Webelos to Scout Transition Timeline

This time-line should be modified to accommodate the Webelos II dens that complete all requirements and are prepared to cross-over to Boy Scouts, some as early as December. The Troop Membership Chair and Pack Membership Chair are responsible to ensure that Scoutmasters, Cubmasters, and Webelos II Leaders are informed of and follow the timeline.

August

- Share names, addresses, and telephone numbers of second year Webelos and parents with the troop.
- Plan a joint Boy Scout Troop/2nd year Webelos Den camping trip for October.
- Request a Den Chief for each Webelos Den from the Troop.
- Invite the Troop to other "connecting" activities: Boy Scouts assist with Pack School Nights, organizing games for the incoming boys while their parents sign registration forms.
- Invite the Scoutmaster to attend the Pack Committee meeting to find out how the Den Chief program works and discuss how many dens are interested in securing a Den Chief. This gives the Scoutmaster adequate time to recruit Den Chiefs and for them to complete Den Chief training.
- Provide Webelos II parents with the Parent Orientation Guide.
- Ask the Troop for a copy of their annual calendar to share with the Webelos I & II dens.

September

- Distribute "Boy Scout Troop Questions" Checklist to parents and guardians of Webelos II.
- Ask the Troop to put second year Webelos on the mailing list to receive the troop newsletter.
- Continue planning the joint camping trip for October.
- Hold Pack recruitment event with the Boy Scout Troop helping out.

October

- Conduct the joint camping trip with Webelos II den.
- Webelos leaders go through Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training and Outdoor Leader Skills.
- Discuss with Webelos leaders fund raising opportunities in which Webelos II may participate with the Troop to have funds for camp next summer.
- Encourage Webelos II leaders to begin discussing Boy Scout summer camp with Webelos and parents. Troops should provide printed material for Webelos II leaders to distribute.
- Boy Scout Troop should plan a Webelos campout and invite the first and second year Webelos. Troop could teach skills needed for a variety of Webelos activity pins, particularly ones that need to be done outside.
- Troop conducts a campfire with skits & songs.

November

- Invite the Troop to attend a Webelos den meeting to teach the Webelos how the Boy Scout troop works.
- Invite Boy Scouts to attend the pack meeting to show camp video/pictures and "talk up" summer camp to the Webelos II.
- Ask the troop to give the Webelos II families the dates the troop will be attending Summer Camp along with the annual troop program plan.
- Ask the Scoutmaster to prepare a list of basic Scouting equipment that the brand-new Boy Scouts will be needing, like flashlights, pocketknives, mess kits, sleeping bags, backpacks, etc., so that these items can be Christmas gifts. Help the parents by giving tips on best prices, best brands, best sources – remember the Scoutshop is the source for official BSA clothing and equipment.

December

- Set a date for Webelos and their parents to visit a Boy Scout Troop meeting in January if they have not already visited. .
- Invite the Troop Membership Chair to attend Pack Committee meeting to introduce themselves to Webelos Leaders. From now until March crossover, the Webelos-To-Scout liaison should work closely with the Den Leaders to assure that all boys will be earning the Arrow of Light and to get Boy Scout applications completed. This person should attend a Den Meeting in January to explain troop operations, answer questions, and establish a good relationship with all Webelos II parents.

January

- All Webelos II's and their parents attend a Boy Scout troop meeting.
- Cub Master & Webelos II Den Leader plan a crossover ceremony for the March Pack Meeting.
- Invite the Troop to attend a meeting for 1st year Webelos to introduce them to Boy Scouting.
- Invite some Boy Scouts from the troop attend the Pinewood Derby and act as announcers, interviewing winners and "calling" the races. Encourage interaction between the Boy Scouts and all the Cub Scouts.

February

- Other "connecting" activities: Invite the Scoutmaster and several Boy Scouts attend the Pack's Blue and Gold Banquet to cook dinner for the Pack. Form an honor guard for the flag ceremony using a mix of graduating Webelos II and Boy Scouts for the honor guard.

March

- Hold the crossover ceremony at the Pack Meeting.
- Other "connecting" activities: Troop and pack committees should coordinate a service project activity so boys can work as teams and parents of new Scouts can get to know the other parents. Plan a pizza lunch for the whole crowd after the work is done.
- Follow-up with the family by phone, email, and letter of every boy that did not crossover into the troop. Assure them it is not too late, describe the fun events scheduled, and invite them to visit the Troop again.

April/May

- Invite the Troop to attend a meeting of 1st year Webelos and pick a date with Den Leader for a field trip to summer camp one day during the week the Troop is at camp.

June/July/August

- New Webelos II take a field trip to summer camp for one day the week the Troop is at camp. Someone from the troop gives them a guided tour of camp.

Cub Scout Pack Role

It should be the goal of the Cubmaster and Webelos den leaders to graduate every Webelos Scout into a Boy Scout troop. The key to accomplishing this is to begin promoting Boy Scouting when Cub Scouts are still in their Tiger, Wolf, and Bear dens, and to sell the sizzle of the great outdoors. Scouting should be viewed as an ongoing adventure, and the progression should be as normal as moving from elementary school to middle school.

Develop a working relationship with the leadership of a Boy Scout troop or troops in the community. Most troops should have either an assistant Scoutmaster or committee member assigned to new Scouts. Your unit commissioner can help put you in contact with troop leaders.

- Compare calendars of troop and pack activities to coordinate activities. Community events can be done together, and planning can help prevent conflicts in use of equipment and facilities.
- Work with troop leaders to secure den chiefs for each Webelos den and Cub Scout den.
- Work with troop leaders to plan and conduct Webelos overnight activities.
- Work with troop leaders to plan visits to troop meetings. Never show up without first calling in advance.
- Invite the Scoutmaster and troop youth leaders to special pack activities. This will help create familiarity and level of comfort for the Webelos Scouts as they graduate to Boy Scouting. The local Order of the Arrow lodge can often be a valuable resource in conducting ceremonies.
- Webelos leaders should be strongly encouraged to move into the troop with the boys, either as assistant Scoutmasters or troop committee members. This will give the new Scouts a familiar face at troop meetings and a connecting link to Boy Scouting.

You can locate your nearest troops at https://beascout.scouting.org/

Webelos Den Leader Role

As the most trusted guide and mentor, the Webelos Den Leader is the most influential player in the process. Parents and the boys will trust the Den Leaders judgement. It is very important that you review all the roles and lead the boys and their parents through this process. You should commit early to continuing your mentorship into Boy Scouting. This will rest your boys and parents at ease.

The Webelos Den Leader's Role

- Should have the WEBELOS function as a patrol
- Ensure the boys attend camp
- Verify the presence of the necessary Scout Skills
- Attend Roundtables and get to know Scoutmasters
- Attend troop meeting and recruit Den Chief
- Plan the graduation/bridging ceremony and promote Troop summer activities
- Verify the transfer of documents (the boys' records)
- Provide the new Scoutmasters the Scouts completed applications at Crossover

A good WEBELOS Den Leader will:

- Train the boys to be good Scouts
- Enforce the requirements for camping and troop visitations (at least two & three at best)
- Enforce the importance of the Arrow of Light Award (It's as important as the Eagle Award)
- Work for February to April graduation plan (Usually in March)
- Have the boys begin functioning as a patrol and not as a Den
- Choose a patrol name
- Make a patrol flag
- Wear a patrol emblem/patch
- Elect patrol officers
- Rotate patrol positions

Use of Den Chiefs

- Resource for scout skills and help training
- Assists in operating the patrol
- Assist in the patrol graduation
- Counts as leadership time

Find a Troop Early

- Contact Commissioners, Scout Executives and professional Staff
- Ask other Scouters
- Plan joint activities
- Summer camp funds savings
- Build a good relationship with the boys of the troop
- Makes the transition natural and fun

Planning the Transition

- Share rosters
- Plan the transition graduation (bridging ceremony)
- Review camp plans & fees
- Set a date for the scoutmaster to meet with the WEBELOS parents (at least one visit for each troop)

Webelos Parents Role

The Cub Scout Program has been a great introduction to values based enrichment and has begun to help your Scout start on the road towards good choice making and independence. The challenges and adventures provided by a Boy Scout Troop will by significant dividends later in their life. Though their lives seem to become more complicated as they get older, know that Scouting's constant hum is the glue that will hold everything together.

