



## Session Two

# Nuts and Bolts of the Outdoor Program

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### Time Allowed

40 minutes

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### Teaching Objectives

- Convey the understanding that *skills* and *safety* are the two main elements of adult leadership in delivering the promise of Scouting through the outdoor program.
- Reinforce the principle that the boy-led troop using the patrol method is the right framework for developing an exciting and meaningful program of outdoor activities.
- Review the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety—the BSA's primary guidelines for conducting outdoor activities.
- Encourage Scoutmasters to implement the principles of Leave No Trace in planning and conducting every BSA experience in the outdoors.
- Help Scoutmasters understand that conservation and service projects are important components of the BSA's outdoor program.

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### Materials Needed

- *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, No. 33009A
- *The Boy Scout Handbook*, No. 33105
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416C
- PowerPoint slides or overheads from CD, if desired

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## Recommended Facility Layout

- Session meeting area. Each participant should have a comfortable place to sit, take notes, and organize written materials. That setting most often consists of tables, each accommodating six to eight participants forming a patrol, and enough chairs for all participants.

## Delivery Method

- Instructor-led discussion

## Presentation Procedure

Open the discussion by asking participants to share their thoughts about their troops' outdoor program, guiding the discussion with two questions:

- When it comes to the outdoor program of your troops, what are you most enthused about?
- When it comes to the outdoor program of your troops, what are you most concerned about?

Write their answers on a flipchart and post the pages for future reference. Among the responses may be:

- Enthused about:
  - Having fun
  - Learning new skills
  - Spending time together as a troop
  - Developing a focus for meetings of the troop
- Concerned about:
  - Knowing what to do
  - Keeping everyone safe
  - Having a bad experience with the troop
  - Finding additional adults to accompany the troop
  - Arranging transportation for everyone

The answers to these concerns, and the way to be sure that enthusiasm results in a good program, is by recognizing that adult leadership in the outdoor program has two elements:

- *Skills*
- *Safety*

## **Skills and Safety—The Two Elements of Adult Leadership in the Outdoor Program**

### **Instructors' Note**

*Lead participants in a discussion of skills and safety, supporting the ideas with reference to the resources available to Scoutmasters. Encourage participants to share their own ideas and to bring up any questions and concerns they may have. Use the following version of such a discussion as a guide in conducting your presentation of this material.*

One of the biggest concerns of new Scoutmasters is that they may think they don't know enough to handle the demands of a troop's outdoor activities. If you don't have much experience cooking meals in the open, pitching tents, dealing with bad weather, and coping with all the other challenges of the outdoors, what can you do?

In recent presentations we've talked about the resources available to you as you provide leadership to a troop. The BSA resources available to you regarding the outdoor program are every bit as rich as they are for other aspects of the Scoutmaster experience.

Our intent in this discussion is not to teach you any specific outdoor skills, but rather to help you discover where you can find the answers to any and all of your questions concerning the outdoor program. By the time we are done, you should feel confident that you can help your troop begin enjoying an outdoor program that really works, that is fun and challenging for the boys, and that brings a lot of satisfaction to you, as well.

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### **SKILLS**

The key resources available to you to develop your skills for delivering the BSA's outdoor program are these:

- BSA training opportunities (including Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills)
- Other adults
- The boy-led troop using the patrol method
- BSA outdoor-related literature

### **RESOURCE ONE—BSA TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Boy Scouts of America encourages lifelong learning for its members and leaders. The fact that you are here today is evidence that you are willing to seek out new ideas and to engage new approaches to leadership.

Some of the training opportunities offered by the BSA can have immediate rewards for the outdoor programs of your troops. Other training will become valuable to you when your troop moves into specific activities such as climbing, rappelling, and aquatics.

The first of the training opportunities you are likely to encounter is one we've mentioned before—Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills.

### Instructors' Note

*The course overview presentation near the beginning of Session One of Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training included the following information about the Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills. At this point in Session Two, it may be wise to review what participants can expect from Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills and to remind them of the dates and locations of upcoming opportunities for them to take the training.*

### Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

- Provides an important and enjoyable part of the basic preparations to be a Scoutmaster.
- Covers the outdoor skills expected of a First Class Scout.
- Adult leaders who already have knowledge of some of the skills may pass that section of the course by demonstrating their abilities to an instructor.
- Adult leaders who have already completed Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills will not need to repeat the training.

### RESOURCE TWO—SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Scouters who are committed to the Scouting program represent a tremendous storehouse of knowledge about where, when, and how Scoutmasters can conduct successful outdoor activities. Scoutmasters will also find a variety of other adults with the skills, knowledge, and willingness to help ensure a quality outdoor program.

- During BSA training opportunities, participants will meet many Scouters who have much knowledge to share about running an outdoor program.
- District roundtable meetings and other gatherings of troop leaders bring new and experienced Scoutmasters together.

from a number of troops to share ideas, successes, and problem-solving skills to the outdoor program.

