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# Roundtable Big Rocks

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## ADULT RECOGNITION

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand why adult recognition is important.
2. Identify what types of recognition are appropriate.
3. Understand how proper use of recognition contributes to successful units and supports the aims and methods of Scouting.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

Suggested presenters include: anyone serving on the district or council nominating committee if looking to explain the award nomination process; anyone from the district or council training committee who can help explain how to submit training awards; and the district Key 3 to help with recognizing volunteers.

### Presentation Method

Have copies of the training award forms available for all volunteers, or direct them to the website where the most current forms may be downloaded. Volunteers can also be directed to the district or council website for the award nomination forms. Posters or displays showing the various recognitions can be set up in the midway or gathering area before and during roundtable, with the presenter available to answer questions or collect forms as needed.

### BSA Reference Materials

- *Guide to Awards and Insignia*, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33066](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33066)
- Scout Leader Uniform Inspection Guide to assist with placement, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34048.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34048.pdf)
- Your district or council training committee or recognition committee Web page
- Your council Web page for award nominations

### Presentation Content

- Adult volunteers in Scouting do not get involved to receive knots. They most often become involved to support the unit their children have joined. However, through proper training, successful completion of certain activities, and tenure in their Scouting assignment, adults contribute to successful Scouting programs and can earn recognition for a job well done.

- Training awards reflect a pattern of growth in the development of an adult leader. The training award recognizes completion of the basic level of training and tenure in a Scouting assignment. The Key Award reflects the additional time and effort a leader has devoted to a key assignment in Scouting.
- Some volunteers make additional commitments beyond their current position in Scouting. They may serve at the district or council level or in other ways, such as through a religious, fraternal, or social organization, or by supporting the council or national endowment funds. All of those groups have awards that can be worn on the Scouting uniform.
- These awards are nominative—that is, the award holder does not campaign for them. The misguided actions of some volunteers in the past who actively sought recognition caused others to not want to wear the knots at all, and individuals should be discouraged from collecting recognition. Instead, they should focus on encouraging and recognizing the contributions of others.
- Completion of the requirements for training awards reflect the effort a volunteer makes to put on a quality program. This recognition is an outward sign that the wearer made the effort to obtain proper training and serve as a dedicated leader, and it also reflects well on the unit, district, or council. Adult volunteers who also go above and beyond supporting the work in their units should be recognized for that additional commitment, as is common in other organizations and workplaces.
- Nominative awards are available from the National Council for work done at the district and local council level. Information about the process and timeline for submission is available from district and council nominating committees and websites.
- An adult who has earned the Arrow of Light, the highest Cub Scouting award; the Eagle Scout Award, the highest award in Boy Scouting; the Summit Award (or the Silver Award), the highest award in Venturing; or the Quartermaster Award, the highest award in Sea Scouting, can wear the representative knot on their uniform as a Scouter. It sets an example for other adults and encourages the youth we serve to continue working on their recognition.
- Proper wearing of adult recognition is explained in the *Guide to Awards and Insignia* and the Scout Leader Uniform Inspection Sheet.

# HISTORIC TRAILS

## Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand why Scouts hike historic trails.
2. Identify sources for local and national historic trails.
3. Understand how to organize and safely lead a hike.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

Unit leaders who have never hiked a historic trail will want a description of local trails. A Scouter who has hiked local historic trails and knows that information is an ideal presenter. The presenter also should discuss trail safety and how hiking relates to Cub Scout and Boy Scout advancement programs.

## Presentation Method

The presentation should include a list of historic trails located in the local council or nearby councils. The location, length, theme, and degree of difficulty of each trail should be described. Printed scans of available trail patches to show participants may improve interest level.

## BSA Reference Materials

- Local council historic trail list and award requirements
- BSA-approved historic trails list with state by state list
- National Park Service National Trails System, [www.nps.gov/nts/](http://www.nps.gov/nts/)

## Presentation Content

- Hiking can be an exciting component of a well-rounded outdoor program when properly planned and executed. It can also improve a Scout's stamina and physical fitness.
- All Cub Scout ranks and many adventures include outdoor activities that can be met by hiking portions of a historic trail. Boy Scouts must complete patrol or troop activities to earn Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, which can include historic trail hikes.
- The Hiking merit badge can be earned by hiking several historic trails of the proper length.
- A historic trail gives purpose to a hike beyond the physical effort needed, so a Scout's interest can be heightened. Scouts will learn local or national history in the process of hiking historic trails.
- Historic trails usually include a colorful patch for those who answer a trail questionnaire and complete the trail. They are mementos of the event and can be an incentive for Scouts to hike historic trails.

- There is no single type or length of "historic trail." Some examples of trails are described below.
- Historic trails can commemorate local events (such as a nearby battle or civil rights march), include local historic sites (such as early public buildings and residences in the city), or connect several sites associated with a significant person.
- Each council should have a list of BSA historic trails in the council or state, and the questionnaires required to earn any available trail awards.
- If your council has one or more BSA historic trails, the presenter should describe where each of them is located as well as the theme or highlights of each. Also, indicate whether each trail is suitable for all ages or only older Scouts. Show an example of the patch or other award(s) available for completing the trail.
- The BSA national website maintains a list of authorized historic trails by state, which can be used to plan longer trips. The list was being updated when this topic was written, but cached versions can be found online.
- Historic trails can be found at most national battlefield parks and many national historic parks managed by the National Park Service. The NPS websites will include information about available hikes and awards. A list of nearby NPS trails will be useful for unit leaders planning historic trail hikes.
- Your city hall or local historical society may have a list of local non-BSA historic trails.
- Remember to file a tour and activity plan if hiking a historic trail, when distance or other factors require the plan.
- Call ahead to make sure that the trail is open for use (season, weather events, etc.), and check the hours of operation of sites that must be visited along the trail.
- Practice hiking safety and Leave No Trace principles.
- Wear proper footwear. Even city sidewalks require well-cushioned soles to avoid foot problems.
- Make sure everyone stays hydrated.
- Scheduled rest stops (like 10 minutes every hour) will reduce exhaustion and straggling. Straggling can make some Scouts feel inferior to others, and also makes proper adult supervision more difficult.
- Make sure not to litter. More than one BSA trail that crossed private property has been closed due to misbehavior by Scouts.

## LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Realize that Scouting is not a child care program.
2. Understand that parent involvement is essential to the Scouting program, and training is the key to making this happen.
3. See that Scouting does not end when a boy earns the Arrow of Light Award.
4. Understand that it takes a community to maintain a Scout unit.
5. Understand that Scouting is not a “one-person show”!

### Suggested Presenters(s)

This could be presented by two Scouters (one new Cubmaster and one an experienced Scoutmaster), or a Scouter who has a history of involving parents in the local unit.

### Presentation Method

- “A Tale of Two Units”
- Discussion—listing ways to ensure leadership transition and parent involvement

### BSA Reference Materials

- Orientation for new Boy Scout parents, [www.scouting.org/Training/Adult/Supplemental/OrientationforNewBoyScoutParents.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Training/Adult/Supplemental/OrientationforNewBoyScoutParents.aspx)
- Cub Scout Parent Information Guide, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/520-259.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/520-259.pdf)
- What I Wish Every Parent Understood, <http://scoutmastercg.com/what-i-wish-every-scout-parent-understood/>
- Getting parents excited about Scouting, <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2008/10/scouters-speak-getting-parents-excited-about-scouting/>
- Tuesday Talkback: When parents see Cub Scouting as low-cost babysitting, <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2013/11/26/tuesday-talkback-when-parents-see-cub-scouts-as-low-cost-babysitting/>

### Presentation Content

#### A Tale of Two Units

- It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Two Scout units (a pack and a troop) were chartered by the same institution. Each unit had approximately 30 youth. Both units had monthly activities. The

troop supplied den chiefs for the pack. Scouts from the troop made presentations at the pack’s blue and gold banquet. At the fall School Night to Join Scouting event, 15 boys joined the pack (five Tigers, two Wolves, three Bears, and five Webelos).

- Eight boys who had been Webelos earned the Arrow of Light and joined the troop, while two more joined a different troop in the community. Twenty-five members of the pack signed up to attend day camp and 21 Boy Scouts attended summer camp.

The leadership in the pack and troop are quite different.

- Bob has been a Cubmaster for one year. He was previously a Tiger adult partner, Wolf den leader, and assistant Cubmaster. Bob was never a Scout; he got involved when his son asked about Tigers after seeing a school flier. Besides Youth Protection Training (YPT), Bob has taken the online Cub Scout leader training, attends roundtable, and has signed up to take Wood Badge. He has encouraged all parents in the pack to take YPT, and planned a parent night where they could take Cub Scout leader training and discuss the implications for the pack. Bob’s philosophy is that the more parents are involved in Scouting, the better the program will be for the boys in the unit.
- George has been Scoutmaster for the past 10 years. George is an Eagle Scout and a member of the Order of the Arrow. He earned the Scoutmaster’s Key, has taken Wood Badge, and was awarded the District Award of Merit. Because of his Scouting experience and dynamic personality, the parents in the troop are willing to “let George do it” and do not register as assistant Scoutmasters. The troop has become a “one-man show.”
- Recently, in May, Bob and George informed their respective committee chairs that they would be transferring to other states by June 1. Which of these units will probably experience a difficult transition period, either before or after they have a new unit leader? Why or why not? What can be done to prevent this situation from occurring in the future?
- For parents to be involved in their son’s unit, they must:
  - Realize Scouting is to their son’s benefit
  - Understand that Scouting is not child care, but an active family program
  - Realize they need to be trained (YPT and This Is Scouting as a minimum)
  - Know Scouting does not end when a Webelos Scout crosses the bridge to Boy Scouts

- Be welcomed into the troop
- Be given a leadership position that is appropriate to their talents, experience, time, and energy
- Be offered a description of the position and a mentor to help with questions
- Know the time limit of the position
- Healthy leadership transitions may follow this pattern in order to keep a vibrant and engaged volunteer base:
  - Year 1, learning the position
  - Year 2, performing the position
  - Year 3, training their successor

## RECRUITING COMMISSIONERS

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the commissioner role in Scouting service.
2. Identify the characteristics of good commissioners.
3. Identify various sources for recruiting commissioners.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

The district commissioner is an ideal presenter since duties include recruiting a commissioner staff. An assistant district commissioner in charge of staffing, training, or other duties is also a good presenter.

### Presentation Method

A brief, informative talk is best. Encourage Scouters to visit with the presenter after the meeting about candidates who may make good commissioners.