As a parent, the process of transitioning with your son to a Scout Troop may be more scary for you than for your son. Rest assured that given a little effort you can navigate this process with relative ease. The best advice is to pay attention to your son and give him plenty of options to take part in the decisions. His excitement, apprehention, questions, will really help drive the process. The tips below will help you as a parent know what to do so you and your son can make the smoothest transition.

Three of the more local Boy Scout Troops are as follows:

- Troop 79 – Scoutmaster Michael May. Meet Tuesday nights at St Margaret's Church in Homer from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. (607) 645-1846
- Troop 85 – Scoutmaster Rick Burt. Meet Tuesday nights at Homer American Legion from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. (607) 591-5650
- Troop 94 – Scoutmaster Chris Decker. Meet Tuesday nights at United Presbyterian Church on Church St in Cortland from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. (607) 756-2219

What Are The Requirements to Join?

The requirements to join Boy Scouts aren't difficult at all. In general, a boy must be at least 11 years old to join, must fill out an application to join so the Scoutmaster knows who the boys is, pay the national application fee and complete a general medical form to be used for determining his physical abilities at outings. For a boy who is in the Webelos program, he can join at 10 ½ years old if he has earned the Arrow of Light rank. That's it. That's all it takes to join. The hardest part is finding a Troop where the boy has a good fit for the types of things he likes to do.

What Do You Mean "A Good Fit"?

When the boys visit a troop for the first time, they may feel a bit intimidated. This is to be expected to some degree. After all, they are going from learning to being a leader in the Pack and setting the example to being the new kid amongst "the big boys". Not only that, but not all Troops are the same. Some Troops will be built around camping and outdoors while others will be "High Adventure" Troops that hike all other Troops still may be geared towards being very community service driven and earning rank. In most cases Webelos will want to join the same Troop as their friends. However, not every boy in a Webelos patrol has to move into the same Boy Scout Troop. Cub Scout Packs may be closely aligned with Boy Scout Troops and even have many Den Chiefs from one Troop but that doesn't mean that every boy will join that particular Troop if they aren't "a good fit".

The best way to figure out if you want to join a specific Boy Scout Troop is to have a Scoutmaster conference. Have the conference with other families in your den. You then can discuss between you what is best for each of the boys. Aside from it being a requirement for the Arrow of Light achievement, it is a great way to get to know a Troop's main mentor. The other way to get to know the Troop is to go on outings with them. This allows the Webelos to really see Boy Scouting in action. They get to be a part of the activities, experience the patrol method first hand and get a real taste of what that Troop is about.

What Else Should We Consider?

One key factor for many is the size of the Troop – too big and will we get lost in the shuffle; too small and who is going to help with achievements and rank advancement? This is where Troop leadership and parental involvement are really important. The Troop should be led by the boys meaning they get to decide what they do, when they do it and how it's to be done BUT the parental involvement dictates do we have anyone qualified to teach that skill, do we have funds to pay for that trip, etc. Parental involvement is a critical piece of the Troop's success!

Along those lines, you need to consider the social element of the Troop. Do you already know any boys in the Troop? Do you know any of the parents in the Troop? Boys and parents must feel welcome and comfortable in the Troop if they are going to succeed in their Scouting experience and adventure.

Sometimes you really like two Troops and you have to pick one so here is a sample Score Card to help you decide. Please keep in mind that once you pick a Troop, nothing prevents you from changing your mind later!

How Many Troop Visits Should We Do?

The requirements for Arrow of Light state that the Webelos Scout should visit at least one Boy Scout Troop meeting and one Boy Scout-oriented outdoor activity. This would give the boy only a small view into that one Troop. I highly recommend that all Webelos visit at least three Troops and each of those Troops should be visited at least twice each. The meetings should be visited about six months apart. Why six months apart? Troop leadership at the boy level changes every six months, or it should change every six months. With new leadership comes new dynamics and new personalities. Change within the Troop may also be with the number of active boys, new boys may have joined since your last visit and others may have left. It may be sports season and attendance is lower with boys involved in organized sports. That would be a good thing because Scouting is just one part of a boy's life and the boys should be encouraged to pursue their passions and goals.

Keeping the scorecard for your Troop visits will allow you to compare the first visit from the last. This will greatly help you and your Webelos Scout decide where the best fit is. It is important to remember that picking a Boy Scout Troops is not a lifetime decision. You are free to change Troops at any time if you feel the need or if the dynamics change with a Troop. The most important thing is that the Scouting Experience continues!

When Do We Cross Over to Boy Scouts?

The soonest Webelos Two boys can Join a Troop is when they turn 11 or have completed their Arrow of Light and waiting 6 months since completing the 4th grade. That would make December the earliest time they can Cross Over.

February is Scouting's Anniversary month. After this time is when Webelos typically will go through a "Crossover Ceremony" which symbolizes their transition into the Boy Scout Troop. It will be at this ceremony where members of the Troop that the Webelos decides to join will be there to officially welcome the scout into the Troop. There could be many different Troops present as each boy may decide to go to a different Troop.

Be sure to have a completed transfer application to your Webelos Den Leader before the Crossover Ceremony so that they can provide it to the new Troop along with your Scout's Advancement records.

Is That It?

Crossing over into a Boy Scout Troop is just the beginning! Now is when all of the fun happens.

(This Guide was created by the Potawatomi Area Council, and is used by permission. It was edited for the Baden-Powell *Council.)*

Webelos to Scout Transition:
A Parents' Guide

Boy Scouts is a whole lot different than Cub Scouts or Webelos Scouts. The idea of graduating from a Cub Scout pack to a Boy Scout troop may be intimidating for some Webelos Scouts and their parents. Some Webelos may not be sure they want to cross over into Boy Scouts because they believe it will just be more of the same thing that they did in Cub Scouts.

The best way to make your decisions, to choose the right troop, and to get your questions answered is to visit several troops that meet close to your home. This guide is designed to help the Webelos Scout, his parents, and his den begin the Webelos to Scout transition.

My son wants to be a Boy Scout, how does the transition begin?

During the fifth grade, a typical Webelos den continues to meet until February. During this time, the Webelos will earn additional activity badges and work to complete the Arrow of Light. A review of the requirements for the Arrow of Light will show that it is designed to prepare a Webelos Scout to join a Boy Scout troop. The requirements for the Arrow of Light include learning the basics about Boy Scout (Scout Oath, Scout Law, motto, slogan, handshake, salute, and uniform differences).

The requirements also call for the entire den to visit both a troop meeting and to participate in a troop outdoor activity. After all of the other requirements are complete, the last Arrow of Light requirement is for the Webelos Scout and his parents to visit a troop and meet with the Scoutmaster to complete the Boy Scout application. *Remember, the requirement is to complete the application. You don't have to join a troop at that point.*

How does a Webelos Scout select a troop to join?

Selecting a Boy Scout troop to join is an individual decision for each Webelos Scout and his parents. Every troop is different in the kinds of activities they schedule and in their personalities. Each family must choose the troop they feel will best meet their needs. In selecting a troop, you should consider the following factors. Are the troop activities the kind that you would enjoy? How do the Scouts interact with each other? How do the older Scouts interact with the younger Scouts? Are there older Scouts active in the troop? (This indicates if the troop's program is exciting and interesting for a variety of ages.) Is the troop "boy lead" or is it run by the adults? (The best answer is the troop is "boy led".) Are you comfortable with the adult leaders in the troop? Are the adult leaders trained, do they follow BSA policy, and do they welcome input and participation by all parents? In practice, the decision of which troop to join usually comes down to two factors: convenience of the weekly troop meetings (meeting night and location) and which troop a boy's best friends are in.

