

Troop Philosophy and Basic Structure

Troop 1577 prides itself on being a boy-run, patrol-based, outing-focused, skills-oriented Troop. Our goal is to develop young men with strong values and practiced leadership skills. Scouts elect their own leaders, who plan and execute troop activities—including meetings and outings—under adult leader supervision. This is a very important part of learning essential leadership skills. Our program allows scouts to fail at times and to learn from these failures. Our troop's goal is to help our scouts to become tomorrow's leaders.

Our Troop also is focused on having fun! This is accomplished by encouraging our scouts who are leaders to think outside the box and to come up with interesting things to do -- whether it is exploring caves, riding rapids in canoes, backpacking, or high adventure activities.

Programs and organization: We have a goal to maintain programs for boys of all ages, and provide programs at three levels:

- **The "First Year" program** takes in boys who are either current Webelos scouts or brand new to scouting—generally joining Boy Scouts in the spring of their 5th grade year. This important program is led by an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader who uses Troop Guides—experienced scouts assigned to work directly with our new scouts. "First year scouts" are be assigned to 2–3 temporary “patrols” to be taught the skills and values needed to be successful in the Scouting program.
- **Youth patrols** are 10–12 active 6th to 8th grade scouts who are led by Patrol Leaders—experienced scouts who are elected by the patrol on a semi-annual basis. These Patrol Leaders are in turn led by a senior leadership patrol of 8–10 scouts that plan and support the youth patrol program. Youth patrols are where scouts start practicing leadership, as they continue to work on scout skills and merit badges, and plan for and participate on outings.

- **High school scouts** are either in the aforementioned Senior Leadership Patrol or will join a patrol of older scouts—the Ranger Scouts. Every effort is made to keep these scouts involved in scouting programs; tailoring programs and activities to their interest level (e.g., auto-maintenance merit badge as they start to drive), while continuing to use their skills and experience to assist with the youth patrols. We are fortunate to have 10th, 11th and 12th graders who continue to be active in our program.
 - There is an active commitment within these ranks to doing high adventure with the BSA programs: every year Troop 1577 scouts (who are 14 and above or finished 8th grade as required by BSA) participate in one of the three BSA programs: Philmont, Sea Base, or Northern Tier, or other programs as they decide.
 - Many of our older scouts also participate in Boy Scout's honorary society "Order of the Arrow" and in Venturing programs—a program for boys and girls age 14 and older.

High parental involvement is important but great efforts are taken to make sure that scouts are running their own meetings, organizing themselves on outings, and learning leadership at many levels. The Troop is very lucky to have a large cadre of Assistant Scoutmaster and an active Troop Committee. The Scoutmaster has three Primary Assistant Scoutmasters (PASMs) who are responsible for one of the following program areas: first years, youth patrols, and senior patrols (their names may be found on the contacts list). Additional ASMs support each PASM; each patrol in troop 1577 has its own Patrol Advisor—an ASM that serves as the point of contact, oversees the youth leadership, and assures health and safety of their scouts. The Troop also has several ASMs who focus on older scouts and assist them on the trail to Eagle rank.

Advancement Philosophy: It is the goal of Troop 1577 that we will actively help each Scout attain the Rank of First Class, having passed through Tenderfoot and Second Class ranks. At this rank a scout has the values and the skills necessary to lead a patrol safely (first aid, safe hike, safe swim, safety afloat) and effectively (planning for

cooking, selecting and setting campsites). Scouts are discouraged from beginning merit badges until they join the Youth Patrols, and merit badges required for Eagle Rank are usually not begun until scouts have attained First Class. Our goal is for all scouts--assisted by scout leaders and ASMs-- to advance to the rank of First Class.

Many scouts choose to continue in advancement through the leadership ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle; for these ranks much more responsibility is on the scouts themselves. For the rank of Star scouts begin practicing their leadership (4 months in a position) and service (6 hours) and start the more advanced merit badges. Life rank continues this leadership, service, and skills learning; Eagle rank is the pinnacle. Scouts will be working with ASMs and Eagle coaches along the way who will support their advancement. Not all scouts choose this path; participation in outings, meetings and service is not incumbent on scouts advancing through Leadership Ranks.

Outings: The Troop has an outing planned for every month—typically the third weekend of the month. Scouts are strongly encouraged to participate---“outing is $\frac{3}{4}$ of scouting”—it is here that scouts practice their scout skills and hone their leadership abilities. Outings are often camping and cooking; other type outings are also included as chosen by scouts.

The Troop always offers at least one summer camp per year. We often offer more than one choice--a regular summer camp, a high adventure (for example, Philmont Scout Ranch or SeaBase), and perhaps a specialty or leadership development camp.

Meetings: Meetings are Monday’s 7:15 to 8:30, although scouts typically arrive at 7:00 for leadership preparation and planning, turning in forms and advancement materials, or checking out Merit Badge books. Scouts attend meetings in uniform; a summer uniform is selected after school is out. Meeting formats vary and include troop games, planning, and scout skills training. Senior patrol works with patrol leaders to set the agenda.