### BSA Reference Materials

- *Administration of Commissioner Service*, No. 34501
- [www.scouting.org/Commissioners.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Commissioners.aspx)
- Commissioner Recruitment and Retention, [www.scouting.org/Commissioners/recruiting.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Commissioners/recruiting.aspx)

### Presentation Content

- Commissioners play important roles in unit service. They are district and council leaders who help Scout units succeed. They coach and consult with adult leaders of packs, troops, teams, and crews.
- Commissioners focus on four key areas:
  - Supporting unit growth in the Journey to Excellence criteria

- Visiting units and reporting the information from those visits to identify what resources are needed
- Linking district committee resources to the unit based on those visits
- Supporting on-time charter renewal and membership retention.
- Understanding the ideal attributes of commissioners is an important part of identifying where to recruit them. All commissioners should know and practice Scouting ideals, but they also need certain qualities to succeed in commissioner service.
  - Unit commissioners should have a Scouting background and excellent people skills, and they should be fast learners.
  - Assistant district commissioners need excellent people skills and should be able to recruit and work with a team of unit commissioners. They need a broad Scouting background or an ability to learn quickly.
  - Roundtable commissioners should be congenial and enthusiastic performers, have the ability to recruit a roundtable team, have good experience in the program for which they will run roundtables, and be a good planner.
  - District commissioners should be enthusiastic leaders of adults and good recruiters for commissioners. They need the ability to guide and motivate commissioners to visit units regularly, identify unit needs, and help unit adults to meet needs.
- So where do we find Scouters who have the experience and skills to fill these roles? There are many places we can look:
  - Friends, associates, and business contacts
  - Service club membership rosters
  - Educators, real estate brokers, business owners, government employees, and other business, professional, and service people
  - Eagle Scouts, particularly members of the National Eagle Scout Association
  - Eagle Scout parents, especially those who were active with their son's unit
  - People registered in the Scouting Alumni Association through the website [www.bsaalumni.org](http://www.bsaalumni.org)
  - Order of the Arrow adults who are active in their local lodge but are not primary leaders in their units
  - Youth applicants' parents who have Scouting experience
  - Successful Scouters who have stepped down from their unit leadership roles

- Experienced Scouters serving in support roles who can share their knowledge with another unit. (But don't steal current unit leaders—they need to focus their energy on the unit!)
- Currently, the district is in need of (number) unit commissioners, as well as commissioners who can support (specific roles).
- Recruiting commissioners is an important task for every level of Scouting. If you know of someone who might make a good commissioner, please pass their information on to the district commissioner or a member of the commissioner service team.
- When units suggest excellent Scouters who can serve as commissioners, they not only support other units in the district, but also benefit from the support of commissioners assigned to their unit who can bring ideas, resources, and assistance when needed.

## STAFFING THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the role of the district committee.
2. See how the district committee requires the help of many people, just as a unit does.
3. Encourage more adults to serve on the district committee.
4. Find ways of improving volunteers' attitudes toward the district committee.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

The district chair or the district executive should present this topic. A recent addition to the district committee might make a good supplemental presenter because he or she has been where the participants are now—not yet involved in district operations—and can help others.

### Presentation Method

A brief discussion led by the presenter is recommended. Provide a table with the reference resources and be available to answer questions. Have district committee members on hand to describe their support needs to interested prospects after the roundtable.

### BSA Reference Material

- *The District*, No. 33070
- *District Operations Handbook*, No. 34739
- *Selecting District People*, No. 34512
- District Committee Responsibility Cards, No. 34266

- Activities and Civic Service Committee Guide, No. 33082

**Note:** Big Rocks that may serve as companions to this one include “Parent Engagement” and “Role of the District Committee in Unit Support” from the 2014–2015 *Roundtable Planning Guides*.

### Presentation Content

- Engaging volunteers in the program can happen in many ways, but the key is district leadership that invites new people to assist in supporting units by delivering a high-quality Scouting experience. The presenters must show genuine interest in recruiting new district volunteers.
- Roles and needs of the district committee:
  - To serve and support unit needs. This is accomplished by volunteers who serve on the district's committees. These committees may be standard committees (such as camping, activities, and advancement) or may address unique local district needs.
  - Functioning district committees are a critical means of ensuring good program delivery at the unit level. A key part of commissioner service is to connect units in need of support to district committees that can assist that unit.
  - A “committee of one” is rarely as successful as a committee of many dedicated people who work together to deliver a good program.
  - Having many volunteers—each with a single, well-defined role—helps ensure a better Scouting experience for the youth and reduces volunteer burnout. This is true at both the unit and district levels.
  - Having more district volunteers enables the district to provide higher quality support for the units. This may include more activities, community service projects, unit recruiting support, unit leader training events, etc.
  - Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing are different programs and, therefore, have different activity and training needs. A well-staffed district has program-specific volunteers who support the special needs of packs while other volunteers support the special needs of troops and crews.
- Tips for successful district recruiting:
  - Consider asking all current district committee members to stand up. Many may be long-term Scouters, and this may encourage the development of a new generation of district volunteers.
  - District service provides important roles for Scouters who have served well at the unit level or who want to continue after their sons grow up.

- Committees should be staffed by volunteers from various units, both large and small, and from all program areas.
- Unit requests for better or different district support often provide an opportunity to recruit new volunteers. For example, those who make the requests may want to be part of the solution and become district volunteers themselves.
- Respect the rule of “one volunteer, one job” even if there are many tasks that need doing. Asking too much can turn a great district volunteer into a poor performer.
- Volunteers who are not able to take on a year-round assignment may be able to help once or twice a year, perhaps organizing or providing assistance at a camporee, training event, advancement fair, the district pinewood derby, or a district service project.
- First-time district volunteers can be asked to help staff an event organized and led by a seasoned district volunteer. This is less overwhelming than asking someone to lead when they have no previous experience.
- District committee members should be present at unit program events such as camporees, recognition dinners, and other activities. They should also be regular participants at roundtables and other meetings, where they can discuss the need for supporting the units.
- Unit commissioners can be very helpful in identifying potential district volunteers from among parents who aren’t currently key unit leaders.
- Tips for retaining district volunteers:
  - Be sure to thank each volunteer for the tasks they do! Thanking them publicly is even better. Ensure that they receive leader recognition awards when earned.
  - Volunteers must know what is expected of them. Carefully define each volunteer’s responsibilities in writing.
  - A well-staffed district committee includes seasoned Scouters who orient, train, and mentor newer volunteers. Supplying a mentor can make a real difference in the success a volunteer enjoys.
  - Ensure the roles are meaningful to the volunteers. People will not feel needed unless there is something meaningful for them to do.
  - It is very important to have a sincere discussion with volunteers to gauge satisfaction with their role. Always be open to new ideas and avoid the “we’ve always

done it that way” trap. The root causes of concerns and overall happiness of volunteers need to be identified and addressed, just as in the business world.

- Volunteers are too precious to waste. Before negativity overwhelms a person who has been in a role too long, or in the wrong role, redirection with a new role can help refresh their energy and desire to serve. It is a lot easier to find a better fit than to find and train a new volunteer.
- The presenter should close by briefly describing the needs of understaffed committees in the district and provide a handout with contact information for each of those committees.

## **INCORPORATING STEM OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PROGRAM**

### **Time Available**

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### **Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the meaning of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and how it encompasses a diverse range of activities.
2. Explain to others the BSA’s STEM and Nova Awards programs.
3. See how STEM activities can be incorporated into many Scouting events.

### **Suggested Presenter(s)**

The ideal presenter will be a local STEM professional involved in the STEM and Nova Awards programs, or a Scouter whose experience includes STEM activities in their unit.

### **Presentation Method**

Because many Scouters may not be familiar with the variety of activities related to STEM, a brief introduction is appropriate. Provide resources for further exploration.

### **BSA Reference Materials**

- STEM in Scouting, [www.scouting.org/stem/AboutSTEM.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/stem/AboutSTEM.aspx)
- STEM-related merit badge pamphlets
- *Cub Scout Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34032
- *Boy Scout Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34033
- *Venturing Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34031

## Community Resources

Local STEM-related enterprises, including museums, schools, community programs, and corporations

## Presentation Content

- As our country continues to move forward in electronics and technology, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs are becoming increasingly important and relevant to everyday life.
- Many people think STEM only applies to specific activities, usually science or math education. But Scouting has actually been involved in STEM since the BSA was founded.
  - The BSA's many outdoor nature and conservation programs are perfect examples of science activities.
  - Pioneering uses many engineering concepts. Math is also used to calculate heights, lengths, and construction strengths.
  - Scouting's vocational programs expose Scouts to a wide range of STEM opportunities, from firefighting to aerospace to medical science.
  - Even fun competitions like pinewood derbies are opportunities for STEM learning.
- Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing all involve a number of indoor and outdoor STEM activities. These include working on Cub Scout adventures, Boy Scout merit badges, and the Venturing Ranger Award.
- To tap into our Scouts' natural interests in STEM pursuits—whether in a traditional program, hobby, vocational interest, or daily life—the BSA has developed the Nova Awards program, with specific awards for each Scouting program level.
  - Age-appropriate award programs have been developed for Cub Scouts, Webelos, Boy Scouts, and Venturing youth.
  - At each program level, the award offers four parts, one for each element of STEM.
  - For their first Nova Award at each program level, Scouts earn the distinctive Nova Award patch. A Scout can then earn three more Nova awards, each one recognized with a separate pi ( $\pi$ ) device that attaches to the patch.
  - Scouts who want to challenge themselves further can pursue the Supernova Award, which includes a medal and certificate. The Supernova awards have more rigorous requirements than the Nova awards, and are designed to motivate youth and recognize more in-depth, advanced achievement in STEM-related activities.

- The wide variety of STEM-related activities makes this an easy program element to incorporate into a unit plan.
  - Look for naturally occurring STEM opportunities in your current program calendar.
  - When planning calendars, suggest ideas that could include STEM activities.
  - Encourage youth who are interested in pursuing the Nova awards to also utilize local community and online resources. These include science centers, museums, school resources, STEM corporations, NASA online, TV shows such as “MythBusters,” and many other resources readily available to Scouts.
- The most important aspect of the STEM program is having fun while exploring topics that interest the Scouts. Whether done as part of an ongoing program or as a special focus, STEM offers an exciting opportunity for Scouts to pursue their own interests within the STEM paradigm.

## WOOD BADGE

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand how Wood Badge is the pinnacle leadership training experience.
2. Identify when the course will be offered and how to prepare for it.
3. Understand that Wood Badge is useful for every Scouting leader, and not just for Boy Scout leaders.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

An ideal presenter would be someone from the district or council training committee, or the district Wood Badge representative or recruiter if your council is set up that way. A presenter should emphasize that Wood Badge is for any Scouting leader, serving in any program.

### Presentation Method

This presentation should be a marketing pitch—explaining how Wood Badge benefits the unit and the leader rather than selling one particular course or course director. The presentation should not include a beading ceremony, as it would run longer than the time window provided for a Big Rock topic and could have a negative impact on potential interest and support. The training committee should place information tables in the midway or gathering area for a representative to answer questions and provide registration forms.

## BSA Reference Materials

No established reference sources are available through the National Council. However, your council or district training committee should have information on courses being offered.

## Presentation Content

- Wood Badge is regarded as the premier leadership-training experience for all adult leaders in Scouting. The course exposes leaders to the various tools and resources for working with youth and adults and gives them practical experiences to use those tools.
- Participants develop a plan for using newly acquired leadership skills in their Scouting positions. Leaders who complete the training are recognized with special Wood Badge recognition emblems.
- Wood Badge is not just for Scoutmasters. The knowledge acquired benefits a leader in any Scouting program. The learning plan you develop is shaped to your current responsibility in Scouting, and thus every volunteer and every position benefits from the training.
- Leaders benefit the most from Wood Badge training that is specific to their current position in Scouting. This is advanced training, and participants can easily feel lost if they are not in the appropriate course. Your council or district training committee will help you find and complete the necessary preparations for attending Wood Badge.
- Part of Wood Badge training involves the outdoors and camping. Camping has always been a part of Scouting at all levels of the program, so properly trained leaders must be prepared for it.
- Completion of the learning plan—which is sometimes referred to as a “ticket”—will require a commitment of time, and a participant should plan for that. This is not simply a “show up and get credit for being trained” course. A volunteer will work with you to guide your completion of the learning plan, but as a participant you must do the work.
- Participants come out of Wood Badge with an increased understanding of Scouting. They take with them leadership skills that they can also use in their workplaces and daily lives.
- Information on upcoming Wood Badge courses offered by the council (or other councils nearby) is available from the district or council training representative or district or council website.