A Scout does have the freedom to transfer to another troop if, for any reason, he changes his mind after joining a troop. The measure of a successful troop is how well it meets the three aims of Scouting: encouraging participatory citizenship, building strong moral character, and helping boys to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. In other words, do boys leave the troop a better person than they were when they joined? There are many excellent troops in our area. Any one of them would be a good choice. For a list of troops in your area, please contact your District Webelos to Scout Transition Chair.

What are some items to consider as we visit and evaluate the troops?

To fulfill the Arrow of Light requirements, the Webelos den leader should make arrangements for his or her den to attend an outdoor activity with one of the troops. Ideally this should be with a troop that the boys in the den have a lot of interest in. However, this can be done with any troop. Try to schedule your troop outing early because it's difficult for troops to take Webelos Scouts camping during the harsh winter weather.

Your son's Webelos den leader should make arrangements for his or her den to visit several troops in the area. BSA gives troops a lot of latitude in how they operate so you should notice a lot of variety among the troops. It's also a good idea to visit a few of the troops more than once to get a true impression of how they operate. Webelos den leaders may receive invitations from neighboring troops to visit on particular nights. However, it's not necessary to wait for an invitation because the troops may not have an accurate list of Webelos den leaders. The den leaders may also initiate the contact with any troop they wish to visit.

Troop Overview:

- Troop Focus: Most troops have established a focus or theme, like Indian folklore, backpacking, kayaking, etc. Each troop sets its own activity calendar and decides what to focus on.
- Troop Meetings: When and where the Troop meets must fit with the overall family calendar. Some troops meet weekly, and some less often. Some events may be mandatory, so it is important that your son's schedule allow him to participate. Most troops have optional meetings, which allow flexibility for homework, sports, etc. Most troops realize that your son is involved in other activities.
- Troop Size: The number of active scouts in the troop has an impact on the number of activities that can be offered, the level of "intimacy" of the troop, and the potential demands on parents to lead trips.
- Rank Advancement: Advancements are strongly emphasized in some troops. Other troops focus less on rank advancements, a good environment for boys less motivated by rank and more interested in activities and doing.

Troop Leadership:

Troops can be run by the Scouts, by the Adult leaders or some combination thereof.

- Troops that are run by Scouts develop strong leadership skills but can be somewhat chaotic at times while the boys are learning these skills.
- Adult run troops are more structured and predictable but offer less opportunity for Scouts to learn by leading.
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- Areas where the leadership must be determined within a troop may include running the weekly meetings, establishing the annual calendar, organizing outings, and conducting the rank advancement classes.

Type and Breadth of Activities Offered:

Boy Scout troops typically offer a wide range of outings; however each troop generally develops an activity profile that reflects the level and type of activities that the Scouts in the troop prefer.

- High Adventure: These are trips that can be physically demanding and generally require substantial preparation. Examples include long (50 plus miles) backpacking trips and class 4 white water rafting.
- Outdoor Outings: Included here are such events as camping, shorter backpacking trips, day hikes, caving and rappelling, submarine trips.

- Educational Activities: These tend to be activities that focus on mental skills development rather than on physical skills. Examples are CB Radioing, woodworking, tours of local businesses and museums.
- Service Projects: All Scout troops offer some level of service projects. They can range from Scouting for Food to Trail repair to visitations at senior centers.
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Parental Participation:

There are two elements to research here. Note that Scouting can provide one of the best ways that parents can stay involved with their son and his friends as the boys reach their teenage years.

- What level of involvement is expected from each family? Troops can vary from expecting every family to be actively involved to desiring but not requiring involvement.
- What parent opportunities are available within the troop? Typically the opportunities are leadership/committee, activity support, or general support roles (merit badge counselor, Public Relations, quartermaster).
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Social Element:

- Are any of your son's friends or schoolmates involved in the Troop? It has been found that if your son has at least one friend in the Troop he is more likely to embrace Scouting and the Troop.
- Are there adults in the Troop that you know? This may or may not be important to you.

Troop Selection Checklist

Use the worksheet below to record information you gather on the Troops. Hopefully it will help you in evaluating the relative merits of each Troop as compared to your boy's and your family's interests. Additional spaces are provided for family specific requirements and comments.

Criteria to be Considered	Our Preference	Troop	Troop	Troop	Troop
Troop Overview					
Focus					
Meeting Time and Place					
Size (Small, Medium, Large)					
Rank Advancement Emphasis					
Troop Leadership					
Activities					
High Adventure					
Outdoor Activities					
Educational Activities					
Service Projects					
Parental Participation					
Level of Involvement					
Opportunities					
Social Makeup					
Friends of Your Scout?					
Adult Friends In Troop?					
Personality of Troop					

How does my son join?

First, of course, is your son's interest and desire to become a Boy Scout. Hopefully, he has visited several Troops in the area, is interested in Scouting, and has decided on the Troop that offers the program that he is most interested in.

The logistics are fairly easy. Get a New Scout Application Form from the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster, fill it out, and turn it in with the dues and other fees the Troop may require.

When do Webelos Scouts cross over into a troop?

After the list of troops has been narrowed down a bit, it might be useful to invite the Scoutmasters of those troops to one of your Webelos den meetings to meet the parents and to answer questions. By the end of January, every Webelos Scout should have a good idea of what troop they want to join and they can begin attending weekly meetings with that troop at that time. Most Cub Scout packs have a crossover ceremony for the graduating Webelos during the Blue and Gold in February or during the pack meeting in March. It can be earlier if the Webelos Scouts have completed the requirements for the Arrow of Light. Representatives from the appropriate troops participate in the crossover ceremony to welcome the new members. Most troops present the new members with some welcoming gift.

My son has a disability. Will he be able to join?

Yes. The basic premise of Scouting for youth with special needs is that every boy wants to participate fully and be respected like every other member of the Troop. While there are, by necessity, troops composed exclusively of Scouts with disabilities; experience has shown that Scouting usually succeeds best when every boy is part of a patrol in a regular Troop.

Scouts with physical or mental disabilities may advance through Scouting's ranks by meeting advancement guidelines or approved alternatives.

A council advancement committee may allow a Scout to complete alternative requirements tailored to his ability. Scouts with permanent mental disabilities may request extended membership beyond the age of 18.

How much are dues?

The dues amount will be determined annually be each Troop's Troop Committee. Dues cover the items listed:

- Yearly Registration
- Boy's Life Magazine
- Troop Insurance
- Advancement patches and awards

In addition, dues and fundraisers defray other necessary Troop expenses such as:

- Camping Equipment
- Special Ceremonies
- Training Printing
- Postage
- Special Awards

What is the purpose of Boy Scouts?

The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated to provide a program for community organizations that offers effective character, citizenship, and personal fitness training for

youth.

Specifically, the BSA endeavors to develop American citizens who are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit; have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness; have personal values based on religious concepts; have the desire and skills to help others; understand the principles of the American social, economic, and governmental systems; are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand our nation's role in the world; have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people; and are prepared to participate in and give leadership to American society.

Boy Scouting, one of three membership divisions of the BSA (the others are Cub Scouting and Venturing), is available to boys who have earned the Arrow of Light Award or have completed the fifth grade, or who are 11 through 17 years old, and subscribe to the Scout Oath and Law. The program achieves the BSA's objectives of developing character, citizenship, and personal fitness qualities among youth by focusing on a vigorous program of outdoor activities. In 2003, the Boy Scout program membership totaled 930,325 Boy Scouts in 44,335 troops.

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, Reverent

What are the aims and methods of Boy Scouting?

