

TROOP PROGRAM FEATURES



YEARLY PROGRAM PLANNING

In recent research the Boy Scouts of America determined that inadequately planned and executed troop meetings were the number one cause of boys leaving Scouting. The troop operations plan, introduced in 1989, addressed some of the issues dealing with "boring troop meetings" by adding

- A new-Scout patrol, to assist new Scouts in becoming comfortable in the troop environment and in learning basic Scout skills. Delivery of skills instruction was segmented according to a Scout's knowledge and abilities.
- An older-boy program, to provide challenging experiences for Scouts age 13 and older.

The challenge now is to help leaders and Scouts implement these ingredients to create a successful troop program.

Planning a troop program on an annual and a monthly basis is a new task for many leaders. Good planning and execution depends on (1) a Scoutmaster who understands the process, (2) trained junior leaders who can not only plan meetings but successfully execute them, (3) sufficient manpower in the form of assistant Scoutmasters, troop committee members, and parents, and (4) a troop of knowledgeable, informed parents.

Your first step in planning is to utilize the resources available to set goals for the troop. The next step will be to train your junior leaders in the planning process. Then give them the responsibility and authority to plan and implement the troop program. The final step will be to get your troop committee and parents to "buy in" to support this "boy-planned" program.

A Troop Program Planning Kit, Supply No. 33018, is available to assist you and your Scouts in planning a super program. The kit, consisting of workbook and video, will guide you through the basics of planning, from doing your homework to securing parental support for your program. The monthly program features in *Woods Wisdom*, *Troop Program Features*, No. 34251, and in *Scouting* magazine are

the other principal pieces of literature needed to run the program planning workshop.

The video in the Troop Program Planning Kit has three parts. Part I is primarily for Scoutmaster use and will take you through "doing your homework." This involves gathering information on district and council support, setting troop goals, developing a troop calendar, and training your senior patrol leader to run the annual troop program planning conference.

Part II of the video is a model for a troop program planning conference, to be previewed by you and your senior patrol leader, and then shown to members of the troop's actual planning session. (The Troop Program Planning Kit contains a detailed agenda for the troop planning conference, along with much of the support information you will need to make it effective.)

Part III of the video deals with *monthly* program planning and features a model of the planning portion of a patrol leaders' council meeting. You and your senior patrol leader will preview this prior to the troop planning conference; you'll then use it as the basis for a session at the conference devoted to planning the next month's troop program in detail.

THE ANNUAL PLANNING PROCESS

The Scouting program year begins in September, so you should start troop planning during the summer. There are five basic steps in the annual process.

1. Do your homework.
2. Get patrol input.
3. Conduct the annual troop program planning conference.
4. Obtain troop committee support.
5. Inform everyone.