## YOUTH PROTECTION AND BULLYING

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance the BSA places on youth protection.
2. Know that Youth Protection training (YPT) is required for all BSA registered volunteers.
3. Understand the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements related to youth protection and bullying.
4. Be aware of the automatic notification process for Scouters who have not taken YPT as well as the 30-, 60-, and 90-day notifications when a Scouter’s training certification is soon to expire.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

Ideal presenters include the Youth Protection coordinator for the district or council, the Scout executive or district executive, a school psychologist, or a social worker who is either a Scouter or familiar with the Scouting program.

### Presentation Method

- Relate a story.
- Discuss youth protection and bullying.
- Answer questions.

### BSA Reference Materials

- Youth Protection, [www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx)
- Bullying Resources, [www.hoac-bsa.org/bullying-resources](http://www.hoac-bsa.org/bullying-resources)
- The Scout Law and Cybersafety/Cyberbullying, [www.scouting.org/filestore/youthprotection/pdf/100-055\\_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/youthprotection/pdf/100-055_WB.pdf)
- Bullying Awareness (fact sheets and resources), [www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/bullying.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/bullying.aspx)
- Youth Protection and Adult Leadership, [www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss01.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss01.aspx)
- BSA Cyber Chip, [www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/CyberChip.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/CyberChip.aspx)
- Bullying: Prevention and Intervention Tips for Scout Leaders and Parents, [www.scouting.org/filestore/ppt/bullyingprevention.ppt](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/ppt/bullyingprevention.ppt)
- The Troop Bully, <http://scoutingmagazine.org/issues/1009/a-bully.html>

- Scouting and the Bully, <http://scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0203/d-fam.html>
- With BSA's new Cyber Chip, online safety's the point, <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/06/04/with-bsas-new-cyber-chip-online-safety-the-point/>
- Stomp Out Bullying, [www.stompoutbullying.org](http://www.stompoutbullying.org)
- "Preventing bullying and helping kids cope" (on Chief's Corner, CSE Wayne Brock's blog), [www.bsachief.com/?author=0&paged=31](http://www.bsachief.com/?author=0&paged=31)

## Presentation Content

- Tell the following story: A stranger knocks on the front door of a house. When the owner opens the door, the stranger asks if he can borrow the owner's car. The owner quickly refuses the request, stating, "I don't know you, so why should I let you use my car?" The stranger answers, "Each week for the past several months you have entrusted to me something much more valuable to you than your car—I am your son's Scout leader!"
- Knowing the "who" is of vital importance to Scouting—both parents and youth knowing the leaders, which helps build a safe environment for the youth.
- However, it is also important that parents understand the steps taken to ensure Youth Protection standards are maintained. Parents need to engage as partners in the education process—not only training but also the youth requirements—and alert leaders to any concerns.
- Youth Protection Mission Statement: "True youth protection can be achieved only through the focused commitment of everyone in Scouting. It is the mission of Youth Protection volunteers and professionals to work within the Boy Scouts of America to maintain a culture of Youth Protection awareness and safety at the national, regional, area, council, district, and unit levels."
- Youth Protection training is required for all BSA volunteers.
- Registered adult leaders will receive notification if they have not taken YPT, or their YPT has expired or will expire within 30, 60, or 90 days—provided a valid, current email address is on file.
- The *Guide to Safe Scouting*, which is available online, states that "Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults ... have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the unit."
- Why should Scouters be concerned about bullying? Consider the following:

- Seventy-one percent of students report incidents of bullying as a problem at their school.
- More than 3.2 million students are victims of bullying each year.
- One in 10 students drop out of school because of repeated bullying.
- "Eighty-three percent of bullying incidents receive no intervention and continue to happen."—Bullying Facts and Statistics, [www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)

- *"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."*—Desmond Tutu, Anglican Bishop, retired
- *"Bullying is not okay. Period."*—author Jim C. Hines
- *"If you turn and face the other way when someone is being bullied, you might as well be the bully too."*—Anonymous
- *"When people hurt you over and over, think of them like sandpaper. They may scratch and hurt you a bit, but in the end you end up polished and they end up useless."*—Anonymous
- Anti-bullying slogans:
  - Who wants a bully for a friend?
  - Delete cyber bullying. Don't write it, don't forward it.
  - Think twice what you type.
- Answer questions from participants.

## UNIT-TO-UNIT CONNECTIONS

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and advantages of forming positive connections with other units in the district or council.
2. Identify the key players in forming those connections.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

The ideal presenter will be a commissioner with experience in multiple levels of Scouting, particularly one who has served units in both the Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting programs.

## Presentation Method

A brief presentation is the ideal method of delivery since the target audience will be Scouters from all levels of the program. The primary focus should be introducing the idea of forming connections with multiple units in the district and council.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Cub Scout Leader Book*, No. 33221
- *Webelos Den Leader Guide*, No. 37003
- *Troop Leader Guidebook*, No. 33009
- *Administration of Commissioner Service*, No. 34501

## Presentation Content

- Forming and building positive connections with various units in the district and council promote the opportunity for units to engage in fellowship activities and to share experiences.
- Engaging in multi-unit activities promotes awareness that in Scouting, we are involved in an organization that is larger than just the local unit, district, or council.
- Building positive connections with multiple units provides opportunities to borrow and share unique, specialized equipment that can increase the scope of the Scouting experience for members in all units.
- Forming positive connections between multiple troops and packs facilitates the troop visitation process required of Webelos Scouts to advance in the Cub Scouting program.
- The familiarity established through positive unit-to-unit connections facilitates more effective choices and a smoother transition for Webelos Scouts when crossing over to a Boy Scout troop.
- Building relationships with multiple units provides for greater opportunities for shared resources in developing programs and planning service projects.
- Positive unit connections allow for mutual unit support during work on large-scale projects such as Eagle Scout service projects.
- Building and maintaining unit-to-unit connections helps to facilitate the process of newer leaders learning from more experienced leaders through interaction and discussion.
- Positive connections between units can provide mutual support to units attending broad-scope training events such as Wood Badge and Powder Horn courses.

- Building positive connections between units of the district and council reinforces the fourth point of the Scout Law: A Scout is Friendly.
- Helping boys at all levels of the program to understand that they are part of an organization larger than their neighborhood is an important learning point of the Scouting program.

## Additional Points

- Some unit leaders may hesitate to form relationships with other units for reasons such as “We are all competing for boys from the same recruiting pool” or “If a boy decides he wants to transfer to another troop or pack, it will impact our numbers.” It is important to point out that not every unit is the best fit for every boy. The important thing is to keep a boy in the program and in a unit where he fits best.
- While some unit leaders may be reluctant to share equipment and resources with other units, sharing program experiences and ideas can make every unit program stronger and retain more boys in the program. It can also help units build new program strengths that they are otherwise unable to access.
- Highlight how unit commissioners can introduce different unit leaders to help build connections between units—particularly as a means of meeting needs identified through unit visits and conversations with leaders.

## BEYOND THE ARROW OF LIGHT

### Time Available

10-20 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the changes to the Cub Scout advancement program and how it relates specifically to the Arrow of Light.
2. Understand the advantages of the new Arrow of Light program and how it relates to Boy Scouting.
3. Understand that the Arrow of Light is not an end point but, rather, a key step in the Scouting program.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

The presenter should be a member of the district or council advancement committee or an experienced unit-serving commissioner who is well versed in both the Cub Scout and Boy Scout advancement programs.

## Presentation Method

The recommended method of presentation is a guided discussion with the support of handouts and a prepared flipchart that highlights the key points of the Arrow of Light requirements.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088
- *Boy Scout Requirements*, No. 33216
- 2015–2016 Cub Scout Program Transition Information, available at [www.scouting.org/Home/programupdates.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Home/programupdates.aspx)
- *Webelos Handbook*, No. 33452

## Presentation Content

- Arrow of Light should no longer be viewed as “the Eagle Scout of Cub Scouting,” but now as the final preparation for Boy Scouting and as a gateway to developing an interest in the outdoors that will continue through each level of the Scouting program.
- Recent changes to the Cub Scouting program and Cub Scout advancement have led to significant updates in the Arrow of Light requirements.
  - Boys who join Cub Scouting in the fifth grade can work directly on the Arrow of Light requirements after receiving the Bobcat badge. This allows them to better prepare for the Boy Scouting program.

- The shift toward more outdoor activities, especially in the Arrow of Light and Webelos elective adventures, can stimulate interest in high-adventure opportunities that could eventually carry a youth beyond Boy Scouting and into the Venturing program.
- The new Cub Scout advancement program, and the Arrow of Light in particular, will help troops receive new Scouts who are well prepared for the challenges ahead of them.

## Additional Points

- Unit leaders at the Cub Scout level are now probably very familiar with the changes in the Cub Scout advancement program. However, they may not be sufficiently informed about changes to the Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements.
- Handouts should highlight the Arrow of Light requirements, especially Scouting Adventure. Also focus attention on the Castaway elective to illustrate changes in the Arrow of Light program.
- Scoutmasters may have further questions after the presentation of this Big Rock topic. Use the opportunity to promote the connections between leaders at the pack and troop levels, and to develop unit-to-unit ties.

# **Boy Scout Interest Topics**

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# Chaplain's Aide

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the requirements for the chaplain's aide position.
2. Describe the roles of the chaplain's aide in troop program operations.
3. Identify resources for holding interfaith worship services at Scouting events.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

The ideal presenter is a troop chaplain or minister who knows the roles and purpose of the chaplain's aide and how the position can lead to better troop programming. Alternative presenters include a Scoutmaster with an effective chaplain's aide program in his unit or the district religious emblems coordinator.

## Presentation Method

The presentation should include a review of the chaplain's aide roles from BSA literature. It should also include a group discussion about interfaith services, and when a single-religion service might be appropriate. Copies of related BSA literature should be available to show unit leaders.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Boy Scout Handbook* description of "reverent."
- The Roles of the Troop Chaplain and the Chaplain Aide, [www.scouting.org/Media/Relationships/ChaplainRole.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Media/Relationships/ChaplainRole.aspx)
- Manual for Chaplain Aides and Chaplains, [www.scouting.org/Media/Relationships/ManualforChaplainsandAides.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Media/Relationships/ManualforChaplainsandAides.aspx)
- Duty to God religious emblems brochure, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-879\\_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-879_WB.pdf)
- *A Scout Is Reverent*, No. 34248
- *In Our Own Way*, No. 34612
- Gironde, David C. *Duty to God Handbook*. 1999, Grand Canyon Council.
- Nehrbass, Dan. *Beyond Kum Ba Ya: A Resource Guide for the Chaplain Aide*, Boy Scouts of America. 2008, CreateSpace.

