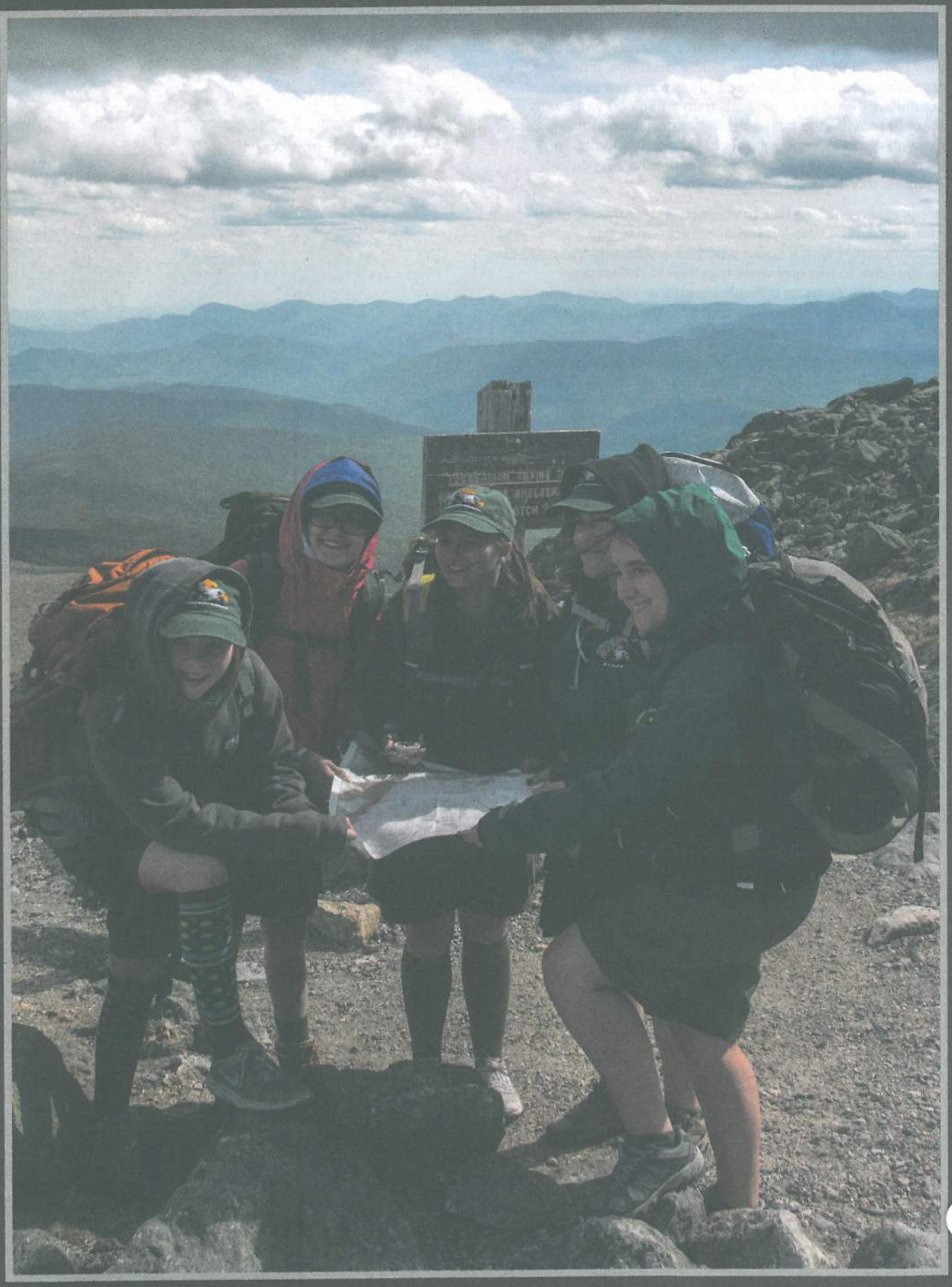
Many parents of children who have special needs may have been protecting and over-compensating for them throughout their lives—helping to overcome the obstacles they face. If they hesitate to disclose their child's disability, it may be for fear of consequences. We need to be sensitive to this. Leaders must listen to parents, gain trust, and work with them to provide the best possible experience. In many cases, this will mean helping parents to let go somewhat and increase their child's level of independence. As you can imagine, this can be a delicate issue.

