

How to Plan an Outing – a Scout’s Guide

So you need to plan an outing . . . sounds huge and don’t have time, right.

Well, the good news is you can do it and it’s not huge and won’t take every day for weeks. Let’s get started. You will be working as a Patrol and have lots of help. One of the best ways to tackle something big is break it down in to smaller pieces, assign specific items to others in your patrol, follow-up to make sure they are working on them, then bring it all together finished. By the way, an adult leader will be assigned to you to help you through the process but they are there to help, not do.

Here’s a summary of what you and your patrol need to work on:

Figure out the General Outing Plan

- Where are we going? A basic description will be given on the Outing Folder (those red, green and blue folders) created by the Outings Chair. On the folder will be some basic info like the dates and general trek location. From this you need to decide the general outing plan as far as route, mileage, permits, trail quota limits, and transportation.
- Define prerequisites such as what do Scouts need to complete before they go in the way of mileage, training, merit badges, and rank. This info should be described when marketing your outing.
- Determine if a patch is available and review the requirements.
- Review status with Adult Leader and Outings Chair.

3-4 months prior – Market your Outing

- You need to announce, describe the Outing to the Scouts during Troop meetings and promote it to get Scouts and adults to sign up.
- Can you prepare some photos or movie to promote the outing?

3 months prior – Now you need the Outing Details. Remember you have the resources of your patrol members to assign responsibilities.

- You need to come up with the specifics of the outing like what trail head, camp locations, water sources, total mileage, difficulty, special things to see, etc.
- Get topo maps for area and plot out your path.
- Figure out a rough cost for the outing.
- Determine the auto transportation to and from the trailhead, at this point you don’t need all the details, just roughly how it will work.
- Also, you may need backcountry permits to hike and camp. The County, State and Federal government issue these. Check to see what is required and if there is availability for your dates. Many areas limit the number of hikers to 9, 12 or 15. Some areas fill up quickly so don’t wait.
- Find out if you need an “Adventure Pass” for parking.
- Determine if there are any “Trail to First Class” items that can be completed.
- Pick a theme, activity and skill for your outing that can be used to make the outing fun, educational and memorable. Plan the details of what you will do during the outing. Prepare a written agenda for your outing.

- Review status with Adult Leader and Outings Chair.

Always – Market your Outing to the Scouts

- Determine number of Scouts and Adults interested in the Outing.

2 months prior – Get Backcountry Permits

- Apply for your Backcountry permit with the government agency that issues permits for the area you are hiking. You will need some money to pay for this so request a check from the Troop Treasurer.
- If you are camping in a campground, you will need a reservation for that as well.
- Please check the Troop 680 website for web links for permits and park information.
- Confirm that all permits and reservations have been made.
- Review status with Adult Leader and Outings Chair.

3 weeks prior - prepare Permission Slips

- By now you should know all the details including cost for transportation, food, and any other items to prepare the Troop permission slip.
- Send out Permission Slips
- Determine if a BSA Medical form “Part B” is required (activities longer than 3 days).

3 weeks prior – Transportation Details

- Prepare a transportation plan including driving route, vehicles needed, and drivers.
- Prepare maps for drivers, seating assignments and gear stowage.

2-3 weeks prior – Get BSA Tour Permit

You will need a BSA Tour Permit and have two choices:

- On the Troop website is the SDIC Tour Permit that can be download and completed. You will need signatures of both your adult leader and a member of the Troop Committee. Once completed, fax, mail or hand deliver to SDIC headquarters for approval. Your confirmation of a valid permit will have a SDIC approval stamp.
- With you Adult Leader, login to “My Scouting” and complete the online Tour Permit form. You will receive an email confirmation that your permit has been approved.

2-3 weeks prior – Work with Scouts have them prepared for the Outing. Again, remember you have the resources of your patrol members to assign responsibilities.

- Organize pre-outing meeting/education/training at Troop meetings.
- Coordinate tent partners
- Coordinate cooking groups (ALL meals are to be organized as Patrol cooking groups). Scouts, even on 1-night backpacks, are to organize cooking groups for dinner and plan to cook, clean, etc. as a 4-person unit. This means all food will be shared within the cooking group.
- Help Patrols to be sure they have or can get or borrow necessary equipment for the outing.
- Coordinate gear sharing to reduce pack weight.
- Collect permission slips and funds and medical forms (required for activities of more than 3 days)
- Assign Trails & Tracks to a scout
- Review status with Adult Trek Leader and Outings Chair.

Day of the Outing and During the Outing

- At departure gather all in a group:
 - Take roll call, collect any missing permission slips, last minute review of weather conditions, gear, water and food, and seating assignments.
 - With adults hand out driving instructions, exchange cell phone numbers, review route with drivers, determine break stops.
- At the trail head:
 - Hand out maps, review route, break stops, trail etiquette, select your lead hiker, tail hiker, and medic.
 - Monitor Scouts' progress during the hike and determine if assistance is needed.
- Lead the outing theme, activity and skill that you planned.
- Have fun!

1 week After the Outing

- Determine reimbursements and request checks from Troop Treasurer
- Prepare Trip Log and submit to Outings Chair
- Prepare photos for Troop Historian
- Prepare Trails & Tracks