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the "Aims of Scouting." They are character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. The methods by which the aims are achieved are listed below in random order to emphasize the equal importance of each.

Ideals

The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and, as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.

Patrols

The patrol method gives Boy Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where they can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through their elected representatives.

Outdoor Programs

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Boy Scouts gain an appreciation for God's handiwork and humankind's place in it.
The outdoors is the laboratory for Boy Scouts to learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

Advancement

Boy Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in overcoming them through the advancement method. The Boy Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The

Boy Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Boy Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

Personal Growth

As Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is so successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.

Leadership Development

The Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership role of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

Adult Association

Boys learn from the example set by their adult leaders. Troop leadership may be male or female, and association with adults of high character is encouraged at this stage of a young man's development.

Uniform

The uniform makes the Boy Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

What outdoor activities can my son participate in?

Camping

Summer camp represents the highlight of the year for most Scouts. At Camp Barton and at Camp Tuscarora scouts learn teamwork within their patrol and troop and seize this opportunity to pass advancement requirements and earn merit badges. Summer camp blends fun programs and advancement, competitive and noncompetitive events, and individual, patrol, and troop activities. Camp gives leaders an opportunity to reinforce what their Scouts have learned throughout the year. The troop also participates in various weekend camps, hikes and bike hikes throughout the year.

High Adventure

From time to time Troops offer high-adventure programs that include backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, whitewater rafting and kayaking, sailing, mountaineering, and much more. As national high-adventure bases for older Scouts, the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base, Northern Tier National High Adventure Program (in northern Minnesota and Canada), and Philmont Scout Ranch (in northern New Mexico) present unique opportunities for many youths year after year. More on these later.

Conservation

Scouts have always taken pride in being good stewards of the outdoors. Leave No-Trace guidelines allow them to camp, hike, and take part in outdoor-related activities that are environmentally sound, and teach them to be considerate of other users of the out-of-doors.

Jamborees

The BSA conducts a national Scout jamboree approximately every four years and participates in world Scout jamborees (also held at four-year intervals). Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, was the site of the 2010National Scout Jamboree.

In 2009, the BSA purchased 10,600 acres of property adjacent to West Virginia's New River Gorge National River area in order to create The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve (the Summit). The Summit is the new home of achievement, adventure, and innovation in Scouting. With world-class facilities and a focus on outdoor action sports, the Summit will welcome Scouts to a whole new jamboree experience in summer 2013.

What community service projects are required?

Members of the Boy Scouts of America have always provided service to others. It begins with the Scout slogan "Do a good turn daily" and continues through individual Eagle Scout leadership service projects.

How do Boy Scout meetings work*?*

Scouting is a boy-led activity. That is probably the biggest difference you will see between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

Senior Scout leadership is composed of the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) plus at least one Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL). These Scouts are responsible for planning and running the meetings.

Typically, the ASPL's are responsible for managing the meeting plan for a month, with the support of the SPL, the Scoutmaster, the Assistant Scoutmaster, and other supporting adults (by the way, troops would really like to get new Scout parents involved in this process – ask what you can do). The Scout leadership is also supported by the Patrol Leaders.

Parents are encouraged, but not required, to stay around for meetings. You should check with the troop to see what its policies are.

During a typical meeting, the following activities will occur:

- Opening flag ceremony
- Meeting organizational announcements
- Merit badge and general advancement activities
- Campout planning (if necessary; it also may be held after the meeting).
- Recognition of any advancement earned that evening
- General announcements
- Closing flag ceremony

What type of equipment should we get?

All of the Uniform and Book items are available at the Council Scout Shop. Some items will vary by troop – check with your troop before purchasing.

Uniform:

- Khaki Scout shirt (we recommend the short-sleeve)
- Troop numerals
- Red epaulets
- Some troops require a neckerchief.

- Some troops require the boys to buy uniform shorts/pants too.
- You also should consider buying Scout socks, belt and hat.

- **Books:**

- A Boy Scout Handbook. It is a good idea to buy a cover, either plastic or cloth.
- Boy Scout Requirement book (optional)

Camping Equipment (not needed immediately, but eventually. Check with your troop for details.):

- Pocket knife (must pass Totem Chip before using this knife at a Scout function)
- Sleeping bag
- Ground pad (foam, Thermorest-type, cot, etc)
- Flashlight
- Water bottle or canteen
- Personal mess kit (although the Scout Shop has BSA mess kits, other types found at sporting goods stores are adequate).
- Compass (get the type with a clear, rectangular plastic base)
- Rain gear
- Troop t-shirts for day wear at camp (this is known as a Class B or Activities uniform shirt).

Barriers to Abuse within Scouting

The BSA has adopted the following policies to provide protection for our members. These policies are primarily for the protection of our youth members; however, they also serve to protect our adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

- **Two-deep leadership:** Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
- **No one-on-one contact:** One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth.
- **Respect of privacy:** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their privacy in similar situations.
- **Separate accommodations:** When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When spate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.
- **Proper preparation for high-adventure activities:** Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, and supervision and safety measures.
- **No secret organizations.** The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.
- **Appropriate attire.** Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping is not appropriate as part of Scouting.

- **Constructive discipline.** Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

- **Hazing prohibited**. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

- **Junior leader training and supervision.** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by junior leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

How can parents help protect their children?

Parents participate in the protection of their children in a variety of ways. We have already mentioned the need for open lines of communication so that children are encouraged to bring any troubles to their parents for advice and counsel. In addition, parents need to be involved in their sons' Scouting activities. All parents receive important information concerning the Scouting program as part of their sons' membership applications. This information is provided so that parents can detect any deviations from the BSA's approved program. If any deviations are noted, parents should call these to the attention of the chartered organization or the unit committee. If the problems persist, parents should contact the local council for assistance.

Parents also need to review the booklet, *How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse: A Parent's Guide*, inserted in every Boy Scout and Cub Scout Handbook. The information in this booklet should be the subject of discussions between Scouts and their parents prior to joining a troop or receiving the Bobcat badge.

How does my son advance in rank*?*

Rank requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class are signed off in the Scout Handbook. Most of the information needed to pass these rank requirements can be found in the handbook. Taking the time to read and study a subject thoroughly is important and expected. When a Scout satisfactorily demonstrates that he has a complete knowledge of a skill or requirement, the requirement may to be signed off in the handbook by a troop leader.

A Scout is expected to perform service work for advancement as well. Scouts must appear before a Board of Review as a final step for rank advancement. Rank advancement is recognized at a formal ceremony called a Court of Honor. It is meant to be a solemn occasion focusing on each Scout's growth and achievements. All Scouts are expected to wear their full Class A uniforms, including merit badge sashes. Parents/guardians are expected to attend each Court of Honor and will be asked to join their son in front of the Troop when he receives his patch and recognition for rank advancement.

How does my son earn merit badges?

Merit badges are required for rank advancement from First Class to Eagle. There are more than 100 merit badges in the Scouting program and they offer Scouts an opportunity to explore areas in which they may not have engaged otherwise. A list of merit badges can be found in the Scout Handbook. There are merit badges for many areas of interest, such as sports, hobbies, careers and Scouting skills. Through merit badges a Scout learns to manage himself, his home, his health and others.

Glossary of some common Scout terms

As in any organization, acronyms and unfamiliar terms are often used that can be confusing. Does your son return from a scouting activity and seem to be speaking a foreign language? Do you note some strange words on a flyer or calendar?
This glossary is an effort to help define some of the more frequently used terms. If someone uses a term you are not familiar with simply ask them to explain it (we too all had to learn it somewhere), or sneak a glance at this glossary if your bashful about asking.

Adult Patrol : When the troop goes camping, all of the adults form their own patrol for meal planning, shopping, cooking, eating, and sleeping. The adults try and set a good example of how a patrol should operate.