Sometimes, due to a lack of contact or experience, other members of the unit—youth or adults—may be uncomfortable with a Scout who has a disability. We need to be sensitive to this and work together to defuse any misunderstandings or difficult situations. We need to help Scouts and leaders learn the best approach in cases where special needs must be met.

The goal is to include Scouts who have special needs in as many activities as possible. There may be, however, activities that are beyond their capabilities or beyond the unit's ability to safely support. This situation is not unique to Scouts with disabilities, and most will understand. Just use common sense, and do your best to include everyone as often as possible.

Many Scouts must take medication to control behaviors or other symptoms of a disability. If the medication is prescribed to help the individual live a more normal life, it is not advisable to take a "medication vacation" while participating in Scouting.

Integrating Scouts with disabilities into your troop can create challenges and require extra effort on your part. The benefits are worth it, however, for everyone involved, especially the Scouts themselves.



APPENDIX

Bullying Prevention Guide

Bullying is incompatible with the principles of Scouting and should be taken seriously whenever and wherever it occurs. Unit leaders should understand how to prevent bullying and be prepared to deal with it proactively and thoughtfully.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is harassment or aggressive behavior that is intended to intimidate, dominate, coerce, or hurt another person (the target) mentally, emotionally, or physically. It is *not* "just messing around," and it is *not* "part of growing up." Bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict. It is no more a "conflict" than is child abuse or domestic violence. *Bullying is prohibited in Scouting. All forms of bullying violate the Scout Oath and Scout Law.*

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. This behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Anyone who is bullied or bullies others may have serious, lasting problems that need to be addressed.

Hazing is bullying that involves forcing someone to do something unpleasant, stupid, or dangerous, usually as a requirement for joining a group.

Bullying and hazing can lead to poor self-image, low self-esteem, physical problems, and worse in the person being targeted. People who are bullied often grow up to bully others, creating a continuing cycle of pain.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms:

Verbal—Name-calling, belittling, taunting

Social—Spreading rumors; destroying or manipulating friendships; excluding or ostracizing the target

Physical—Hitting, shoving, kicking, using physical coercion, intimidation through gestures

Criminal—Assault; sexual aggression

Cyber/gaming bullying—Using digital technology such as social media, cell phones, etc., to engage in these kinds of behaviors

How to Spot Bullying

Youth who are being bullied may:

- Be reluctant to join activities or unwilling to participate.
- Avoid activities, arrive late, or leave early (to avoid the bully).
- Avoid certain places or areas.
- Refuse to leave their tent at camp (out of fear).
- Experience nightmares, bedwetting, or insomnia (triggered by fear).
- Seem nervous around certain youth.
- Wait to use the restroom away from the group.
- Appear sad, moody, angry, anxious, or depressed.
- Seek, carry, or hide weapons (for protection).
- Lose money or personal items such as clothing or patches (taken by the bully).
- Feel sick, often with seemingly psychosomatic illnesses.
- Appear lonely, have difficulty making friends, or suddenly have fewer friends.
- Seem reluctant to defend themselves verbally or physically when teased or pushed.
- Have bruises, cuts, defensive wounds, or other physical marks.
- Mention or consider suicide.

A bullied youth may develop a poor self-image, lose self-esteem, quit Scouting, or begin bullying other youth, thus perpetuating the bullying cycle. Studies indicate bullied youth tend to be future bullies. As a leader, either break the cycle or do not let it start.

A Special Note to All Leaders

You are the key to creating a safe, bullying-free environment for Scouting youth. Experts say that leaders can usually tell when a youth new to the unit may become a target and be bullied. Individual factors such as temperament, social competence, physical condition (e.g., overweight/underweight), speaking another language at home, special health-care needs, perceived differences (e.g., sexual identity/orientation, race/ethnicity, religion), or the presence of a disability may put a youth at greater risk of being bullied. Leaders should identify these youth and take measures to help ensure their smooth integration into the unit.