## Presentation Content

- In its Charter and Bylaws, the BSA maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God.
- The *Boy Scout Handbook* has this to say about reverence:
  - "A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others."
  - "Your family and religious leaders teach you about God and the ways you can serve. You can do your duty to God by following the wisdom of those teachings and by defending the rights of others to practice their own beliefs."
- From the BSA Declaration of Religious Principle: "The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. . . . [The BSA], therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member; but is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. . . . Only persons willing to subscribe to this Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of membership."
- Baden-Powell said: "No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion. . . . Religion seems a very simple thing: First, love and serve God; second, love and serve your neighbor."
- The 12th point of the Scout Law is Reverent. Every Scout has a responsibility to be reverent. The BSA has created two leadership positions to help Scouts meet their obligation to be reverent: the chaplain and the chaplain's aide.
- A chaplain's aide who does well in the role will also complete requirement 8 of the Communication merit badge and requirement 2 of the Public Speaking merit badge.
- A youth's service as a chaplain's aide can apply toward the "positions of responsibility" requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. The responsibilities of this youth position include encouraging the spiritual growth and awareness of each member of the troop and assisting the troop chaplain (and adult committee members).
- Ideally, the chaplain's aide should work with an adult member of the clergy or lay minister who agrees to mentor the aide and who understands and agrees with the BSA's nonsectarian religious principles, so that all Scouts are included in religious observances conducted by the chaplain and the chaplain's aide.

- For units chartered by a religious organization, the adult should be the head of the chartered organization or someone designated by the head of the organization.
- Part B of David Gironda's *Duty to God Handbook* (1999, Grand Canyon Council) gives excellent tips for training a chaplain's aide and includes a handy checklist for the roles of the chaplain's aide.
- Qualifications for the position of chaplain's aide are:
  - The chaplain's aide must be mature and sensitive and have earned the respect and trust of his fellow Scouts.
  - The chaplain's aide must be at least a First Class Scout.
  - The chaplain's aide must have received or be working on the requirements leading to the age-appropriate religious emblem for his faith.
  - **Note:** The two [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org) pages in the reference section differ in the use of "must" versus "should" for the last two qualifications. Either way, it is intended that the chaplain's aide be a person of faith who is old enough to be mature and able to communicate well to other Scouts.
- The chaplain's aide is intended to play an active role in the troop operations, as follows:
  - Participate in patrol leaders' council planning sessions to ensure that spiritual emphasis is included in troop activities.
  - Working with the troop chaplain, plan and then lead an appropriate prayer before or after meals.
  - Lead vespers at the end of troop meetings and on campouts before the Scouts go to bed. It can be as simple as leading the Scout Vespers song and saying the accompanying benediction.
  - Work with the troop chaplain to plan, and assist in conducting, appropriate religious observances for all members during weekend troop campouts.
  - Help the troop chaplain (or other adult) plan, and assist in conducting, an annual Scout-oriented religious observance, preferably during Scouting Anniversary Week in February.
  - Present an overview of the religious emblems program at troop meetings at least once per year.
  - Help the troop chaplain (or other adult) recognize troop members who receive their religious emblems, perhaps during a troop court of honor; even if the church or other religious body also holds an award ceremony.
- A chaplain's aide should encourage every Scout to earn the religious emblems for his faith.
  - This exhortation will be more meaningful if the chaplain's aide has earned his own religious emblem or is at least working toward earning it.
  - The chaplain's aide is NOT intended to lead other Scouts in earning religious emblems. That is the role of an adult counselor selected by the church or other religious body.
  - The Duty to God brochure shows the religious emblems for all faiths that have adopted them, and gives information on where to order workbooks. This brochure enables each Scout to obtain useful information about his own faith's religious emblems without requiring the chaplain's aide to know all of the available awards.
  - The chaplain's aide should advise other Scouts when local churches or other religious bodies offer religious emblems classes or offer to counsel Scouts of their faith.
- A chaplain's aide is intended to lead his unit in religious observances when on campouts.
  - The BSA intends that these religious services be welcoming to every Scout. "Know your audience" applies here.
  - When a troop has Scouts from a variety of faiths or denominations, care must be taken not to offend any Scout during prayers or religious services.
  - If the group consists of members with mixed beliefs, or if the beliefs of the group are unknown, then prayers must be of an interfaith content.
  - When all Scouts are of the same faith (are members of the same church, for instance), then it is OK to conduct a religious service that follows the teachings of that specific faith.
  - It is acceptable to have a nonsectarian religious observance that speaks to every Scout's faith, followed by a second observance that is for a specific faith or denomination. Care must be taken to alert Scouts when shifting from one to the other.
- The resource section of this topic lists several guides that contain prayers, songs, and other elements of an interfaith service.
  - The troop should invest in at least one of these resources for use by a chaplain's aide who has not yet become proficient at leading religious observances without a prayer book at hand.

- These resources also provide guidance for services that are nonsectarian, so a chaplain's aide doesn't feel the need to fall back on his own religion for the content of the service.
- Unit leaders should be encouraged to discuss how they use chaplain's aides and share successful religious observances with other unit leaders.

- Close by sharing known upcoming classes for religious emblems offered by churches and other religious bodies in the district or in neighboring districts, so the unit leaders can give this information to their chaplain's aides for sharing with the other Scouts in the troop.
  - It can be helpful to have a religious emblems tab on the district website under which fliers promoting upcoming religious emblems classes can be posted.
  - Churches or other religious bodies in the district known to offer religious emblems can also be listed.

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## High Adventure

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### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand BSA high-adventure opportunities.
2. Share ideas about local high-adventure options, including troop-planned outings.
3. Develop sample itineraries as local examples.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

A local unit leader or experienced high-adventure Scouter is ideal. The local camping committee may also be an excellent resource.

### Presentation Method

This content works best as an interactive discussion with initial content to start the conversation. Then leaders can add ideas and information relevant to the local area.

### BSA Reference Materials

- Scouting High Adventure Bases, [www.scouting.org/HighAdventure.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/HighAdventure.aspx)

### Community Resources and Materials

- Information or links to local high-adventure options or places that can facilitate a high-adventure activity
- Local parks and adventure guides
- Local outfitters and other resources as available

### Presentation Content

- The Boy Scouts of America offers four high-adventure bases with superb programming options for Scouts age 14 and above:
  - Florida Sea Base offers sailing, fishing, snorkeling, kayaking, and scuba diving.
  - Northern Tier provides canoeing, fishing, and winter expeditions.

- Philmont Scout Ranch delivers backpacking, climbing, shooting sports, and horseback trek options.
- The Summit Bechtel Reserve, the BSA's newest base, provides a growing array of camping, climbing, shooting, and zip-lining challenges.
- Each base has its own selection system for assigning available trek slots. The local council and each base can provide details about the selection process.
  - Upon selection, important details such as deposits, participant fees, health forms, and logistics will be sent to the tour leader contact.
  - Some bases will require extensive travel needs, which should be planned into the trip itinerary. Pay special attention to any items that may have travel restrictions, including most outdoor cooking systems, etc.
  - Each base requires specialized gear unique to the adventures offered. Some gear is also available for lending or rental. Inquire in advance about these options.
  - Note that additional physical requirements and training certifications may be required, such as weight limits and advanced first-aid certifications. Additional portions of the BSA Health and Medical Record may also be required, including a physician evaluation.
- Discuss local trips and opportunities for council contingents to attend these bases, as available.
- High adventure is also readily accessible through unit-planned events—sometimes called “roll your own” high adventure.
  - Trips may take advantage of local resources and options, often at very reasonable costs for a week or more of events and activities that the Scouts will remember for a lifetime.
  - The *Guide to Safe Scouting* and any BSA safety policies applicable to a planned activity still apply.

- Any tour operator, guide service, or outfitter should be carefully screened well in advance for safety practices, experience working with Scout-aged groups, and knowledge of BSA policies applicable to the activity.
- Also be sure to confirm any third-party service has appropriate insurance coverage in place prior to planning any excursion, and confirm that the insurance information is still current at the time of the trip or event.
- “Roll your own” adventures can include a wide variety of experiences, from traditional outdoor programs like backpacking, climbing, canoeing, or whitewater to specialized experiences supporting interests in astronomy, aviation, Indian lore, metalworking, or any number of other pursuits.
- For high-adventure trips of a week or more, Scouts can take advantage of many opportunities farther from home than a typical weekend event. They can often integrate several different adventure themes into a trip, if desired.
- Discuss local high-adventure options within range of the district. Include nearby council facilities as well as opportunities that may be up to two or three days of travel away.
- As an option, after discussing and potentially sharing itineraries from prior high-adventure trips, including “roll your own” excursions that units have pursued, break the roundtable into small groups to plan a sample weeklong skeleton itinerary going in different directions from the local district. This can demonstrate the wide variety of interests and opportunities available to local units.

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## Historic Trails

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### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand why Scouts hike historic trails.
- Identify sources for local and national historic trails.
- Understand the difference between the BSA Historic Trail Award and 50-Miler Award, and “normal” historic trails.
- Organize and lead a hike safely.
- Create a historic trail if there aren’t any local trails.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

A Scouter who has hiked historic trails and knows about local trails is an ideal presenter. The presenter should be able to discuss how hiking relates to Boy Scout advancement programs and trail safety.

### Presentation Method

The presentation should include a list of historic trails located in the local council or nearby councils. The location, length, theme, and degree of difficulty of each trail should be described. Printed scans of available trail patches to show participants may improve interest level. Discuss the BSA Historic Trail Award and how it differs from a historic trail patch. Discuss ideas for a new historic trail, and considerations involved in creating one.

### BSA Reference Materials

- Local council historic trail list and award requirements
- BSA-approved historic trails state-by-state list
- National Park Service—National Trails System, [www.nps.gov/nts/](http://www.nps.gov/nts/)
- BSA Historic Trail Award, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34408.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34408.pdf)
- BSA 50-Miler Award, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-067\\_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-067_WB.pdf)

### Community Resources and Materials

- Historical society list of significant local places
- Schedule of local heritage events.
- Local “volksmarch” groups dedicated to hiking as a public fitness event.

### Presentation Content

- Physical fitness and citizenship development are two of the three aims of Scouting. Outdoor programs and advancement are two of the eight methods of Scouting. Hiking historic trails achieves each of these aims and methods.
- Hiking can be an exciting component of a well-rounded outdoor program when properly planned and executed. It can improve a Scout’s stamina and physical fitness. Scouts will learn local or national history in the process of hiking historic trails.
- Boy Scouts must complete a number of patrol or troop activities—which can include historic trail hikes—to earn the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. Trails of increasing length can help to ease younger Scouts into the joys of hiking without overwhelming them.