Annual Planning Meeting : The PLC (see below) meets to plan the next years activities with the guidance of the Scoutmaster. This plan is then present to the Troop Committee (see below) for approval to make sure the plan meets BSA guidelines and that necessary resources canbe provided. This normally occurs in the spring to plan the next school years activities.

APL - Asst. Patrol Leader : See Patrol Leader below.

ASM - Asst. Scoutmaster : See Scoutmaster below.

ASPL - Asst. Senior Patrol Leader : See Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). Troops often have more than one ASPL

Be Prepared: The motto of Boy Scouting.

Blue Card: In order to work with a Merit Badge Counselor the scout must first obtain a Blue Card from the Scoutmaster. Blue Cards are the record of Merit Badge progress and are turned in to receive the Merit Badge after all the requirements have been met and the counselor has signed off the card. The scout should keep his copy of the blue card until after he has reached the Rank of Eagle. The plastic baseball trading card holders work well for storing completed Blue Cards.

Board of Review - BOR : As a requirement for each rank advancement a scout must appear individually before a group of three to six adults (members of Troop Committee) to ensure that the scout has met the requirements for that rank.
By policy the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters cannot sit on a BOR. A Board of Review takes place after a Scoutmaster Conference (see below) for Rank Advancement, or when a Scout requests it or if the Troop
Committee feels the Scout needs it. Eagle boards are conducted at the district level.

Boy Scout Ranks (in order of increasing rank)
Tenderfoot
Second Class
First Class
Star
Life
Eagle
Eagle Palms: Bronze, Gold, Silver

Bridging: A ceremony where Webelos Cub Scouts cross a ceremonial bridge to signify their transition from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts. This is normally done at a Cub Scout Pack Meeting with Boy Scouts from the Webelos' new troop participating. This is NOT a graduation ceremony from Cub Scouts, it is rather an induction ceremony into Boy Scouts.

BSA Lifeguard: A 3-year certification awarded to scouts or scouters who meet prescribed requirements in aquatic skills.

Buddy System: Whenever a scout needs to go somewhere at camp, hiking, Merit Badge Class, etc. it is always done in groups of at least two. A scout always takes a "buddy" scout with him. Also used as part of the "Safe Swim Defense" program.

Camporee: Campout attended by several troops within the district.. Usually there are various competitions between the patrols attending.

Chaplain: Adult member of the Troop Committee who provides guidance to scouts related to observance of the 12th point of the Scout Law - A Scout is Reverent. This adult works with the Chaplain Aide, a youth leader.

Class A or B Uniform: Different types of activities require different uniforms. Class A or Field Uniform is a complete uniform. Class B or Activities Uniform is a scout polo shirt or T-shirt often worn for camp or for other activities.

Commissioner: Adult volunteers working at the district or council level. Unit commissioners are

assigned to units and should be a friendly resource to the unit leaders.

COPE: Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience. (Boy Scout activity involving heights, trust and team building).

Council: A group of Districts make up a Council.

Court of Honor – COH: An awards ceremony, usually held quarterly, at which scouts are recognized for their rank advancements, merit badges earned, and other awards.

Cracker Barrel: A scout term for a social gathering with refreshments after a meeting or activity.

Den Chief : A Boy Scout who helps a Den Leader direct the activities of a Cub Scout den.

District: A subdivision of a council. The Baden-Powell Council is divided into 4 separate Districts, each with a dedicated professional District Executive and run by a volunteer District Committee: Hiawatha District, Taughannock District, Chenango District, and Delahanna District.

Dutch Oven: A large cast iron covered pot used to bake and cook in over a wood or charcoal fire.

Firem'n Chit: A certification given to Scouts who know and understand fire safety rules.

Friends of Scouting (FOS) : Friends of Scouting - annual fund raiser for the council. The council does not get any share of your registration fee and is grateful for your donation.

Good Turn: "Do a Good Turn Daily" is the scout slogan. A good turn is something you do without being asked or expected to do it and for which you expect no reward.

Guide to Safe Scouting: This booklet is the “Bible” when it comes to safety related issues in scouting. Those items in **BOLD** print are rules that MUST be followed. All else in the booklet are recommendations that should be followed. Troop leaders frequently consult this to see if planned activities are being done safely and within prescribed BSA policy.

Jamboree: Scout meeting or camp out on a grand scale. There are district, regional, national and international jamborees.

Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) : Scouting and ham radio join forces to make many international contacts through the "air" waves. Traditionally the 3rd weekend in October.

JASM - Junior Asst. Scoutmaster: A youth between 16 and 18 who has already held major leadership positions within the troop. Appointed by the Scoutmaster to help in guiding the troop and youth leaders.

Junior Leader Training (JLT): A training class taught by the senior youth leaders for newly elected and appointed youth leaders generally inthe fall.

Klondike Derby: A winter/snow oriented camporee. Overnight camping experience in the snow with team building games and activities.

Leadership: To advance in the more senior ranks a scout must hold a leadership position for a set period of time. The rank requirements in the Boy Scout Handbook (as revised) lists the leadership positions that qualify.

Leave No Trace (LNT) : A set of guidelines that set standards for outdoor activities that are environmentally sound and considerate to others using the same area.

Merit Badge Sash: As scouts earn Merit Badges they are sewn on a Merit Badge Sash (available at the Scout Shop). The Merit Badge Sash is normally worn only for formal occasions such as a Court-of-Honor.

NESA: National Eagle Scout Association. Open to membership to any youth or adult who attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

Northern Tier High Adventure Base: Northern Tier is a Boy Scout High Adventure Base that is focused on canoeing in the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota and Canada.

Order of the Arrow (OA): A national brotherhood of scout honor campers of the Boy Scouts of America. Members are elected by their peers after meeting basic requirements of camping knowledge and

experience. Boys and adults leaders can be elected to the OA. The OA motto of "Cheerful Service" indicates their purpose. They are often found improving scout camps, running council events, and providing service to the scouting community.

OA Ordeal: The initiation ceremony experience for new OA members generally involving personal introspection, service to improve camp or trail and ceremonies based on Indian legend or lore.

Palms, Eagle: After a scout reaches the rank of Eagle, they can earn a Palm for every 5 additional Merit Badges they complete. You may wear only the proper combination of Palms for the number of merit badges you earned beyond the 21 required for the rank of Eagle. The Bronze Palm represents five merit badges, the Gold Palm 10, and the Silver Palm 15. For example a scout with 20 additional Merit Badges would wear a Silver and a Bronze Palm.

Patrol: The Patrol is the basic unit within a troop. Made up of 6-10 scouts who camp, cook and eat together. They work as a team at various activities and events. They elect their own leader.

Patrol Equipment: The Patrol Equipment consists of tents, stoves, lanterns, and cooking equipment. The Patrol is responsible for the storage and upkeep of this equipment. This equipment is stored and transported in Patrol Boxes which need to be cleaned after each outing.

Patrol Leader (PL) : The elected leader for the patrol. An Assistant Patrol Leader can be elected or appointed by the PL to help in running the patrol.

Patrol Leaders Council (PLC): Made up of the youth leadership of the troop. They meet once a month to plan the following month's activities and annually to plan the upcoming year.

Permission Slip: In order to go on any outing the scout must have a Permission Slip signed by his parent. The Permission Slip also provides details about uniform, departure time, food, etc. Many troops post Permission Slips on their web sites. It is the Scout's responsibility to make sure they have the appropriate Permission Slip signed and turned in by the due date noted on the Permission Slip.

PFD: Personal Floatation Device (PFD) otherwise known as a life vest. Those used in scouting must be U.S. Coast Guard approved.

Philmont: A high adventure Boy Scout camp and training facility located in the northeast corner of New Mexico.

Roundtable: Monthly meeting for leaders to exchange ideas, fellowship, and, a few announcements that is run by the district.

Safe Swim Defense: An eight-step plan for conducting swimming activities in a safe manner.