- Support and empower youth who are bullied or at risk to be bullied; ensure they are connected with other Scouts who have things in common.
- Keep an ongoing, open line of communication with parents; keep parents updated on their children's progress with the unit and provide support.
- Speak with Scouts known to be unreceptive to new Scouting youth; empower them to be good Scouts and welcoming to new youth.
- Set an example by how you integrate these youth into the program; model strong, positive behavior by your interaction with youth and adults.
- Take bullying seriously; reinforce the message, using key points of the Scout Law, that bullying is not acceptable behavior.
- Closely supervise youth in your care and interrupt bullying whenever it occurs; follow up to monitor the results.

Remember, Youth Protection Begins With YOU.

Warning Signs for Suicidal Behavior

Common signs include:

- Talking about suicide
- Getting the means to commit suicide, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Giving away or loaning out all of their possessions
- Being preoccupied with death, dying, or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing other warning signs listed above

Suicide Intervention and Response

If a youth mentions suicide, take it seriously.

- Immediately notify parents or guardians.
- Immediately notify the Scout executive.
- Utilize the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available toll-free at 800-273-8255.
- If a youth is in danger of committing suicide or has made a suicide attempt, get emergency help.
- Don't leave the youth alone.
- Don't try to handle the situation without help.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number right away if you believe the youth is at immediate risk. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room yourself.
- Try to find out if the youth is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or may have taken an overdose.

How to Address Bullying

These tips can help Scout leaders respond effectively:

- Immediately stop the bullying. Stand between the bully and the target, preferably blocking their eye contact. Do not immediately ask the reason for the bullying or try to determine the facts.
- In a matter-of-fact tone of voice, state what behaviors you saw or heard. Tell Scouts that bullying is unacceptable and against the Scout Law; e.g., "Calling someone names is bullying. The Scout Law states that a Scout is friendly and kind."
- Provide support in a way that allows the bullied youth to regain self-control, to save face, and to feel safe from retaliation. Follow up with the youth later, but at the time of the incident do not ask what happened or be overly solicitous. Young people often find it uncomfortable to be questioned in front of peers, and a bullied youth may feel embarrassed to be shielded by an adult.
- Do not require Scouts to apologize or make amends during the heat of the moment. Everyone should have time to cool off.
- Speak to bystanders but do not put them on the spot to explain publicly what they observed. In a calm and supportive tone, praise them if they tried to help. If they did not act, or if they responded aggressively, guide them in how to appropriately intervene or get help when they witness bullying; e.g., "Maybe you weren't sure what to do. Next time, please tell the person to stop or get an adult's help if you feel you can't work together to handle the situation."
- Immediately notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied of what occurred. Address the parents' or guardians' questions and concerns. Inform them of the next steps.
- Hold Scouts who bully others fully accountable for their actions. If appropriate, impose immediate consequences. As a first step, you might take away program opportunities.
- Increase supervision to ensure the bullying is not repeated and does not escalate. Let the Scout who bullies know you will be watching to be sure there is no repetition or retaliation. Notify other Scouters, and discuss the incident at the next unit meeting.
- Do not require Scouts to meet to "work things out." Forced apologies don't help, and a compulsory meeting could worsen the relationship between the parties. Instead, encourage the Scout who bullied to make amends (after follow-up with a parent or guardian) in a way that would be meaningful for the youth who was bullied.

Cyber/gaming Bullying

A rapidly growing form of bullying, cyber/gaming bullying uses the power of the internet, cellular networks, and social media to harass the target. Cyber/gaming bullying encompasses text or instant messages with hostile or degrading comments, embarrassing digital images, and fictitious online posts intended to humiliate, threaten, or coerce. Cyber/gaming bullying can devastate the target, whether a lone bully participates or others witness or join the attack. The target may obsess over what is posted, become depressed, avoid school or social activities, or have suicidal thoughts. In extreme circumstances, cyber/gaming bullying can lead to suicide.

Parents and adults should talk with youth about their online activities and stay alert to signs of cyber/gaming bullying such as sleeplessness, withdrawal, stress, avoidance, declining grades, or lowered self-esteem.