- The Hiking merit badge can be earned by hiking several historic trails of the proper length.
- A historic trail gives purpose to a hike beyond the physical effort needed to walk, and this will heighten a Scout's interest. Since the Hiking merit badge requires a minimum of six hikes, historic trails can prevent boredom by providing new sites to see and different terrains.
- Historic trails usually include a colorful patch and perhaps other awards for those who answer a trail questionnaire and complete the trail. They are mementos of the event and can be an incentive for Scouts to hike historic trails.
- There is no single type or length of "historic trail." Some examples of trails are described below.
  - Historic trails can commemorate local events (e.g., battles that took place nearby or a civil rights march), include local historic sites (e.g., early public buildings and residences), or connect several sites associated with a significant person.
  - Each council should have a list of BSA historic trails in the council or the state, and the questionnaires required to earn any available trail awards.
    - If your council has one or more BSA historic trails, the presenter should describe them to units that have not yet hiked them, and encourage every unit to try one.
    - Tell where each trail is located and describe the theme or highlights of each.
    - Indicate whether each trail is suitable for all ages or only older Scouts.
    - Show an example of the patch or other award(s) available for completing the trail.
    - Ask units that have hiked the trail to give their views on ways to make the experience a positive one.
  - The BSA national website maintains a list of authorized historic trails by state. The BSA national list was being updated when this topic was written, but cached versions can be found online.
    - This list is useful when the local council does not have a historic trail within its borders.
    - These trails can be used to supplement local trails for even more variety.
    - An out-of-council or out-of-state trail can become a component of a weeklong summer trip in that area or serve as a destination of its own.
  - Historic trails can be found at most national battlefield parks and many national historical parks or monuments managed by the National Park Service (NPS).
    - The NPS websites include information about available hikes and awards.
    - A handout with a list of nearby NPS trails will be useful for unit leaders planning historic trail hikes.
- The National Park Service has a system of very long-distance trails called the National Trails System.
  - The NPS website has a map showing all 29 of the trails. Every state, including Alaska and Hawaii, either has a portion of one these trails or is near one.
  - Since these trails can be 1,000 miles long, or more, there are many places to begin and end a hike. Scouts can hike any length of these trails that they desire. For hikes intended to last more than one day, look for a segment with available camping facilities.
  - Many of these trails do not have a trail questionnaire, so Scouts may not receive an educational component from the trail without doing pre-hike research on the purpose of the trail and how their chosen segment fits that purpose.
  - A weeklong hike on one these trails can qualify for the BSA 50 Miler Award. This award requires five days on the trail plus 10 hours of conservation service that can be done at home after the hike.
- Some councils sponsor an annual heritage hike as part of a local heritage celebration.
  - The U.S. Grant Heritage festival in Galena, Illinois, the Circus Heritage festival in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois, are examples of such hikes organized by councils.
  - These hikes occur once a year, on the date of the festival, so careful attention to the calendar is required to register and attend. Private property that is open for visits as part of the festival may not be open to visitors at other times.
- Your city hall or local historical society may have a list of historic trails created by members of the society for civic pride. Feel free to use these resources even if they don't have a commemorative patch, or create a patch if you want.
  - Some towns may have a heritage weekend sponsored by the town or the historical society. This festival may include visits to local historical sites or houses on the National Register of Historic Places. Even if there is no patch, walking between these sites is a convenient way for Scouts to learn about their hometown while engaging in a patrol or troop activity.
  - The city or historical society also should have a map with a list of historic sites that can be made into a permanent historic trail of your own, if there are no existing historic trails.

- Many BSA historic trails were created as Eagle Scout projects, when there were no existing local trails. Units should keep this in mind as an idea for a Scout looking for a special Eagle project.
  - See the Tips for Creating a New Historic Trail supplement to this topic for suggestions on how to create a historic trail. These tips were written by a Scouter who designed a trail that linked several state historical society sites with a common theme; a patch was created for trail participants.
- The BSA Historic Trail Award is not related to any specific historic trail. It can be earned while hiking a historic trail but has its own extra set of requirements that include:
  - Studying about the purpose of the trail
  - Spending two days and one night along or near the trail
  - A trail maintenance or improvement project, or participation in a public event related to the trail (such as a pageant or a reenactment)
  - Trail maintenance projects must be approved by the landowner.
- Remember to file a tour and activity plan if hiking a historic trail where distance or other factors require the plan.
- Call ahead to make sure that the trail is open for use (time of year, recent weather events, etc.), and check the hours of operation of sites that must be visited along the trail.
- Practice hike safety at all times.
  - Wear proper footwear for the terrain. Even city sidewalks require well-cushioned soles to avoid painful foot problems.
  - Make sure everyone remains hydrated.
  - Match trail difficulty and length to the abilities of your Scouts. Hike shorter trails to build stamina before hiking longer ones.
  - Scheduled rest stops (i.e., 10 minutes every hour) will reduce exhaustion and straggling. Straggling can make Scouts feel inferior to others, and also makes proper adult supervision more difficult.
- Practice Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles.
  - Make sure not to litter.
  - Leave historic artifacts where they are, just as they were left by other Scouts who preceded you.
  - Avoid all forms of vandalism. Remember the adults who toppled a rock formation and the consequences of that action for them and for Scouting.

- More than one BSA trail that crossed private property has been closed due to misbehavior by Scouts.

- Your city may have a local “volksmarch” group that conducts noncompetitive public group hikes. This can be a fun way to meet people who share the joy of hiking.

### Tips for Creating a New Historic Trail

Have you ever wished there was a historic trail connecting sites where you live? Have you ever thought about creating one? This paper is intended to provide tips that can help you make that dream a reality.

There are four primary considerations in making a successful historic trail:

- Geography
- Content
- Safety
- Property rights

Each consideration is discussed below in theory and in the context of the decision-making that went into the creation of a specific historic trail. Then two additional considerations are discussed—the BSA Historic Trail Award and handling trail awards.

### Geography

In order to have a manageable trail, the sites must be close enough to each other that they can be walked or biked for the Hiking or Cycling merit badges, and so that visitors will not spend an unreasonable length of time getting from one to the other. You don’t want the trail to be so long and so scattered that people give up halfway or decide not to go there at all because it is too spread out.

For example, this was a real issue when planning a trail to commemorate the 1862 U.S.–Dakota War. The war took place all over southern Minnesota, with sites in nine counties. The trail cannot encompass this geographic range and be successful due to the traveling time required to visit all the sites. At best, the trail can include only a small number of sites that are located reasonably close to each other. At least a dozen sites were researched to determine the distance between them, which led to focusing the trail on three sites that are only 10 miles apart: the Lower Sioux Agency, the Birch Coulee battlefield, and the Morton official state monuments. Their proximity enables Scouts to visit all three sites in one day of hiking so they can earn the trail patch and have the hike count toward their Hiking merit badge. An optional fourth site was included for purposes of content (see below).

## Content

In addition to selecting sites that are close enough together, each one needs significant content to make the transit time worthwhile. There's nothing worse than the "We came all that way for this?" feeling when you walk or cycle between the sites. This is an essential consideration for a trail where many historically significant buildings used to be before they were torn down for a shopping center, housing project, etc. The building itself would have been interesting to see. But the new shopping center? Not so much.

When creating a trail questionnaire, be careful selecting questions about museum displays because such displays can and do change. It is frustrating to trail participants to spend time looking for an item, only to find it has been removed from view. The trail organizer should recheck the trail from time to time and update the questionnaire as needed.

In the case of the U.S.–Dakota trail, the Lower Sioux Agency Museum has an excellent and very educational summary of the causes and effects of the war. The Birch Coulee battlefield nearby is very compact, featuring many interpretive markers with information about the different ways the whites and Dakotas fought the war. The two state monuments at Morton were added partly to round out the 10 miles so the trail would qualify for the Hiking merit badge, and partly because they remind us of the prejudice against Indians that was so prevalent at the time they were erected. These three locations have the content essential for a trail about the U.S.–Dakota War.

### Which sites were not selected as essential?

- Fort Ridgely was considered by both sides as the key to winning or losing the war. If the fort fell, there were no other soldiers nearby to stop the Dakotas from reclaiming more land and killing more settlers than they did. If it didn't fall, it could be used as a supply and reinforcement base for counterattacks against the Dakota anywhere in southern Minnesota—which is exactly what happened. Fort Ridgely was the site of intense fighting in two separate battles, about which there are several educational markers. There are also several monuments in the cemetery adjacent to the fort. Two of the original buildings are still standing and the foundations of the others are still there (along with photos of some of the original buildings). So content-wise, Fort Ridgely State Park is right up there with the Lower Sioux Agency Museum building exhibits. But even with all that great content, the trail questionnaire is clear that Fort Ridgely should only be visited if the Lower Sioux Agency Museum is closed on a particular day, for three reasons:

- Fort Ridgely has less information than the museum on the causes of the war.

- The fort is 20 miles from Morton, which is too far to be walked or biked in the same day with a tour of Birch Coulee and the outside displays at the Lower Sioux Agency.

- The narrow road between Morton and Fort Ridgely is unsafe for hiking or biking. Taking a car between the Lower Sioux Agency Museum and Fort Ridgely is also recommended because the two sites are so far apart.

- Why was New Ulm, Minnesota, eliminated from consideration? Two reasons: geography and content. New Ulm is 40 miles from the Lower Sioux Agency and Birch Coulee. That is almost an hour's drive and impossible to hike. Also, almost all of the historically significant buildings and battle sites were demolished during the last 150 years. There is a wonderful state monument and plaques on the walls of modern buildings describing what used to be there—but there is nothing that is worth driving a long way to see.
- The Etoile du Nord Trail through downtown St. Paul, Minnesota, was designed before some significant re-development projects took place along the trail. Several buildings were repurposed, making it impossible to determine their original use, and displays were moved to new locations across town. Consequently, the trail fell out of use. An update took place in 2007, with several items removed from the original trail questionnaire and several new ones added to replace them. Nearly eight years later, one more small item has been removed from view at one of the locations, so it is time for another update.

### Safety

It should go without saying that the safety of Scouts hiking or biking a historic trail is a major concern. No leader wants a Scout getting hurt because a trail is poorly designed.

The U.S.–Dakota War trail includes stretches along three roads. One is a heavily traveled highway, and the other two are less-used country roads. There is also a stretch on city streets in a small rural town. The highway has broad shoulders that are safe to walk or bike along, assuming the Scouts and their leaders take the normal safety precautions—proceeding in single file, keeping to the shoulder on the proper side of the road. The country roads have narrower shoulders that are also safe to walk or bike on if the normal safety precautions are taken.

By contrast, the trail brochure advises taking a car to visit Fort Ridgely. That's partly because of the distance, and partly because the heavily traveled U.S. highway connecting Morton and Fort Ridgely has several stretches with narrow shoulders. There are tall cliffs close to the road on one side where cuts in hillsides were made for the highway and drop-offs on the other side, making it an unsafe route for bikers and hikers.

## Property Rights

Make sure that your trail doesn't require Scouts to trespass on anyone's land. The best way is to stick to public places and public roads. If the trail would need to cross private property, make sure to get the landowner's permission and include a registration process that tells you which units have gone through the property, in case of littering or other unacceptable behavior. Trails have been closed after incidents on private property, and Scouting does not need that kind of reputation, not to mention the loss of an interesting trail that took considerable effort to organize and promote.

## BSA Historic Trail Award

This award requires two days and one night on a historic trail, plus either a service project for the benefit of the trail or an educational event in conjunction with another group. Some trails are good candidates for those requirements and some are not; keep this in mind when designing a trail. Key considerations include:

- Is the trail long enough?
- Is there camping nearby?
- Is there a community or historical reenactment group that performs somewhere along the trail?

The Northwest Voyageurs Brigade Trail (Voyageurs Area Council) seems to have been designed with the Historic Trail Award in mind. The trail includes three options for canoeing and portaging along rivers and across lakes used by Minnesota fur traders in the 1700s and early 1800s. A fourth route offers a 9-mile hike, and at three sites along the trail, costumed reenactors show the public what life was like in the old fur-trading days. The Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base, along one of the trail segments, is a place where Scouts can engage in reenactments.