Safety Afloat: Guidelines for safe troop activities utilizing water craft.

Safety Circle: A safety zone around someone using a pocket knife, hatchet, ax, or other sharp tool. Basically it is an arms length plus the length of the tool in all directions. No one should be in another person's Safety Circle when a sharp tool is in use. Be sure to check the Safety Circle when your knife is closed.

Scoutmaster (SM): Adult leader who trains and guides the youth leaders in carrying out the scouting program. One or more Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM) help the Scoutmaster and are often assigned specific roles and duties.

Scoutmaster Conference: A formal meeting that takes place at a Troop meeting or activity between a Scout and the Scoutmaster, or a person he designates, to review a scout's progress. A Scoutmaster Conference takes place at advancement time prior to a Board of Review, when a Scout requests it or if the Scoutmaster feels the Scout needs it.

Scouts Own: Non-denominational religious observance of reflection usually conducted on camp outs. Allows each Scout the opportunity to obey the twelfth point of the Scout Law in his own way. Let your troop leaders know if you do not want your son to participate in this activity, as we wish to respect every family's religious beliefs.

Scout Spirit: The way a scout tries to live up to the Scout Oath, Law, Slogan, and motto in his everyday life.

Seabase: A high adventure Scout camp located in the Florida Keys.

Service Star: A pin worn over the left shirt pocket of the uniform to denote the number of years of service.

Silver Beaver: A recognition given by the National Court of Honor for distinguished service to youth within the council.

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) : The senior most elected youth leader of the troop. The SPL is in charge of the troop at all functions and activities. He appoints one or more assistants (ASPL) to help him in running the troop.

Summit: In 2009, the BSA purchased 10,600 acres of property adjacent to West Virginia's New River Gorge National River area in order to create The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve (the Summit). The Summit is the new home of achievement, adventure, and innovation in Scouting. With world-class facilities and a focus on outdoor action sports, the Summit will welcome Scouts to a whole new jamboree experience in summer 2013.

Totin' Chip: A certification that enables the bearer to use knives, axes, and saws. The Scout earns it through educational and hands-on safety sessions led by an adult leader or older scout appointed by the scoutmaster. Any time a Scout is observed doing something unsafe with a sharp tool, a corner is cut off his Totin' Chip card. When all four corners are gone, the card is taken away and must be re-earned.

Tour Permit: A document that must be filed with the council office before any official scouting activity can take place. Special permits are required for travel out-of-state, over 500 miles, or for flying activities.

Troop Committee: Adult committee of registered adults that provide oversight, assistance, and guidance to the Scoutmaster in carrying out the scouting program within the troop. The Troop Committee is responsible to provide the necessary resources requested by the PLC and Scoutmaster that are required to carry out the scouting program. All registered adults are part of the Troop Committee, key members include the Committee Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Outdoor/Activities Coordinator, Advancement Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Equipment Coordinator, and Fund Raising Coordinator.

Two Deep: Two Deep Leadership is a Boy Scout Policy. A minimum of two adults must always be present with any youth. One of these adults must be 21 years old. This is part of the BSA Youth Protection Guidelines.

University of Scouting: The University of Scouting is a training event primarily intended for adult leaders of Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, and Venturing Crews; as well as parents of youth involved with those programs. Being a registered leader within the Boy Scouts of America is only required if you intend to be officially credited with any of the National Training Courses.
There is also a section devoted to Scouts who are currently serving as a Den Chief or aspiring to become a Den Chief.

Woodbadge: Advanced Training for Boy Scout adult leaders. Any adult who has taken Basic Leader Training can attend this advanced training course to expand their knowledge of the scouting program and be of more help to the troop.

Youth Protection Training: A 30-minute interactive video presentation and training program that is offered several times a year. Each unit should encourage all leaders to attend one of these sessions that provide valuable information on how to recognize child abuse, how to set up safe guards, and how to report suspected abuse. The training can also be done online through the link on this page: *www.myscouting.org*

Webelos Parent Orientation

Troop Organization

The Patrol Method – In 1888, Lord Baden Powell wrote, "The formation of the boys into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop." **Patrols** are the building blocks of Scouting. As a member of a patrol, you plan together, learn together, and all of you pitch in to turn exciting plans into action. Patrols are such an important part of Scouting that a part of each troop meeting is usually set aside for each patrol to meet by itself. Every patrol has a name and every Scout in the patrol wears a patch on their right sleeve with their patrol's emblem. Each patrol has a flag they make that they carry at troop meetings a campouts. Every patrol has a yell, too. You give the yell when your patrol wins a contest or performs well at any other event.

Your patrol will elect one of its members to serve as **patrol leader**. The patrol leader is in charge of the patrol at troop meetings and during outdoor adventures, and he represents the patrol on the patrol leaders' council. While there is only one patrol leader, every member of a patrol shares the duties of leadership. You could be the one who finds the way on a hike, who is the chief cook in camp, or who teaches other Scouts how to tie a knot.

The **new-Scout patrol** is a group of boys who have just become Scouts. They are helped by a **troop guide** – an older, experienced Scout who can show the way. Members of a new-Scout patrol choose their patrol leader, plan what they want to do, and take part in outings and troop meetings just like any patrol. They also learn the basic skills they need in order to enjoy hiking, camping, and other Scout adventures. Before long, members of a new-Scout patrol will discover that they are passing many of the requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class.

SPL – Senior Patrol Leader. This is the top boy leader of a troop and is elected by all of the Scouts. With guidance from the Scoutmaster, he is in charge of troop meetings and the patrol leaders' council, and does all he can to see that the patrols succeed.

Patrol Leader Council – The activities of your troop are planned by a patrol leaders' council (PLC) made up of you patrol leaders, senior patrol leader, Scoutmaster, and other troop leaders. The PLC discusses future meetings and outings for the whole troop. Your patrol leader's responsibility is to share the ideas that have come from you and other Scouts in your patrol to the PLC and to report back decisions made by the PLC back to you and the patrol

Scoutmaster – The Scoutmaster is the main adult leader of your troop. He is responsible for signing for rank advancements, training the Senior Patrol Leader, meeting with each boy as they are ready for advancement (Scoutmaster Conference), and directing the activities of the various assistant scoutmasters.

Meetings – Unlike Cub Scout packs, most troops meet every week of the year, including summer. In addition, there are usually separate patrol meetings (1 to 2) a month, a monthly outdoor activity such as a campout, and a number of service projects.

Boy Scout Advancements

Scout Badge – All Scouts when joining a troop must pass the requirements listed on page 4 of the Scout Handbook for the Scout Badge. This is much like earning the Bobcat badge when you joined your pack.

1st year Program (Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class) – The first year program, with the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class is designed to teach the camping, first aid, and safety skills needed to

go camping to new Scouts. Though called the 1st year program there is no time requirement on when the advancements must be completed. Some Scouts can do all of the requirements in less than a year, some will take longer. Unlike Cub Scouts there is no age determined advancements. All Scouts go through the same advancement program no matter how old they are or when then join. You may pass any of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class at any time. For example, if you fulfill a First Class requirement before you are a Second Class Scout, you may check off the First Class requirement as completed. You may not receive a rank, however, until you have earned the one before it.

Handbook - This is the Scout "Bible". It explains all the requirements and lists out all of the information you need to know in order to reach First Class. This is also the place where your requirements get signed off. Most Scoutmasters expect this book to be always with you at troop meetings and campouts.

Scoutmaster Conference – One requirement that Boy Scouts have for rank advancement that Cub Scouting doesn't have is that whenever you complete the requirements for a rank you need to have a Scoutmaster Conference. At this meeting the Scoutmaster will review the requirements with you to make sure that they have been learned correctly, he will help you to set up the goals for the next advancement, and he will have you share your ideas about the troop (how it's going from your viewpoint, what you would like the troop to do more of, problems you see occurring…)

Board of Review – Another difference in Boy Scout requirements is that all rank advancements require a Board of Review. The members of a Board of Review can be any adult in the troop except for the Scoutmaster or any of his assistants. The main purpose of the Board of Review is not to retest the skills a Scout has learned, but to see what the Scout's spirit is and how the troop is doing is helping the Scout along and meeting Boy Scout objectives.