Ways to Address Cyber/gaming Bullying

- Encourage children to speak up immediately if they are victims of cyber/gaming bullying. Assure that a young person has a trusted adult—whether parent, teacher, or Scout leader—in whom to confide.
- Block cyber/gaming bullies by using available privacy controls such as blocked-sender lists and call-blocking.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Take screen shots. Save them as evidence.
- If the cyber/gaming bullying is criminal or you suspect it may be, contact the police. Areas falling under the jurisdiction of law enforcement include threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing phone calls or messages, harassment via stalking or hate crimes, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and taking a photo or video image of someone in a place where privacy would normally be expected.
- Utilize tools offered by the BSA. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the BSA introduced the Cyber Chip, developed in cooperation with the content expert NetSmartz®, part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (See "Bullying Prevention Resources," below.)

Seeking Professional Help

Bullying is a form of abuse that can cause psychological, physical, and academic problems. Parents may want to talk with a counselor about a counseling or mental health referral. A professional can assess how much support and assistance a bullied youth needs. If a youth is sick, stressed, not sleeping, or having other problems because of bullying, a health professional should be contacted.

A young person who bullies others will also need the help of caring adults. Scouts who bully may need help recognizing their behavior, taking responsibility for their actions, developing empathy, and finding ways to make amends. Scout leaders can offer guidance in how to interact with others in socially appropriate ways. Assess possible reasons for the bullying behavior, such as lack of self-control, poor social skills, academic problems, or a troubled family life. Depending on the severity of the bullying behavior or the related circumstances, therapeutic intervention might be needed for the bully as well as the target.

Incidents Requiring an Immediate Report to the Scout Executive

The following must be reported to the council Scout executive for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 911.

If a Scout is bullied because of race, ethnicity, or disability, and local help is not working to solve the problem, contact the local council Scout executive. If the Scout executive is unavailable, the BSA provides a 24-hour helpline: 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8821).

Antibullying Action Plan

- Stop the abuse, bullying, or policy violation.
- Protect the targeted youth.
- Summon assistance from other leaders, authorities, etc.
- Gather factual information about the bullying incident, including details of who was involved, what happened, and when and where it happened.
- Notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied.
- Take corrective action.
- Notify the council Scout executive when warranted.
- Check back with the targeted youth to ensure the problem behavior has stopped.

Bullying Prevention Resources

Bullying Awareness

This series of fact sheets can be found online at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying.

- A Scout Is Kind Newsletter
- Bullying—What is Bullying?
- The Bully
- Creating a Bullying-Free Culture in Scouting
- What to Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied (for parents)
- Prevention of Cyber/Gaming Bullying in Scouting
- Reporting Suspected or Observed Bullying
- Providing Support to Scouts Who Are Bullied
- Prevention of Bullying in Scouting—Unit Discussions

Antibullying and Anti-Cyber Intimidation Programs

Website: learning.learningforlife.org/digital-programs/abc

BSA Youth Protection

Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection

Cyber Chip

Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip

Cyberbullying Research Center

Website: https://cyberbullying.org

NetSmartz Workshop

Website: www.netsmartz.org

StopBullying.gov

Website: www.stopbullying.gov

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Troop Committee Chair							
Secretary							
Treasurer							
Outdoor/Activities Coordinator							
Advancement Coordinator							
Chaplain							
Training Coordinator							
Equipment Coordinator							
Unit Religious Emblems Coordinator							
Other Troop Committee Members							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
Chartered Organization Representative							