## Trail Awards

Most historic trails offer an award of some sort, usually a colorful patch. In the past, it was common for trails to offer a patch, a medal, a neckerchief, a neckerchief slide, and perhaps pins to go on the patch or medal if the trail was hiked more than once or if optional segments were hiked. Today, most trails offer only a patch.

Why is that? Medals are more expensive to make and stock than patches, and often don't sell very well due to the cost. Pins are also expensive and can require administration. Neckerchief slides tend to get lost too easily, so parents seem reluctant to pay for something their Scout may never use.

When designing a trail patch, here are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Check with your local council service center and Scout shop manager before making plans that hinge on their involvement. They may not have the staff to check for completed questionnaires. Or they may not be willing to invest funds in the trail patch or to collect payment and forward it to the owner of patches left with them on consignment.
- How many patches should you order in the first run? To keep costs down, it may be tempting to order enough patches to earn the maximum quantity discount. But trails often take quite a while to become well known, so it may be a better use of funds to make periodic reorders than to sit on hundreds of patches for a long time.
- Who will pay for the initial stocking order and reorders—the local council or the individual who designs the trail and the patch? A council with limited discretionary funds may not be inclined to devote several hundred dollars toward the purchase of patches for a new trail that may or may not see frequent use. The Scout shop manager is under pressure from the Supply Group to increase inventory turns, and may be unwilling to invest in the patches.
- Who is going to administer the awards? This means receiving the completed trail questionnaire (if there is one), making sure the questions are answered correctly, and mailing awards to recipients (if that is an option). Will it be the local council service center? The Scout shop? The trail organizer? Staffing levels at the local council service center or Scout shop may dictate the answer.
- How will you promote the trail? Will the local council host the trail brochure (with award-ordering information) on its website? Or must the trail organizer create a website for this purpose? If the council website is chosen, the trail organizer must be vigilant to ensure changes to the site don't accidentally break links to the brochure. If this does happen, the organizer should work courteously with the council to have the links repaired.

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# Leadership Within the Community

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand that the development of leaders is a critical part of Scouting.
2. View leadership as an activity, not a role or position.
3. See that there are opportunities for anyone seeking to “move the needle” on a challenge within their community.
4. Understand that they must share responsibility for acting together in pursuit of the common good.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

District chairs make ideal presenters for this topic if they are well experienced in leadership. Other good candidates are community members who have demonstrated the ability to encourage others to take on leadership roles.

## Presentation Method

Start with opening remarks from the designated presenters. Then the session can be opened to discussion with participants. The objective is to build understanding about how adults and youth can be developed as effective leaders in their communities.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *District Operations Handbook*, No. 34739
- Chrislip, David D., and Ed O'Malley. *For the Common Good: Redefining Civic Leadership*. 2013, Kansas Leadership Center ([www.kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://www.kansasleadershipcenter.org))

## Presentation Content

- **Intervene skillfully.** The activity of leadership starts with a personal intervention. Nothing happens until someone takes initiative. Making conscious choices about whether, when, and how to intervene most skillfully will help you maximize the likelihood of progress.
- **Make conscious choices.** Most of us react to situations in unconscious, instinctual, or habitual ways. Becoming aware of these tendencies can help us make conscious choices to intervene in different, more effective ways.
  - How do you commonly react (your “default mode”) when faced with leadership challenges?
  - In a given situation, what is the purpose of your intervention?
  - What kind of intervention from you might help make some progress? How would this compare to or contrast with your usual response?

- **Raise the heat.** Leadership challenges, especially those in the civic arena, are filled with potential drama. If done properly, focusing everyone’s attention on the disagreement can help “raise the heat” in a constructive way. What is your default?
  - Do you typically lower the heat, thereby avoiding conflict?
  - Do you raise the heat to a level appropriate for getting the work done?
  - Or do you raise the heat so much that it keeps people from engaging productively with each other?
  - Given your diagnosis of the level of heat in a particular situation, what could you do to raise or lower the heat so some work gets done?
- **Share the work.** Sharing the work lightens everyone’s load.
  - Do you tend to go it alone (Lone Ranger syndrome)?
  - Do you rely on others to exercise leadership?
  - Or do you mobilize others to help do the work? What could you do in a given situation to accomplish this?
- **Hold to purpose.** Clarity of purpose helps to orient and guide interventions.
  - What helps or hinders your capacity to stay attuned to your purpose?
  - In a given situation, what might throw you off from your purpose?
  - How could you reorient yourself to your purpose and “get back on track”?
- **Speak from the heart.** When we communicate our care and concern honestly, we can help to energize others.
  - What makes it easier for you to speak from the heart?
  - What makes it harder for you?
  - In a given situation, how could you share your concerns in a way that also shows respect and appreciation for others?
- **Act experimentally.** There is no certainty about how to make progress on adaptive challenges. This means that one must anticipate the unexpected and be prepared to improvise and experiment.
  - What keeps you from being more experimental in the way you exercise leadership?
  - In a given situation, what experimental interventions might you undertake in order to make progress?

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# Tough Scout Challenge

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the concept of the Tough Scout Challenge and the situational leadership challenge.
2. Describe the use of the Tough Scout Challenge as the interpatrol activity portion of a troop meeting.
3. Help develop activities and find resources for a future Tough Scout Challenge.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

The ideal presenter is a Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster who has experience in youth leader training and has completed the Fundamentals of Training, the Trainers EDGE, and, ideally, the Wood Badge course. Experience with COPE or other challenge activities that can be done at the unit level is also desirable.

## Presentation Method

The presentation should include a description of the Tough Scout Challenge and the situational leadership challenge, and how these activity models can help develop youth leaders and foster patrol-level team development.

The discussion should be followed by a sample Tough Scout Challenge that is presented to and completed by the Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters at roundtable.

Handouts listing different Tough Scout Challenge ideas based on local resources should be provided to all participants.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Belay On*, No. 430-500
- Troop Meeting Plan, [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34425.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34425.pdf)

## Community Resources and Materials

- “Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?” (National Geographic Channel series), <http://channel.national-geographic.com/are-you-tougher-than-a-boy-scout/>
- <http://toughscout.com> (National Geographic website that supports Boy Scout recruiting)

## Presentation Content

- The Tough Scout Challenge concept is intended to capitalize on the National Geographic Channel series “Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout?”
- The TV show can serve as inspiration for local unit and district events that challenge youth to demonstrate mental and physical fitness, character strength, leadership skills, teamwork, and planning.
- The Tough Scout Challenge is based on the concept of situational leadership—a scenario in which there are several potential solutions but none that are clearly “right” or “wrong.” Situational leadership challenges have been used in other leadership development arenas with great success due to the flexibility of the process.
  - The overall intent of the Tough Scout Challenge is to build stronger teams and develop more effective Scouting leaders.
  - The Tough Scout Challenge can be incorporated into district and council events, and used to develop patrol and troop teamwork and unity.
- The BSA “low COPE” program can serve as a starting point for developing a Tough Scout Challenge. Appropriate obstacle courses may also allow Scouts to test their knowledge and capabilities while working as a team. Every attempt should be made to incorporate Scouting skills.
- In a troop meeting setting, the Tough Scout Challenge should fit the planned completion time of 15 minutes for an interpatrol activity. This makes the “game time” of the troop meeting a useful leadership development and team-building experience.
- Longer format challenges could be used for a campout event or a district camporee.
- Keep the equipment required for each challenge to a minimum so all patrols can attempt the challenge at the same time. If this is not possible, the patrol attempting the challenge should do so in a location where other patrols cannot observe them; this way, each patrol can develop a unique strategy for addressing the task.
  - Each patrol must complete the challenge according to standards you provide. There should be no specific “right” or “wrong” way to complete the task, and in some cases, the task will not be completed successfully. The challenge should be a controlled opportunity for patrol leaders and other youth leaders to exercise leadership methods and skills, and to develop problem-solving and team-leading strategies.

- Once the Tough Scout Challenge is completed—or the time limit has been reached—the patrols should be reassembled and a post-activity review should be conducted. In this review, you should:
  - Reveal the intent of the challenge.
  - Allow each patrol leader to explain how his patrol addressed the challenge.
  - Share information and feedback to help develop leadership.
- If time allows, roundtable participants can break into small teams and create sample Tough Scout Challenges to share with the whole group. Give each team a particular Scout skill to build their challenge around—but remind them that challenges are not just about skill, but also about leadership, preparation, and decision-making.

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## Troop Guide and Instructor Roles

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### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and purposes of the troop guide and instructor positions, and the differences between them.
2. Understand the responsibilities of each position.
3. Work with their senior patrol leaders to help troop guides and instructors be more effective in their roles.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

A unit leader who has experience working with troop guides and instructors in the intended manner would be an effective presenter. The district training chair could be another presenter.

### Presentation Method

The presentation should include the position-specific duties of the troop guide and the troop instructor. Discuss the role each of them plays in unit operations and as a friend to new Scouts. As an example, highlight the role of a troop guide in a Wood Badge course to put it in a context that participants will recognize. Have unit leaders share their experiences using troop guides and instructors, and discuss tips for better performance by Scouts who serve in those positions.

### BSA Reference Materials

- *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*, No. 32501
- Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops: Position Description Cards, No. 30521
- *Troop Leader Guidebook*, No. 33009

### Presentation Content

- Leadership development is one of the eight methods of Scouting.

- Troop guides and instructors are key unit leaders when properly selected and trained. Knowing and properly implementing the roles of the troop guide and troop instructor will help them achieve the desired results in their positions of responsibility.
- Scouts whose outside schedules may keep them from attending meetings and outings and performing their duties should not be selected as troop guides and instructors.
- Qualities of a good troop guide or instructor:
  - Sets a good example.
  - Wears the Scout uniform correctly and enthusiastically.
  - Lives by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
  - Shows Scout spirit by attending as many unit events and meetings as he can.

### Troop Instructor

- Responsibilities of a troop instructor:
  - Teaches basic Scouting skills in troops and patrols.
  - Teaches outdoor skills to new Scouts so they can earn First Class in the first year. (Advancement is one of the eight methods of Scouting.)
  - Teaches outdoor skills to new Scouts so they can perform better on outings. (Outdoor programs is one of the eight methods of Scouting.)
- To prepare well in advance for each teaching assignment, a troop instructor should refresh his memory by studying carefully the skill to be taught, using BSA resources such as the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Program Features for Troops, Teams, and Crews*, and merit badge pamphlets. He should write an instructional plan to ensure he teaches the subject thoroughly and doesn't leave out useful material. He must make sure to have all the necessary supplies ("Be Prepared").