Court of Honor – When you complete a rank advancement you will usually be given the badge at the next troop meeting. About four times a year, the troop will hold a special meeting called a Court of Honor. This is a formal ceremony to recognize you and your fellow Scouts for rank advancement and other Scouting achievements. This event is held with an audience of family, friends, chartered organization officials, and troop leaders.

The Path to Eagle – Once a Scout has reached First Class and learned the basic skills of Scouting, he is ready for the challenge of becoming an Eagle Scout. The Path to Eagle has three ranks, Star Scout, Life Scout, and Eagle Scout. Here the requirements for advancement consist of earning merit badges, doing service projects to help the community, showing that you can lead other Scouts as a patrol leader or some other leadership position, and demonstrating to others that you have Scout spirit.

Merit Badges – A merit badge is an invitation to explore an exciting subject. With more than a hundred to choose from, some merit badges encourage you to increase your skill in subjects you already like, while others challenge you to learn about new areas of knowledge. Many of the merit badges are designed to help you increase your ability to be of service to others, to take part in outdoor adventures, to better understand the environment, and to play a valuable role in your family and community. Earning a merit badge can even lead you toward a lifelong hobby or set you on the way to a rewarding career. The requirements for each merit badge appear in the current BSA merit badge pamphlet for that award, and in the book *Boy Scout Requirements*, available at Scout shops and council service centers. When you have decided on a merit badge you would like to earn, follow these steps:

- Obtain from your Scoutmaster a signed merit badge application (blue card) and the name of a qualified counselor for that merit badge.
- Along with another Scout, a relative, or a friend, set up and attend your first appointment with the merit badge counselor.

- Complete the requirements, meeting with the counselor whenever necessary until you have finished working on the badge.
- Some important facts to know about merit badges:
- Any Scout, regardless of rank, can earn merit badges.
- Though there are over a hundred merit badges there are fifteen special ones that must be earned in order to become an Eagle Scout. These are referred to as the Eagle Required Badges and have a silver instead of a green border.

Other Awards – There are two other Scout awards that are usually of interest to first year Scouts: The Totin' Chip and the Firem'n Chit. When a Scout demonstrates that he knows how to handle woods tools (knife, axe, saw) he may be granted totin' rights. Until a Scout has earned his Totin' Chit he is not allowed to carry a pocketknife. If found handling wood tools incorrectly, a corner of the Totin' Chip card is often cut off. When all four corners are gone, so is the Scouts totin' rights. The owner of a Firem'n Chit has demonstrated knowledge of safety rules in building, maintaining, and putting out camp and cooking fires. Until a Scout has earned his Firem'n Chit he is not allowed to carry matches.

Camping and Equipment:

Overall – In general the first year of camping will be pretty tame. New Scouts need time to learn camping skills and what is expected of them from the Troop and their patrol. Parents may, or may not, be invited to attend campouts, depending on Troop policy. When Scouts become 13 years old they may start participating in High Adventure campouts.

Summer Camp – This is a weeklong campout usually focused on earning merit badges. New Scouts may be enrolled in a "Sidney Winter" program that is focused on learning their First Class camping skill. As soon as you decide on a troop begin going to their meetings and find out where they are going for summer camp, how much it will cost, and what forms you need to start filling out.

Equipment – There is a lot of equipment you need to go camping, but that does not mean that you have to go out and immediately buy a lot of expensive gear. When looking for camping equipment keep in mind two things: (1) new Scouts start off small and grow rapidly (a sleeping bag that fits today will be too small tomorrow) and (2) new Scouts will not be doing major hiking or extreme weather camping their first year.

Troop and Patrol Gear – Most troops have their own tents and cooking gear that are supplied to the patrols. Patrols will supplement this with purchases of their own for such things as pot holders, paper towels, etc. Parents, however, usually have to supply their own tent.

Backpacks – When you pack more than 25% of your body weight in a pack you've overpacked. Those great big packs that you see older Scouts and adults use are much too big for new Scouts. Look for a small, inexpensive backpack for the first year (borrow one preferably) and wait for them to reach their growth before buying a bigger, better one. Also since the distance most first year Scouts have to travel is from the back of the car to the tent, a duffle bag is often sufficient. Until a Scout learns how to properly pack, an external frame pack is usually best. They are cheaper, allow for more freedom in packing, and the frame helps keep the lumps in the pack away from the back.

Sleeping bags – A 25° (F) sleeping bag is more than adequate for the type of camping a new Scout will do in the first two years (including winter camping). Even when the temperature goes down to zero the Scouts will be sleeping inside tents with other Scouts, dressed, and with a bag liner or blanket inside the bag. Sleeping bags filled with down are to be avoided. Though they are the "warmest and lightest" they lose almost all of their insulating ability when they get wet (a common occurrence for new Scouts) and cannot be dried out on a camping trip. The new synthetics are almost as good as down, retain most of their insulating capability when wet, and can be dried on a camping trip. Mummy bags are good because they heat up faster,

are lighter and easier, and usually come with a hood to keep the head warm. They can sometimes be uncomfortably for new Scouts, however, because they feel constrictive.

Boots - Boots are an essential for camping. Sneakers do not provide any ankle support and quickly get wet with a little rain. Boots should go above the ankle and should have a gusseted tongue (the tongue has extra material to the sides that attach to the boot) so that water and dirt are kept out. Look for a minimum number of sewn seams (because they all have to be waterproofed) and a cemented or sewn sole. Get a good foot liner to help wick moisture out of the boot. See pages 200-201 of the Scout Handbook for more information about boots and socks.

Flashlights – The preferred flashlights for Scout is the MagLite, with a belt holder. They are small, easily carried, always with you, and have a spare bulb inside. You can also buy a headband for them so that you can use them hand free. Headbands with attached lights are also good. The rule here is that if it takes a D cell, its too big. Also remember that having spare batteries is often as important as having the flashlight.

Mess kits – Don't go out and buy those army style mess kits where everything fits inside everything else. They are made of metal which lets the food get cold quickly and easily get bent out of shape. What you want is a good study plastic plate and bowl that will not break when dropped or stuffed into a pack on the way home. Utensils can be any old mismatched set of knife, fork, and spoon that you won't worry about if it doesn't come home. For drinks use a good plastic mug. Don't get a collapsible cup.

Raingear – Almost everyone goes through what we call an "evolution" in raingear. First year Scouts usually wear a poncho. It's easy to pack, quick to put on, and works for about five minutes in a downpour, unless you're hiking. By the second year they've switched to a plastic or rubber coated rain suit. While this offers more protection Scouts eventually realize that they are sweating inside as much as it's raining outside. Finally they end up in a nylon or Gore-tex rain suit that lets the body breath and also serves as a jacket when it is cooler.

Water Bottle – A water bottle is essential for camping. This can be either a canteen or a plastic water bottle. Either way, it should have a strap or holder to allow for easy carrying.

Who packs – Scouts, never let someone else pack for you, even your parents. You are the one going camping and in the middle of the night when your flashlight dies and you need your spare batteries, you are the one who needs to know in what pocket of the backpack they are in. Your patrol leader should be inspecting your pack for the first campout or two to show you how and to make sure that you haven't forgotten anything. Also, if it has a battery in it and it is not your flashlight, leave it home.

Boy Scout Troop Questions:

Choosing the right Boy Scout troop for you is an individual decision. Troops vary in their focus and the personalities in each troop differ. You need to think about what will make scouting a fun, rewarding experience for you and then find a troop that appears to best fulfill your needs.