Team Development Assessment

Team Development Assessment		
This assessment instrument will help you determine a team's development stage. Score each statement using the following scale: 3=Definitely true 2=Sometimes true, sometimes false 1=Definitely false		
1.	The team's effectiveness is increasing.	
2.	Enthusiasm is high.	
3.	Team members won't ask each other for help.	
4.	Conflict often happens within the team.	
5.	Every team member contributes to the team's success.	
6.	The team seems to be making little progress.	
7.	The team accepts the leader, and he or she accepts constructive criticism.	
8.	Team members seem to be pulling in many different directions.	
9.	Team members feel a shared sense of responsibility for success or failure.	
10.	The team's goals and vision are works in progress.	
11.	The team usually achieves its goals.	
12.	There's lots of talk but not much action.	
13.	The team challenges itself to succeed, often overachieving.	
14.	Members seem less excited than they used to be about the team's progress.	
15.	Members accept one another's faults and eccentricities.	
16.	There's little sharing of fears and concerns.	
17.	Members argue over who is responsible for what tasks.	
18.	The team works to resolve any conflicts that arise.	
19.	Team spirit is high; the team is clearly having fun.	
20.	Members always look to the leader for guidance.	
21.	Everyone's role on the team is understood and accepted.	
22.	The leader gets a lot of pushback from members.	
23.	Members are excited to be on the team but are unsure of their roles.	
24.	The team works by consensus and shared leadership	

Scoring: Transfer the score for each question to the blanks below. After you have entered all the scores, total each column.							
3.		4.		1.		2.	
6.		8.		7.		5.	
10.		12.		11.		9.	
16.		14.		15.		13.	
20.		17.		18.		19.	
23.		22.		21.		24.	
Total Forming		Total Storming		Total Norming		Total Performing	
For each stage, you should end up with a total score of 6 to 18 points. The highest score should indicate which stage the team is in.							

Adapted from the Team Development Survey by Donald Clark, hrweb.mit.edu/system/files/stage_survey.doc

List your elected and appointed youth leaders below, along with the adults who are assigned to support them. (We've left some blanks at the end in case you have multiple youth leaders holding the same position or more than four patrols.) Write Yes or No in each of the other spaces.

Position	Scout in Position	Adult Advisor	Has Completed ILST	Has Helped Lead ILST	Has Completed NYLT	Has Served on NYLT Staff	Has Completed NAYLE	Has Served on NAYLE Staff
Senior Patrol Leader								
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Troop Guide								
Den Chief								
Historian								
Order of the Arrow Troop Representative								
Librarian								
Quartermaster								
Instructor								
Chaplain Aide								
Outdoor Ethics Guide								
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster								
Scribe								
Troop Guide								
Webmaster								

Youth Leadership in Action

A good way to get a sense of how youth-led your troop is—and where adults may need to adjust their level of involvement—is to evaluate a troop meeting, a patrol leaders' council meeting, and a troop outing. If possible, have someone who is not directly involved in the meeting (perhaps your junior assistant Scoutmaster or your unit commissioner) complete the worksheet.

Troop Meeting

Date _____

Preopening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Opening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Group instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Skills instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol meetings

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Interpatrol game

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Closing

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Date _____

Grade the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Was there a written agenda for the meeting? _____

If so, who prepared it? _____

Did the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader collaborate ahead of the meeting? _____

How many Scouts were in attendance? _____

How many adults were in attendance? _____

Would the meeting have been as effective if all the adults had been in another room? _____

Who called the meeting to order (or decided when to begin)? _____

Who led the meeting? _____

Who kept the meeting on track? _____

Whom did participants turn to when they had questions? _____

Who took minutes of the meeting? _____

How prepared was the senior patrol leader to lead the meeting? _____

Troop Outing

Date _____

Grade the outing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who selected the activity? _____

Who selected the location? _____

Who made any required reservations? _____

Who assigned campsites to patrols? _____

Who planned the menu? _____

Who shopped for the food? _____

Who cooked the food? _____

At departure, who took roll and decided it was time to set out? _____

Who led activities during the outing? _____

Who kept the outing on schedule? _____

Who decided on any changes to the original plan? _____

Who coordinated campsite cleanup? _____

At the end of the outing, who took roll and decided it was time to return home? _____

Were there areas where adults led too much? Explain. _____

Were there areas where adults provided too little support? Explain. _____

SMART Goals Worksheet

Name _____ Unit No. _____

My Scouting Position _____

SMART Goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely): _____

_____

_____

Who: _____

_____

What: _____

_____

When: _____

_____

Where: _____

_____

Why: _____

_____

_____

How: _____

_____

_____

_____

How you will determine the task is complete: _____

_____

Patrol Meeting Planner

Date_____ Week _____

Activity	Description	Run By	Time
Opening _____ minutes			
Business _____ minutes			
Skill activity _____ minutes			
Game _____ minutes			
Closing _____ minutes			
After the Meeting			