- The parents of the Scouts in your troop can be valuable sources of information and support for the outdoor program. Those without much outdoor adventure experience may be very interested in learning along with the Scoutmaster and the Scouts as a troop develops its program and then fulfills its plans for outdoor activities. Even those who have no interest in taking part in the activities may be very supportive in helping Scouts organize gear and menus, and in helping provide transportation to and from the sites of troop adventures.

### **RESOURCE THREE—THE BOY-LED TROOP USING THE PATROL METHOD**

The boy-led troop is perhaps the greatest resource available to a Scoutmaster. By giving responsibility and guidance to the boys for planning and then carrying out their own program, adult leaders are helping Scouts become good leaders and allowing them to design adventures that are within their current levels of skill and confidence.

Adult leaders can learn outdoor skills along with their Scouts. As a troop and its patrols build up experience, the patrol leaders' council can expand the range and challenge of the troop's outdoor activities. The boy leaders planning the troop's program for the upcoming months will find plenty of resource materials to help them stay out of the rut of always going to the same place and doing the same things. With the encouragement of their Scoutmaster, troop members can move continually outward and take on experiences that are increasingly challenging. (The Session Three presentation on program planning will take a closer look at BSA resource materials for planning and conducting a wide range of outdoor activities.)

We are gradually approaching a full discussion of short- and long-term planning of the program of a Scout troop, but we aren't quite there yet. However, we can look now at a sample outdoor program plan, one of several dozen complete plans available to you and the Scouts in your troops. This plan, with camping as its highlight, can be found in *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, Chapter 6, "The Outdoor Program."

and a second job. Each Scoutmaster is unique in his or her approach to the outdoor program. However, there are some basic concepts that are common to most outdoor programs. These concepts are described in the following section.

**Ask participants to open their Scoutmaster Handbooks to the camping program plan in Chapter 6, "The Outdoor Program." Briefly review the plan, emphasizing the fact that the content of the weekly troop meetings offer abundant opportunities for Scouts to learn the skills they will need and make the plans that are required for a successful feature event at the end of the month—in this case, a campout.**

#### RESOURCE FOUR—BSA OUTDOOR-RELATED LITERATURE

Much of the literature of Scouting deals with outdoor adventures—how to plan them, what to take, how to carry them out. (*The Scoutmaster Handbook*, *The Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Tours and Expeditions*, merit badge pamphlets for camping, hiking, and other outdoor skills, etc.).

In addition to BSA publications, browse for an hour in a good bookstore and you may find a wealth of literature describing local outdoor locations that could be very inviting to a Scout troop. You may find many local guidebooks to the trails, bike routes, canoe areas, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, and other areas of interest.

As you may already have discovered, the manual that most directly addresses issues involving Scoutmasters and the outdoor program is *The Scoutmaster Handbook*. The chapter entitled "The Outdoor Program" provides a good introduction. It also has some very useful checklists to help guide you along the way:

- Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist
- Scout Outdoor Essentials
- Personal Overnight Camping Gear
- Troop Overnight Camping Gear
- Outdoor Program Checklist (Included at the end of the "The Outdoor Program" chapter, this checklist will help guide Scoutmasters through the most important aspects of conducting their outdoor programs.)

*The checklists and other details of the outdoor program will be covered during Introduction to Outdoor Leader Training. It is enough during Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training to be sure that participants understand that they can turn to The Scoutmaster Handbook as an essential resource to implementing the outdoor programs of their troops, and then to encourage them to read chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program" before they attend Introduction to Outdoor Leader Training.*

*An additional essential skill for Scoutmasters is the knowledge to follow the principles of Leave No Trace. Use the following discussion guidelines to encourage participants to do incorporate Leave No Trace in all of their outdoor activities.*

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### **Leave No Trace**

The principles of Leave No Trace are standards developed and used throughout America by a wide range of land-management agencies and outdoor-oriented organizations. They are designed to provide standard guidelines for respecting the environment and to serve as a common language for agencies and organizations seeking to accomplish that goal.

The principles of Leave No Trace should be at the heart of every BSA experience in the outdoors. Leave No Trace provides Scout units with information they need to protect the outdoor areas they are privileged to enjoy. These principles also help troop members live the values of Scouting, starting with five of the twelve Scout laws:

- A Scout is trustworthy.
- A Scout is helpful.
- A Scout is kind.
- A Scout is thrifty.
- A Scout is clean.

## The Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impact.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate to other visitors.

For descriptions of each principle of Leave No Trace, see *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program."

### Instructors' Note

*For further information about the BSA's awareness of its responsibility to protect the environment, Scoutmasters will find the following documents in The Scoutmaster Handbook, Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program":*

#### **Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America**

*Detailed guidelines for conducting Scouting activities in any privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wilderness areas.*

#### **BSA Property Smart**

*Guidelines for BSA units planning to use public and private property for hiking, camping, and other Scouting activities.*

### **Conservation Projects and the Outdoor Program**

Another important lesson of Scouting is the wisdom of giving something back to the land that Scouts enjoy. A well-conceived conservation project benefits the environment and helps instill in Scouts the sense that they are capable of improving the world around them.

Projects vary greatly depending on the area, the skill level and enthusiasm of Scouts and their leaders, and the needs of land managers or private property owners. It is crucial that a project

be discussed and approved well in advance by the appropriate property owner or land manager.