If you're a Webelos scout, having completed five years of Cub Scouts, you may feel that you've experienced all there is in the program. But Boy Scouts is a very different program full of new experiences. Make a commitment to try it for a year to observe the differences and then decide if you want to continue on or not.

A boy needs to visit at least one troop meeting before joining Boy Scouts. You really should visit several troops to learn the uniqueness of each. Select a troop that fits the needs of your family.

When you visit troops, try to get answers to these important questions to help you decide on a home troop:

- How many registered scouts? (30-50 is generally recognized as a good troop size, but there are many larger and smaller troops)
- How many of those registered scouts are active? (some troops have lots of names on the roster, but the scouts don't participate. Count how many are at the meeting you visit and if it doesn't match what you are told, visit again before deciding to join.)
- How many assistant Scoutmasters, Committee members, other troop positions? (a strong troop committee supports the plans created by the scouts. Assistant Scoutmasters are needed to support scout advancement and troop events. One assistant Scoutmaster for every 8-10 scouts is good.)
- What would a chart of the age distribution of the 'active' scouts look like? (a few older and lots of 11-12 year olds indicates a troop that is either recently growing or is having problems keeping scouts active. More older scouts indicates there's something for them to stay for.)
- How many scouts have earned Eagle in the past few years and how many are still active in the troop? (often scouts reach Eagle and stop participating. Hearing that scouts stay in the troop until the age out at 18 indicates a strong program.)
- How are the patrols organized? (new scouts should be kept together to start, but then either continue on as their own patrol or get integrated into existing multi-age patrols.)
- What goes on in troop meetings? (you should see this when you visit. Some troops spend most troop meetings doing merit badge work - this is not the BSA model for merit badges. Some troops run around in chaos at meetings. The agenda for each meeting should be prepared and run by the Senior Patrol Leader. Meetings should have an opening, time for scout skills, fun time, planning for events, a scoutmaster minute, and closing. The key thing is that you should see the troop being run by the scouts, not the scoutmaster or other adults - even if it seems inefficient.)
- What service projects does the troop do? (service is a key part of scouting. There should be many opportunities for service throughout the year.)
- How is the rank advancement managed? (There should be support in place for new scouts to advance up to First Class. The most important thing you should hear is that the troop has good Troop Guides for the new scouts. These are helpful scouts in a leadership position tasked with guiding new scouts in their first year. Some troops force-feed advancement up to First Class in a new scout's first year while others let the scout flounder with no direction - both tend to lose scouts.)
- How are Merit Badges managed? (the BSA merit badge program is intended for scouts to seek out and complete merit badges that interest them, as well as 12 required badges for Eagle rank. A troop that schedules merit badges and scouts just attend similar to school is not following the program. A troop that spends their troop meeting time on merit badges is not following the program. Scouts need to take responsibility to select merit badges and complete them with a merit badge counselor advising and guiding them.)
- How is troop leadership managed? (The troop should really be 'boy-led'. Every troop will say it is 'boy-run' or 'boy-led', but you need to see if that is true. Who is in front of the troop? Who is corraling the

scouts to start the next activity? Who is teaching? What are the older scouts doing? These should all be scouts in leadership roles. A Senior Patrol Leader runs the meetings with assistance from his Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. Every patrol has a Patrol Leader responsible for leading his group of 5-9 scouts. These scouts should meet every month to plan upcoming activities. There should be an annual scheduling session where the scouts plan campouts, high adventure trips, and other events for the future.)

- When and how often does the troop meet? (A troop should have an outing scheduled for every month. Troop meetings should occur on a regular schedule at least twice a month, and preferably three times. Troops should not stop meeting for the summer - the troop meetings should continue but with less expected participation due to family vacations.)
- How is family communication handled? (email, phone trees, web site - depending on the type of communication and your preferences, any can work. A troop roster should be kept updated and distributed to all scouts.)
- What camping has the troop done and is planned? (This is probably the big question that will effect your choice since you can relate to the answer with no prior BSA background. There should be a wide range of outing themes, not the same 12 events every year. There should be a week-long summer camp, and an outing every month.)
- What high adventure trips have been done recently and are planned? (many troops will rattle off Philmont, Seabase, Northern Tier, and National Jamboree as their high adventures - these are all great trips, but they are very expensive and pretty much a pre-packaged deal. If a troop tells you their scouts are planning a trek in the Rockies, or whitewater rafting, or hiking the Grand Canyon, or some other self-directed high adventure, that shows a broader view of scouting. Ask if the scouts or adults are planning those outings - scouts CAN do pretty much all of it, with just guidance as needed.)
- What participation and training is expected of parents? (You should expect that parents are needed to make the troop's plans succeed. The most important thing a parent can do is ask the scout how a meeting or outing was and to support him in scouting. Many troops would like each family to help with transportation to 2 or 3 campouts each year, some require less. You should hear that adults are required to complete Youth Protection Training before interacting with the scouts. Troops also need a few adults to take on troop roles each year, such as Asst. Scoutmaster or Committee member - these are required to offer a complete scouting program. They should be expected to complete training for their position.)
- What fundraising is done?
- How are the funds managed? Does each scout have his own account?
- What equipment is provided by the troop and the scout?
- What uniforms are required?
- How often are Roundtables attended and by who? (district roundtable meetings should be held each month and the adult troop leaders should attend to find out district and council information.)

Welcome to Our Troop!

Whether or not you've been in Scouting before, there is a new world for youth to explore in a Scout troop. And, of course, as a parent, you can help ensure the success of your Scout. We strive for every youth to achieve the aims of Scouting: character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness.

In order to achieve the aims of Scouting, we utilize the eight **methods of Scouting**:

Ideals	Personal Growth
Association with Adults	Leadership Development
Patrol Method	Outdoors
Advancement	Uniform

Ideals

The ideals are spelled out in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts measure themselves against these ideals and continually try to improve.

Personal Growth

As they follow the Scout Oath and Scout Law, plan their activities, and progress toward their goals, Scouts grow as individuals of good character.

Association With Adults

Responsible adult leaders serve as positive role models, and Scouts learn by observing how those leaders conduct themselves.

Leadership Development

Scouts are given repeated opportunities to learn leadership skills and put them into action while serving others.

Patrol Method

The patrol method gives each Scout an opportunity to share responsibility, exercise good judgment, and develop participating citizenship. The patrol is the basic unit of Scouting.

Describe your unit's approach.

Outdoors

It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts put a variety of skills into action, while having all kinds of fun.

Describe your unit's approach.

Advancement

The advancement program provides Scouts with opportunities to gain understanding, learn useful skills, and receive recognition.

Describe your unit's approach.

Uniform

The uniform is more than a place for the proper display of patches and badges. It gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood that believes in the same ideals.

Describe your unit's approach.

Summary: Scouting's methods represent the tools we use, the path we take in reaching for our goals. In every Scouting activity, some element of each of these methods will be evident. Sometimes this will be obvious; often it will not. But the methods are where we concentrate our attention and effort. A balanced combination of these will lead us to the aims of Scouting.

You can help your Scout to be successful by encouraging full participation in patrol and troop activities; ensuring proper wearing of the uniform; helping with transportation, meetings, and outings; and, perhaps most importantly, supporting your Scout in following the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

My Troop Information

I am in Troop No.: _____

My troop meets every: _____ from _____ to _____.

My troop meets at: _____

My patrol is: _____

My patrol leader's name is: _____

My patrol leader's phone number is: _____.

My senior patrol leader's name is: _____.

My senior patrol leader's phone number is: _____.

My Scoutmaster's name is: _____.

My Scoutmaster's phone number is: _____.

My Scoutmaster's email is: _____.

Scouts are expected to communicate, as needed, with their troop's youth leadership. Parents should allow their Scout to be responsible for the routine flow of information between the family and the troop.

Parents are encouraged to join the troop committee to learn more about the troop to assist their Scout.

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