Troop Meeting Evaluation

Meeting Part	Planned Activity or Activities	... New Scouts?	... Experienced Scouts?	... Older Scouts?
Preopening				
Opening				
Group Instruction				
Skills Instruction				
Patrol Meetings				
Game				
Closing				
After the Meeting				

Applications, Guidelines, and Forms

50-Miler Award Application

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/fifty

Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-028.pdf

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf

BSA National Honor Patrol Award Application

www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/512-021_WB.pdf

Historic Trails Award Application

www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/historic-trails

Individual Scout Advancement Plan

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-936_WB.pdf

Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-935_WB.pdf

ScoutSTRONG™ PALA Activity Log

www.scouting.org/filestore/ScoutStrong/pdf/210-041_log.pdf

Service Project Planning Guidelines

www.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-027.pdf

Resources

Boy Scouts of America print and video resources change frequently. The following list of key resources for Boy Scout leaders was current at press time.

A Note About Catalog Numbers

Free items (sometimes known as bin items) have five- or six-digit numbers with hyphens, while retail items have five- or six-digit numbers without hyphens. Note, however, that many retail items are also available as free downloads at www.scouting.org, as are most bin items. You can purchase retail items at your local Scout shop or at www.scoutshop.org.

Resources Found on www.Scouting.org

Here are some primary resources helpful to troop leaders, available from the Boy Scouts of America's official website. Many more can be found online.

Advancement and Awards for Scouts
Directories related to advancement and awards opportunities for Scouts

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/awards

Advancement Report
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Annual Health and Medical Record
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf

Belay On
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope

Scouts BSA Troop Open House
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/troop-open-house

Campfire Program Planner
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Climb On Safely
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope/climb-on-safely

Den Chief Training
www.scouting.org/training/youth/den-chief-training

Disabilities Awareness—Serving Scouts With Disabilities
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/disabilities

Duty to God
www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/eagle-scout-workbook

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088
The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases

www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement

Guide to Awards and Insignia
A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/insignia-guide

Guide to Safe Scouting
The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss

Manual for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/manual-for-chaplains-and-chaplain-aides

Health and Safety Training Course Syllabus
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/planning-and-conducting-a-safe-scout-outing

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops
www.scouting.org/training/youth

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills
www.scouting.org/training/adult

Leave No Trace Training
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/leave-no-trace

Merit Badge Counselor Information
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide

Nationally Approved Historic Trails
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/trails

Opportunities for Scouts
Listing of opportunities for Scouts such as training courses, scholarships, and special programs

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/opportunities

Orientation for New Scout Parents
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/orientation-for-new-boy-scout-parents

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/awards

Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Resources

Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training
www.scouting.org/training/adult

Selecting Quality Leaders
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/selecting-quality-leaders

Service Project Planning Guidelines
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies

Transfer Form (Youth Member)
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-401WB.pdf

Tread Lightly!
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/tread-lightly

Trek Safely
https://my.scouting.org

Troop Budget Planning
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Leader Resources
https://troopleader.org

Troop Meeting Plan
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Program Planning Chart (English/Spanish)
www.scouting.org/resources/magazines/boys-life-promo

Troop Program Resources
Games, ceremonies, Scoutmaster's Minutes, and more
www.programresources.org

Troop Resource Survey
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-116_WB.pdf

Unit Budgeting and Planning Resources
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Unit Money-Earning Application
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Webelos Transition
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults

Worksheet for Building a Merit Badge Counselor List
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Year-Round Guide to Boy Scout Recruiting
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/year-round-guide

Scoutshop.org Resources

The following items can be obtained at the BSA's official retail website: www.scoutshop.org.

Aquatics Supervision, No. 34737

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys (No. 34622) and *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006)—The primary resource for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills).

Scout Requirements (current year), No. 33216—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards; updated annually.