— *The Scoutmaster Handbook*,  
Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program"

*The Conservation Handbook*, No. 33570, is designed to help Scouts undertake meaningful conservation projects. It lists many of the agencies and organizations that can provide guidance to Scouts and their leaders, and outlines strategies for developing on-going stewardship relationships between Scout troops and the managers of the areas where they take part in outdoor adventures.

### **Camping and Conservation Awards**

The Boy Scouts of America recognizes the outdoor program achievements of Scouts and their troops with a variety of camping and conservation awards. You'll find descriptions of these in *The Scoutmaster Handbook* near the end of Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program."

In addition to those awards described in *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, the outdoor program figures into a number of the requirements for the ranks of Scouting and for merit badges. With that in mind, let's use the rest of this session to discuss the advancement program and its role in the troop.

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### **Safety**

Regardless of what else happens during the activities of a Scout troop, adult leaders must strive to ensure the safety of troop members. That is a basic responsibility of Scoutmasters that must be upheld at all times.

As with other aspects of troop leadership, the Boy Scouts of America provides clear resources and training to assist you in fulfilling this responsibility. Some of these (two-deep leadership; drivers' safety; the BSA's policy on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) have been touched on in New Leader Essentials. Every new leader should also attend the Youth Protection Training offered by the district and council.

### **Instructors' Note**

*If your council's high adventure team offers special training for Scoutmasters, refer participants to a listing of relevant training courses available to them.*

The basic guidelines the BSA uses in seeking to create an appropriate environment for Scouts and adults taking part in outdoor activities are spelled out Sweet 16 of BSA Safety.

## Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

1. Qualified Supervision
2. Physical Fitness
3. Buddy System
4. Safe Area or Course
5. Equipment Selection and Maintenance
6. Personal Safety Equipment
7. Safety Procedures and Policies
8. Skill Level Limits
9. Weather Check
10. Planning
11. Communications
12. Permits and Notices
13. First Aid Resources
14. Applicable Laws
15. CPR Resource
16. Discipline

For descriptions of each of the 16 points, see *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program."

### Instructors' Note

*At this point in the presentation, it is enough to mention each of the 16 points and offer a sentence or two of explanation about each one. The group exercise later in this presentation will provide instructors and participants opportunities to discuss the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety in more detail.*

### Additional Guidelines for Specific Activities

Aquatic activities and those involving climbing and rappelling bring with them certain inherent dangers. The BSA has developed clear guidelines that must be followed by troop leaders every time they consider involving Scouts in these activities. The following guidelines are included in *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, Chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program":

- Safe Swim Defense
- Safety Afloat
- Climb On Safely—A Guide to Unit Climbing and Rappelling
- Guide to Safe Scouting

In addition to its value as a guide to the skills of outdoor programs, *The Scoutmaster Handbook* is the primary resource

In addition to its value as a guide to the skills of outdoor programs, *The Scoutmaster Handbook* is the primary resource for Scoutmasters to use in seeking to ensure the safety of Scouts during outdoor experiences. Among the most useful materials to be found in its pages are the following:

- Principles of Leave No Trace
- Tour Permits
- Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist
- Scout Outdoor Essentials
- Personal Overnight Gear
- Troop and Patrol Equipment
- Guidelines for Safely Using Camp Stoves
- The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

### ***Safety and Difficult Situations***

A Scoutmaster striving to create a safe environment for Scout activities can share that responsibility with the Scouts themselves. The boy-run troop using the patrol method is an ideal framework for encouraging boys to incorporate safety considerations into the planning of an event, and then to do whatever they can to ensure the safety of everyone while the event is under way.

That being said, there may be occasions when a Scoutmaster must step in to stop some activity or insist on certain boundaries or standards of behavior. Once behavior perceived as unsafe has been stopped, the Scoutmaster can take the most appropriate course of action to see that the concern does not arise again. That will require careful listening to understand the true nature of the problem and the use of an appropriate leadership style to fit the situation. Ideally that can be done by working through the boy leaders of the troop to help provide direction to their peers.

Serious or recurring negative activity may require the involvement of the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders in a firm, fair manner. Instances of cheating, lying, inappropriate language, vandalism, or fighting can sometimes be explored through reflection and counseling. Both in weighing the behavior in question and in determining an appropriate response, adult leaders can use the Scout Law for guidance.

A boy who whose actions pose a perceived danger to himself or others during Scout activities should be taken home. Contact his parents or guardians to explain what has happened and to discuss ways that the family and the troop can work together to better integrate the boy into the Scouting program. Serious safety issues arising from a boy's behavior

For further information about these and other means of dealing with difficult situations, see *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, Chapter 11, "Working with Boys."

**Open the discussion for questions concerning the outdoor program.**

### Instructors' Note

Remind participants of the contents of the Local Resources Summary they received at the beginning of Session One. This list should include council camps, public camping areas such as parks and forests that permit camping, and any other properties available throughout the year where troops can camp. If your Order of the Arrow lodge prints a where-to-go camping book, make a copy available to each participant.

## Announce a five-minute break.