



- Asking qualified parents to help with troop meeting instruction on nature.
- Inviting parents to come along on the nature adventure.
- Asking parents to provide transportation, if necessary, for the nature adventure.

PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL

The PLC should meet in the middle of the previous month to plan troop activities for this program feature. If you don't complete all items on the following agenda, continue planning at PLC meetings after each troop meeting.

- Decide on a site for the nature adventure. If possible, choose a place with a variety of nature environments so that Scouts will find a wide range of trees, plants, and animals. If the site is in the vicinity of a fish hatchery or game or forest preserve, the troop might plan a visit. Assign someone to secure permissions, if necessary.
- Decide whether to make the big event a campout or 1-day event. Obviously, more activities are possible on a campout.
- Choose activities for the nature adventure. Consider the other ideas on these pages.
- Consider inviting a Nature merit badge counselor or a counselor for another nature-related badge to help with troop meeting instruction and on the nature adventure.
- Plan details of troop meetings.
- Hold a junior leader training session on sharing leadership (*Scoutmaster Handbook*).

FEATURE EVENT

Nature Adventure

Since the subject of nature is as big as all outdoors, there is a broad range of possible activities for the big event this month. The patrol leaders' council should make its choices based on the interests of the Scouts and their needs for advancement.

As one possibility, the PLC might use requirements for one of the nature-related merit badges as an outline for the nature adventure. As one example, if the focus were on the Nature merit badge, activities might include bird recognition practice, setting out bird feeding stations, plaster casting of animal tracks, identifying reptiles and amphibians, collecting insects, fishing, and identifying wild plants.

Unless one of the troop's activities will be a conservation project, allow some free time in the program so that patrols can do a conservation Good Turn to help young Scouts pass the requirement for a service project for Second Class.

Below are some other possibilities for the nature adventure.

Nature Trail

A troop nature trail is an excellent learning device—much better than nature books—because the Scouts can see, smell, and touch an object while they learn. Obviously your trail will not be as long, detailed, or as permanent as the one in the council's Scout camp. Assuming that you will use it just for one weekend, the markers might be simply 3" x 5" cards taped to the object. Ask a leader who is an amateur naturalist or a Nature merit badge counselor to choose the objects to be marked along the trail. Label them on the spot because desk-written signs are apt to be too formal. Here is an example of a good label: "This lead-pencil tree, red cedar, is the favorite wood for making pencils. It is also used for cedar chests. Smell it!" That's much better than "Red cedar—*Juniperus Virginia*, northeastern United States."

Here are other good signs:

"W-H-I-T-E pine—five letters to the name, five needles to the cluster."

"Bark like alligator skin? It's dogwood."

"Leaflets three—let it be! Poison ivy!"

It is not necessary to identify every tree, plant, and rock in the area. Your primary purpose should be to identify the most