- Instructors should teach all the related skills for Tenderfoot through First Class. Each of those ranks has requirements for first aid, cooking, knots and lashings, etc. An instructor should be able to teach all of those requirements.
- Instructors should teach Scouting skills at troop meetings to get newer Scouts ready for campouts where those skills will be used. The instructors should then attend campouts to provide additional guidance as needed so the newer Scouts can really master these skills by using them.
- Troops may allow the instructor to sign off on skills when the Scouts have mastered them, or may have the instructor tell the patrol leader or assistant Scoutmaster that a Scout is ready to be tested on the skills. The instructor should keep good written notes for his teaching activities and his evaluations of the Scouts he teaches, so he can advise their patrol leaders and others when they are ready to be tested. These notes and evaluations, plus the extent to which the new Scouts have mastered their skills, help the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster evaluate whether the instructor is performing his duties well enough, or if the instructor requires additional coaching and training to perform his job effectively.
- The troop instructor should be trained in using the EDGE (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable) method. This ensures that the Scouts he trains will really learn the skills being taught.
- The troop instructor is generally an older Scout who has demonstrated proficiency in Scouting skills by earning First Class rank. It is helpful if he also earns the merit badge or badges associated with the particular skills he is to teach, because the badges require skills beyond those needed for the lower ranks.
- Instructors are appointed by the senior patrol leader, who also designates the skills the instructor is responsible for teaching based upon the instructor's professed desires and demonstrated competencies.
  - Scouts often have favorite Scouting skills. Match the skill to be taught with the instructor's interest. For example, teaching swimming and other aquatic skills is a perfect job for a trained BSA lifeguard. A Scout interested in the environment may become an instructor on the principles of Leave No Trace, without the 16 hours of training necessary for the official Leave No Trace trainer position.
  - There will usually be one or more Scouts in a troop to whom others turn for advice on Scouting skills. If these boys have demonstrated their mastery of those skills, they should be considered for the instructor position. Depending on the troop size and needs, a troop may have several instructors.
- Troops often add their own eligibility requirements to the instructor's position, such as:
  - Minimum age of 13 or 14
  - Minimum of Star rank
  - Previous leadership experience within the troop
  - Completion of the troop's junior leader training
- Some troops prefer older Scouts as instructors because seniority adds to their credibility. Yet some 12-year-old First Class Scouts may make good instructors.
  - These young but not-so-new Scouts often need a specific challenge to keep them engaged productively in the troop program so they will have fewer temptations to goof off.
  - Their mastery of basic Scouting skills is new enough that they often remember those skills better than older Scouts who haven't used them recently.
- An instructor should show Scout spirit by attending as many troop meetings, hikes, and camping trips as possible, not just when he is scheduled to give instruction or a presentation. He should also share his expertise whenever appropriate, not just when teaching younger Scouts or giving presentations.

## Troop Guide

- Each new-Scout patrol will elect a leader from among the patrol members, like all the other patrols do. By definition, that patrol leader is new to Boy Scouting and to the concept of youth-led Scouting. He will benefit from an older Scout as a mentor who can show him the ropes. That older Scout is called a troop guide. Each new-Scout patrol should have its own troop guide to mentor the patrol leader.
  - Troops that do not put recently transitioned Webelos Scouts in new-Scout patrols do not need a troop guide. Troops that "salt" new Scouts into existing patrols will rely on the leaders of those patrols to mentor and nurture their new Scouts—while also ensuring that older Scouts in the patrol befriend and do not bully the new Scouts, and the least desirable chores are not consistently assigned to new Scouts.
- A high-performing troop guide can assist new Scouts in learning and implementing the patrol method. (The patrol method is one of the eight methods of Scouting.)
- Responsibilities of a troop guide:
  - Introduces new Scouts to troop operations.
  - Coaches the leader of the new-Scout patrol on his duties.
  - Attends patrol leaders' council meetings with the leader of the new-Scout patrol.

- Guides new Scouts through early Scouting activities.
- Ensures that older Scouts never harass or bully new Scouts.
- Helps new Scouts earn First Class in their first year.
- Teaches basic Scouting skills.
- Helps the assistant Scoutmaster with training.
- Counsels individual Scouts on Scouting challenges.
- To be effective, a troop guide must
  - Be First Class or higher.
  - Have strong leadership and teaching skills.
  - Have completed the troop’s junior leader training.
  - Be patient enough to work with new Scouts.
  - Use his status to prevent other older Scouts from picking on the new Scouts. In other words, he should be the “big brother” to the new Scouts.
- As a mentor to the new-Scout patrol leader, the troop guide provides direction and helps him learn and perform his responsibilities.
  - The BSA position description does not require that the troop guide be a former patrol leader, but it would be helpful if he is. It is easier to provide practical leadership training to the new-Scout patrol leader if the troop guide has “been there and done that,” rather than learning at the same time he is trying to mentor the new patrol leader.
- Ask the roundtable participants to remember the role of the adult troop guide in their Wood Badge course: The troop guide did not run the Wood Badge patrol, but rather coached the patrol members as they took turns being the patrol leader. This same dynamic holds true with youth troop guides and the leaders of new-Scout patrols.
- Along with the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol, the troop guide is a member of the patrol leaders’ council.
- Troop guides are appointed by the senior patrol leader.
- The troop guide should enlist troop instructors to help train the new Scouts. This allows the troop guide to focus on his patrol leader mentorship.
  - The troop guide accompanies the new-Scout patrol on troop campouts and makes himself available to assist the new Scouts as they learn and implement fundamental Scouting skills.
  - He can also help the new Scouts use these skills on outings. But, like an adult leader, he should resist doing anything for the new Scouts that they can do for themselves.
- An older troop guide may also work with an assistant Scoutmaster to create an enhanced activities program that is interesting, fun, and challenging for older boys. However, some troops prefer to use a junior assistant Scoutmaster in this role instead of a troop guide.

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## Webelos-to-Scout Transition

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### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the factors involved in the Webelos-to-Scout transition process.
2. Identify key responsibilities of the troop leadership in this process.
3. Develop an action plan for facilitating successful Webelos transition into a Boy Scout troop.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

This should be an experienced Scoutmaster with a proven history of successfully facilitating the transition of Webelos Scouts into a Boy Scout troop with a high multiple-year retention rate. As an alternative, a district committee

member or commissioner tasked with supporting the Webelos-to-Scout transition process could present this topic.

### Presentation Method

The core ideas of this topic are presented as a facilitated discussion. Start by asking questions about how different troops facilitate the process of transition. A list of key Scouters involved in the process of Webelos-to-Scout transition could be presented using PowerPoint or a flipchart.

### BSA Reference Materials

- *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088
- *Boy Scout Requirements*, No. 33216
- 2015–2016 Cub Scout Program Transition Information, [www.scouting.org/programupdates](http://www.scouting.org/programupdates)
- *Webelos Handbook*, No. 33452
- *Troop Leader Guidebook*, No. 33009

## Community Resources

Knowledge of the chartered organizations for various Cub Scout packs in each troop's area

## Presentation Content

- Ask troop leaders how many Scouts they currently have, and how many new Scouts they would like to recruit.
- Ask troop leaders what percentage of new Scouts they retain at the end of year one, and at the end of years two and three.
- Provide an introduction to the key volunteers in the Webelos-to-Scout transition process and their responsibilities:
  - Webelos den leader
  - Cubmaster
  - Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster
  - Unit commissioner
- Troop leaders need to form relationships with multiple packs in their area to facilitate the process of having Webelos visit troop meetings and events.
  - Visiting several units is better than visiting only a few. Also, a Webelos Scout will gain more insight from attending regular troop activities than from going to events specifically designed for Webelos visits.
  - Emphasize that roundtable provides a great opportunity to meet pack leaders and initiate connections.
- Ask unit commissioners for assistance in initiating dialogue and forming connections with various packs and Webelos dens.
- Coordinate a recruiting plan with unit commissioners who can provide insight to many of the packs and Webelos dens in a troop's area.
- Act as a resource in actively promoting outdoor program to Webelos dens.
- Troops should invite Webelos dens to attend events and outings where troop activities are showcased and Webelos Scouts can be introduced to the patrol method.
- Provide support to Webelos Scouts participating in outdoor activities. Be prepared to provide equipment to Webelos dens for their use in camping, and be willing to host a Webelos group on a troop campout.
- Troop leaders should be ready and willing to provide Scouts who will serve as Webelos den chiefs in support of the Webelos program and to promote Boy Scouting.
- Troops need to provide a dedicated assistant Scoutmaster and troop guide(s) to serve the new-Scout patrol, or to serve new Scouts if they are placed in different patrols after crossover to the troop.
- Troops should provide an opportunity for each Webelos Scout to have a Scoutmaster conference before joining a troop.
  - It is important to emphasize that each individual boy can select the troop he wants to join. The goal is to keep boys in the program, not to push them into any specific troop.
  - Some leaders will resist the idea that there are no "feeder packs" recognized by the BSA. Instead, focus should be placed on helping each potential new Scout find the unit where he is most likely to succeed personally and stay in the program.
- Once the troop is informed by a pack about Webelos Scouts who intend to cross over, the troop leadership should plan to take part in the crossover ceremony and provide the new Scout with distinctive troop numerals, neckerchief, a *Boy Scout Handbook*, and a calendar of troop meetings and activities for the year.
- Troops should plan to have an individual Boy Scout sponsor for each of the Webelos Scouts crossing over to provide a "first point of contact" for the new Scout. The sponsor will act to introduce the new Scout to the fully assembled troop at the next regular meeting.
- Ensure that each new Scout and his parent(s) are quickly engaged in the troop, and that all those who have crossed over receive communications about troop meetings and events.

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# Integrating STEM into Troop Programs

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Explain what STEM means (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).
2. Understand the diverse activities that can be STEM events.
3. Discover ways to incorporate the BSA's STEM and Nova Awards programs into troop activities and outings.
4. Encourage discussion on leveraging local STEM resources for the benefit of Scouts.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

The ideal presenter will be a local STEM professional involved in the STEM and Nova Awards programs or a Scouter whose experience includes STEM activities in their troop.

## Presentation Method

Because many Scouters may not be familiar with the variety of activities related to STEM, a brief introduction is appropriate. Provide resources for further exploration and encourage discussion among the leaders present.

## BSA Reference Materials

- STEM in Scouting, [www.scouting.org/stem/AboutSTEM.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/stem/AboutSTEM.aspx)
- STEM-related merit badge pamphlets
- *Cub Scout Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34032
- *Boy Scout Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34033
- *Venturing Nova Awards Guidebook*, No. 34031

## Community Resources

Local STEM-related enterprises, including museums, schools, community programs, and corporations

## Presentation Content

- STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. While it has become a popular topic in recent years, the BSA has been engaged in STEM activities for more than 100 years. Many of Scouting's core outdoor, conservation, and merit badge activities relate to STEM topics.
- For example:
  - The BSA's many outdoor nature and conservation programs clearly relate to environmental, geological, or life science, among other categories.

- Pioneering uses many engineering concepts. Math is also used to calculate heights, lengths and construction strengths.
- Scouting's many vocational and career activities expose Scouts to a variety of STEM opportunities, from firefighting to aerospace to medical science.

- A quick review of the merit badge program shows that many of the subjects are STEM-related:

Archery	Nature
Astronomy	Oceanography
Athletics	Orienteering
Bird Study	Plant Science
Canoeing	Pulp and Paper
Environmental Science	Reptile and Amphibian Study
Farm Mechanics	Rifle Shooting
Fish and Wildlife Management	Robotics
Forestry	Scuba Diving
Gardening	Shotgun Shooting
Geocaching	Small-Boat Sailing
Geology	Soil and Water Conservation
Insect Study	Space Exploration
Mammal Study	Weather
Motorboating	Welding

- The BSA has developed the Nova Awards program to encourage youth with particular interests in STEM pursuits to further explore these subjects.
  - The award offers four parts, one for each element of STEM.
  - Recognition includes the Nova Award patch and separate pi ( $\pi$ ) devices that attach to the patch.
  - Scouts can also pursue the Supernova Award, which has more rigorous requirements, designed to motivate youth and recognize more in-depth, advanced achievement in STEM-related activities.
- The wide variety of STEM-related activities makes this an easy program element to incorporate into a unit plan.
  - Look for naturally occurring STEM opportunities in your current program calendar. (Ask participants to share examples.)