Camp Cookery for Small Groups, No. 33592

Conservation Handbook, No. 33570

Den Chief Handbook, No. 33211

Fieldbook, No. 34006—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills.

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases.

Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly.

Merit Badge Application (blue card), No. 34124 (100 pack) and No. 34130 (25 pack)

Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping, No. 34040

Order of the Arrow Handbook, No. 34996

Patrol Monthly Dues Envelope, No. 33816

Patrol Record Book, No. 34516

Program Features for Troops and Crews, volumes 1, 2, and 3— Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources.

A Scout Is Reverent, No. 34248

This Is Scouting (DVD), No. 610460

Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32502—The official guide for patrol leaders.

Senior Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32501—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders.

A Time to Tell (DVD), No. 605696

Troop Committee Guidebook, No. 34505—The primary resource for troop committee members.

Troop Leader Guidebook, volumes 1 (No. 33009) and 2 (No. 33010)—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters. (Volume 2 will be introduced at a later date.)

Troop Record Book, No. 34508

My.Scouting.org Resources

The following resources can be found at www.My.Scouting.org. (A login is required to take My.Scouting.org training courses.)

Climb On Safely

Fast Start Orientation Training

How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide—found in the Scouts BSA handbooks

Physical Wellness

Safe Swim Defense

Safety Afloat

This Is Scouting

Trek Safely

Weather Hazards

Youth Protection Training

Website Listing for the BSA

Be a Scout: www.BeAScout.org

Boy Scouts of America: www.Scouting.org

BSA Training: www.Scouting.org/training

BSA Health and Safety: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety

BSA Supply Group: www.Scoutshop.org

My.Scouting: My.Scouting.org

Scout Life: www.scoutlife.org—The BSA's official youth magazine; published monthly

Scouting: www.Scoutingmagazine.org—The official magazine for Scout leaders; published five times a year

Glossary

Scouting has a language all its own. Here are some common terms you should be familiar with. For definitions of other terms, visit www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/los.

assistant Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 18 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to help the Scoutmaster by working with a patrol or carrying out other assigned tasks.

board of review. A review held to determine whether a Scout has satisfactorily completed rank requirements. A review may also be held to encourage Scouts who are not advancing.

Scout Life. The magazine for all Scouts, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

campmaster. A volunteer Scouter trained to assist in short-term camping.

charter. In the BSA, charters authorize (1) an organization to operate BSA Scouting units; (2) a local council to incorporate as a BSA local council; (3) operation of an Order of the Arrow lodge; or (4) the Boy Scouts of America to incorporate.

charter presentation. A formal ceremony at which the charter, Scouter commissions, and membership certificates are presented to organization authorities and members of the unit.

charter renewal. An annual meeting attended by the chartered organization representative, head of the chartered organization, troop leaders, and unit commissioner for the purpose of completing the charter application and making plans for the charter presentation.

chartered organization. A religious, civic, fraternal, educational, or other community-based organization that has applied for and received a charter to operate a BSA Scouting unit.

chartered organization representative. A manager of Scouting in a chartered organization who also represents this organization in the local council and district.

commissioner. A commissioned Scouter who works with Cub Scout packs, Scout troops, and Venturing crews to help units succeed.

council service center. *See* local council service center.

council. An administrative body chartered to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

court of honor. A recognition ceremony for those who have met the requirements of any one of the Scouts BSA ranks, merit badges, or other awards.

Cub Scouting. That part of the BSA program for youth who are in the first grade through fifth grade (or are 7 through 10 years old).

district. A geographical area of the council determined by the council executive board to help ensure the growth and success of Scouting units within the district's territory.

district executive. A professional Scouter who works under the direction of the local council Scout executive and acts as an advisor to the volunteer leaders in the district.

Friends of Scouting. An annual opportunity for Scouters and interested people in the community to be identified with the local council through their financial support and influence in the expansion of the council program.

Good Turn. A distinctive feature of Scouting is its emphasis on service to others. The Good Turn habit is one that all Scouts endeavor to acquire.

jamboree. A national or international gathering of Scouts.

