CATEGORY: FAMILY AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITY – SCOUTING

Description —

A chapter sponsors local Cub Scout, Boy Scout, or Venturer units, or offers its facilities for meetings, trainings, and outings. Scouting is a worldwide youth movement that supports young people in their physical, mental, and spiritual development. The Scout movement employs a program of informal education with an emphasis on practical outdoor activities, including camping, woodcraft, aquatics, hiking, backpacking, and sports. Conservation education and outdoor ethics play a big role in this youth program, making it a valuable potential partner with League chapters.

Benefits —

Scouting offers an array of training programs that include outdoor experiences and values. Your chapter will benefit by engaging well-educated youth who are eager to complete conservation projects. By sponsoring and mentoring a Scout group, your chapter will provide a community service and will receive community recognition.

Key Steps —

- To organize and sponsor a Scouting unit or to locate already established units in your community, contact your nearest Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Council office. The Scouting system is based on an established leadership and skills development curriculum supplied by BSA. Your chapter will need to recruit volunteers to serve as adult leaders.
- Plan for the Scouts to use your grounds for meetings, camping, and other outdoor skills development. Your chapter can offer a few evenings a month, a week, or a year (for day camps), or two weekends a month (for campouts and merit badge training).
- Support or host advanced leadership training, such as an Order of the Arrow work weekend.
- Offer Eagle Scout project sponsorship and guidance, if requested.
- Advise Scouts pursuing the prestigious William T. Hornaday Conservation Award.
- Integrate Scouts into other chapter youth-oriented outdoor activities, such as fishing events, youth hunts, shooting sports events, and hunter education courses. Also involve them in your litter cleanup, stream restoration, and wildlife habitat improvement conservation projects.
- Host additional adult training sessions.
- The BSA provides its own insurance and liability protection for its Scouts, adult leaders, and unit sponsors.
- When live-firing firearms and archery gear, have adequate shooting ranges and range safety officers available at all times, along with shooting vests and gloves, and protective ear and eyewear.

- Maintain first aid kits in the chapter house or meeting site and throughout the chapter grounds.

Who Can Help —

Volunteers: Start with six to ten adult volunteers for a single Scout unit, and recruit additional volunteers for multiple units. Additional volunteers are needed for events, outings, and skills training sessions. If the activities involve shooting, some volunteers should be National Rifle Association-certified instructors. Plan to have one volunteer instructor per two shooting participants, and at least one range officer in control of live-firing at all times. Consider designating a chapter leader or member as a liaison between the Scouts and chapter board and officers.

Partners/sponsors: Local businesses and retailers may support the Scouts with in-kind donations for specific projects and activities.

Technical and other support: The Boys Scouts of America has its own national organization with established regional, state, and local management structures. For added support for conservation-related projects, seek collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and state fish and wildlife, natural resources, and forestry agencies.

Dollars and Cents —

Expenses: The cost to purchase group camping gear may range from $250 to $1,000 for the first year. Additional costs may be incurred for underwriting Eagle Scout projects or for renovating campsites and trails for Scout use.

Revenue: Seek contributions from businesses, local conservation groups, and members. BSA has its own registration fee and dues structure and system of innovative fund raisers. Contact the BSA for more details and advice.

Getting the Word Out —

BSA will advertise on its community listserve and Web site; you may also want to post information in your chapter newsletter and on your Web site. Distribute fliers at local schools and businesses. Provide parents and adult leaders with information about the League's mission, your chapter's accomplishments, and membership. Take advantage of those non-members participants by promoting the League and recruiting them as new members.

Chapters with Successful SCOUTING Activities —

Linn County, IA
Arlington-Fairfax, VA
Wildlife Achievement, MD
St. John #1, ND
Ames, IA
Potomac, MD
Elgin, IL
McCook Lake, SD
Waterloo, IA
Crete, NE
Berkeley County, WV
Southern Maryland, MD
Seven Mile, OH
Fullerton, CA
Loudoun County, VA

Note: For the most current specific chapter contacts, refer the *IWLA National Directory* or IWLA Web site (www.iwla.org).