- Troops may also want to suggest STEM opportunities when the patrol leaders' council plans the program calendar.
- Local community and online resources can make STEM activities more accessible. These include science centers, museums, school resources, STEM corporations, NASA online, TV shows such as "MythBusters," and many other resources readily available to Scouts.
- The most important aspect of the STEM program is having fun while exploring topics that interest the Scouts.
- Guide a group discussion about various program options or resources that could offer STEM exploration to Scouts, whether as part of a general Scouting activity or specifically as a STEM opportunity.
- Alternatively, divide the participants into small groups, and give each group the requirements for one of the Nova awards. Each group creates a troop program plan for one month, including meetings and an outing, that can leverage the STEM concepts. Ideas will be shared at the end of the meeting.

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## International Scouting Activities

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### Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Explain what the acronyms JOTA, JOTI, and JOTT represent.
2. Understand the importance of these international Scouting jamborees to Scouts in their units.
3. Know when JOTA/JOTI and JOTT are held and where to find local information.
4. Help set up a JOTA/JOTI and JOTT activity for the Scouts in their district and/or council.
5. Share what they have learned about the BSA International Spirit Award.

### Suggested Presenter(s)

A local amateur radio operator who is a Scouter, and/or a Scouter who has participated in JOTA or JOTI should be invited to present.

### Presentation Method

A guided discussion is an ideal way to present this topic. Because many Scouters may not be familiar with JOTA/JOTI or JOTT, prepare a brief introduction to provide the basics. Have copies of the International Spirit Award application to distribute to units.

### BSA Reference Materials

- Jamboree-on-the-Air, [www.scouting.org/jota.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/jota.aspx)
- Guidelines for Amateur Radio Operators, [www.scouting.org/jota/operators\\_guides.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/jota/operators_guides.aspx)
- Jamboree on the Air and Jamboree on the Internet, <http://jotajoti.info/>

- *Radio* merit badge pamphlet
- JOTT: Jamboree on the Trail, <http://jott.org>
- International Spirit Award application, [www.scouting.org/filestore/international/pdf/130-044\\_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/international/pdf/130-044_WB.pdf)

### Community Resources

- Amateur Radio and Scouting, [www.arrl.org/amateur-radio-and-scouting](http://www.arrl.org/amateur-radio-and-scouting)
- Local amateur radio operator clubs

### Presentation Content

- Not every Scout or Scouter can attend a national or world jamboree, but they can participate with Scouts around the world through JOTA/JOTI and JOTT.
- Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA):
  - This is an official event of the World Organization of the Scout Movement. It began in 1967 and takes place every year.
  - Scouts talk to Scouts worldwide via shortwave "ham" radio.
  - Almost 700,000 Scouts in more than 140 countries participated in a recent JOTA.
- Jamboree-on-the-Internet (JOTI):
  - This is also an official event of the World Organization of the Scout Movement. It began in 1996 and takes place every year.
  - Most of the communication takes place via email and in a chat network called IRC, Internet Relay Chat.
  - Almost 16,000 Scouts in more than 140 countries participated in a recent JOTI.

- JOTA and JOTI both take place on the third weekend in October each year. Benefits include the following:
  - Scouts participating in JOTA or JOTI can “meet” Scouts from another part of the United States or another country, adding excitement to the Scouting program but without leaving town.
  - Participation in JOTA or JOTI can spark interest in careers in electronics, engineering, and radio.
  - Scouts and Venturers who earn their amateur radio license can assist with communication during disasters or other emergencies.
  - Participation in JOTA can help Scouts complete two requirements for the Radio merit badge.
  - Participation in JOTA or JOTI completes one of the mandatory requirements for the International Spirit Award.
- Planning a JOTA/JOTI event:
  - JOTA and JOTI are best organized as district or council events, but can be done as a unit event. Contact your council international representative to see if your council or a neighboring council is hosting a JOTA/JOTI event.
  - JOTA requires a shortwave radio set, licensed operator, and an antenna, as well as a free or low-cost host location. The operator will register the “station” on the JOTA website so other stations can locate the frequency.
  - Contact local Scouters who are ham operators, a Radio merit badge counselor, or a local amateur radio operator club to see if they will sponsor the JOTA event.
  - JOTI can be held anywhere with a free high-speed Internet connection (Wi-Fi) and a room large enough to host several laptop computers. Register your location at the JOTI website.
  - Since Scouts will not spend a lot of time on the radio, plan to conduct other events at the same location. Examples include completing requirements for the Communication, Radio, or Citizenship in the World merit badges for Boy Scouts, and communication-related activities for Cub Scout advancement.
- Jamboree on the Trail (JOTT):
  - JOTT is an informal annual day for members of the World Organization of the Scout Movement to hike together. All Scouts, whatever their age and wherever they live, are invited to participate however they can.
  - JOTT is held on the second Saturday of May each year. This is Mother’s Day weekend in the United States, so the U.S. JOTT coordinator encourages Scouts to hike the weekend before or after if parents do not want to do it on Mother’s Day weekend.
  - The first JOTT in 1988 had more than 24,000 participants in 17 countries around the world. Participation has increased every year since then.
- Preparing a JOTT event:
  - Unlike JOTA and JOTI, JOTT takes place outdoors.
  - Any trail is acceptable. There is no set distance for a JOTT hike. Cub Scouts can walk a shorter distance or on a less demanding trail; Boy Scouts can do a 10-mile hike for the Hiking merit badge or do a trail maintenance service project.
  - In their own way, everyone will be hiking the same direction and with the same spirit: toward a better future through Scouting.
  - JOTT hikes can be done as a district or unit event, but the more Scouts who participate the better the event will be. So a district JOTT event would be ideal.
- International Spirit Award:
  - This award was created for Scouts and Scouters who complete the requirements, gain a greater knowledge of international Scouting, and develop a greater appreciation and awareness of different cultures and countries.
  - It is available for Scouts of all ages (with age-appropriate activities), as well as for adults.
  - Attending a JOTA/JOTI event and conducting a World Friendship Fund collection are two of the five mandatory requirements for all ages. The other requirements are listed on the application form.
- Additional time could be used to show radio equipment and conduct conversations over the air with other operators.

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# How to Utilize a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

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## Time Available

10-30 minutes depending on the agenda format being used

## Learning Objectives

The position of junior assistant Scoutmaster (JASM) has been underutilized or poorly utilized by most troops. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the purposes and importance of the position of junior assistant Scoutmaster.
- Understand the responsibilities of the JASM.
- Understand the differences between a JASM and adult assistant Scoutmasters (ASM).
- Understand how a JASM works with senior patrol leaders and the patrol leaders' council (PLC) to provide youth leadership in the troop.

## Suggested Presenter(s)

A unit leader whose troop already uses a JASM would be an effective presenter, possibly with the JASM as a co-presenter. The district Boy Scout training chair could be another presenter.

## Presentation Method

The presentation should include the position-specific duties of the JASM. Discuss the role of the JASM in troop activities and meetings, and as a peer and mentor to other Scouts. Note that the position is not necessarily a reward for Eagle Scouts or retiring senior patrol leaders. Offer suggestions on how to identify the best candidate for the position. Discuss tips for better performance by Scouts serving as JASMs. Have troop leaders share their experiences working with JASMs.

## BSA Reference Materials

- *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*, No. 32501
- Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops: Position Description Cards, No. 30521
- *Troop Leader Guidebook*, No. 33009

## Presentation Content

- Leadership development is one of the eight methods of Scouting.
- The junior assistant Scoutmaster can be a key youth leader when properly selected and trained. Knowing and properly implementing the role of a JASM will help him to achieve the desired results in his position of responsibility.
  - While a Scout whose outside schedule keeps him from attending meetings and outings wouldn't be the right choice for many youth leadership positions—since he

would need to be present to perform his duties—a Scout in this situation may be able to function as a JASM with the proper coordination of schedules and troop activities.

- Qualities of a good junior assistant Scoutmaster:
  - Sets a good example.
  - Wears the Scout uniform correctly and enthusiastically.
  - Lives by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
  - Shows Scout spirit by attending as many unit events and meetings as he can.
- Position-specific duties for the JASM:
  - Mentors senior patrol leaders, assistant senior patrol leaders, and members of the patrol leaders' council.
  - Prepares to become an assistant Scoutmaster.
- Ideally, a JASM has attended leadership training and has experience in patrol and troop leadership before taking on this position. In preparing to mentor other troop leaders, a JASM should study carefully the skill to be taught to refresh his memory, using BSA resources such as the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Program Features for Troops, Teams, and Crews*, and merit badge pamphlets. He should write an instructional plan to ensure he teaches the subject thoroughly and doesn't leave out useful material. He must make sure to have all the necessary supplies ("Be Prepared").
  - The JASM should be trained in using the EDGE (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable) method. This ensures that the Scouts he trains will really learn the skills being taught.
- The JASM, as part of the troop leadership structure, is appointed by the senior patrol leader with the consent of the Scoutmaster. The senior patrol leader should appoint someone he is comfortable getting guidance and direction from. The Scoutmaster works with the JASM to help the JASM provide support and supervision to the entire troop.
- The JASM is a member of the patrol leaders' council and should be attending its meetings. He should also work with the senior patrol leader outside of the meeting time to help review the meeting agenda and troop activity calendar.
- Depending on size and needs, a troop can have several JASMs, just as it may have more than one assistant Scoutmaster.

- Troops may allow the JASM to sign off on skills when Scouts have mastered them, or the JASM may be required to tell the senior patrol leader or assistant Scoutmaster that a Scout is ready to be tested on the skills.
- Troops often add their own additional eligibility requirements to the position of JASM, such as previous leadership experience within the troop, or that only Eagle Scouts can serve as JASMs, or that when a senior patrol leader has finished his term, he is “kicked upstairs” to serve as a JASM.
- The actual guidance on how a JASM is selected is intentionally left vague. This allows the senior patrol leader and the Scoutmaster flexibility in choosing a young man to fill the role. In some cases, there may be no one ready or able to fill the position, and it can be left vacant with no detriment to troop program and activities.
- The only specified requirement is that a youth be at least 16 years of age. The intent is that at 18, the young man can register as an adult and serve as an assistant Scoutmaster.
- A JASM should set the example and show Scout spirit by attending as many troop meetings and activities as possible.
- The JASM may assist troop guides and instructors as they work with new Scouts. He should share his expertise whenever appropriate.
- As someone closer in age to his fellow Scouts than the Scoutmaster, the JASM may find that Scouts are more comfortable working with him on problems or challenges with advancement.
- Remember that the JASM is still a youth member of the troop. Adult issues, such as youth protection and safety, must be handled by an adult.
- Some of the ways troops have successfully used JASMs include:
  - Training and supervising troop guides who work with the new-Scout patrol
  - Training and supervising instructors in teaching Scouting skills to all troop members
  - Training and supervising den chiefs as they work with local packs to help teach the Scouting skills necessary for Cub Scout advancement and encourage transition to Boy Scouting
  - Encouraging training in Leave No Trace skills and the Outdoor Ethics program
  - Serving as a liaison to the chartered organization by coordinating youth activities or service projects
  - Assisting the Scoutmaster in delivering troop leadership training
- Invite unit leaders at roundtable to share their experiences working with JASMs.