Journey to Excellence. A performance recognition program designed to encourage and reward success and measure the performance of units, districts, and councils.

junior assistant Scoutmaster. A 16- or 17-year-old Scout who helps the senior patrol leader; the junior assistant Scoutmaster is appointed by the senior patrol leader, with the Scoutmaster's advice and consent. The troop may have more than one junior assistant Scoutmaster.

Leave No Trace. A nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness organization that seeks to reduce impacts on the environment and other people; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

local council. An administrative body chartered by the National Council to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

local council service center. The business center for the local administration of Scouting.

lodge. A local council Order of the Arrow group chartered annually by the National Council. A large lodge may be organized into chapters.

My.Scouting. An internet portal for our members that provides access to their account data, automated tour and activity plan applications, the E-Learning Course Management System, and more.

new-Scout patrol. A youth who joins a Scout troop may become a member of a patrol composed of new Scouts; an assistant Scoutmaster and a troop guide help them to get a good start in Scouting.

older-Scout patrol. A patrol of Scouts ages 13 and older in a troop; the patrol participates in high-adventure activities.

Order of the Arrow. Scouting's national honor society. The aim of the OA is to promote the outdoor program and service to Scouting.

outdoor ethics. A set of principles that guide Scouts' ethical decision making in their relationship to the natural world.

patrol. A small group of Scouts (usually five to eight) who belong to a troop and work together in and out of troop meetings. Normally, there are several patrols in one troop.

patrol leaders' council. Each patrol leader, representing their patrol, meets with other patrol leaders and the senior patrol leader to plan the troop program. The Scoutmaster acts as an advisor.

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roundtable. An event conducted by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable staff to help the unit leaders of a district plan and carry out their own unit programs.

Scout benediction. "May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."

Scout executive. The chief executive officer of the local council responsible for the administration, financing, marketing, motivation, recruitment, and staffing required for successful council operations.

Scout Sabbath. The Saturday after February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scout shop. A BSA-owned store, operated by the Supply Group, that sells official Scouting merchandise.

Scout Sunday. The Sunday before February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scouter. An adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America.

Scouting Anniversary Week. The week, beginning on Sunday, that includes February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. During the week, units are encouraged to conduct rededication ceremonies and to demonstrate Scouting's purposeful activities.

***Scouting* magazine.** The official magazine for all Scouters. It aims to interpret the program, stimulate action, and strengthen a desire to serve.

Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 21 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to lead a Scout troop.

Scoutmaster's Minute. A part of the closing ceremony of a troop meeting or campfire in which the Scoutmaster encourages Scoutlike conduct by telling a story.

Sea Scouting. A branch of Scouting that specializes in traditional nautical activities, e.g., sailing, motorboating, and maritime careers.

senior patrol leader. A Scout elected by the Scouts to help all the patrols succeed. Each troop has one senior patrol leader, who may be assisted by one or more assistant senior patrol leaders.

service center. *See* local council service center.

square knot. Generally, embroidered square knots are representative of pin-on medals or around-the-neck awards and are designed for the greater convenience of the wearer.

Supply Group. The arm of the Boy Scouts of America that supplies official uniforms, equipment, literature, and other resources to the field. Includes administrative offices located in the national office, the National Distribution Center, and Scout shops located nationwide.

trading post. The camp or reservation store where campers may purchase equipment and supplies. A distributor's Scouting department is sometimes referred to as the trading post.

Tread Lightly! A national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

troop. The entity that conducts the Scout program for the chartered organization; it is typically composed of several patrols.

unit. The entity that conducts Scouting for the chartered organization; it consists of registered youth members and registered adult volunteer members. A unit may be a Cub Scout pack, Scout troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship. Its affairs are administered by the unit committee, which is appointed by the chartered organization.

Venturing. The young adult program of the Boy Scouts of America for men and women ages 14 through 20, or 13 with completion of the eighth grade.

Youth Protection. This BSA emphasis fights child abuse by teaching youth the "three R's" (recognize, resist, and report child abuse); by helping parents and Scouters learn to recognize indications of child abuse and situations that could lead to potential abuse; and by teaching them how to handle child abuse situations or reports.

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See also Glossary for definitions of specific terms

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Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful,
friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful,
thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

Prepared. For Life.®

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