

PROGRAM PLANNING: THE BASIS OF A SUCCESSFUL TROOP

Program planning is a simple but critical part of your troop's success. Throughout the process, remember your goal is to deliver high quality program to each boy and his family. It should be fun, exciting and focused on the purpose of Scouting.

Setting an annual Program Plan provides direction, a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment in a job well done. Planning also makes the best use of your valuable volunteer time.

Good planning annually, monthly and weekly yield quality program for boys. It prevents the #1 reason that boys drop out of Scouting – boring or poorly run weekly troop meetings. Make sure that your troop avoids the loss by having a good annual plan.

Planning Steps:

One of the most important responsibilities of the troop committee is to keep the troop operating with a first-rate, year-round program. The quality of the program will depend largely on the troop's committee giving the Scoutmaster and the assistants the help they need to run a successful program for the troop.

Troop Program Planning includes three steps that are dependent upon one another, usually these steps guarantee a strong troop program. **The steps are:**

- 1. Annual troop Program Planning Conference with the Scouts**
- 2. Monthly Troop Committee Meetings**
- 3. Monthly meetings of the adult and youth leaders to plan the month's weekly meetings and outings**

The Boy Scouts of America have a special Program Planning Kit available for checkout or purchase from the Scout Office.

Steps to having a great Annual Program Plan:

- 1. SET A DATE TO MEET** – Set a date in August with the committee and the troop's Scouts or Patrol Leaders' Council to establish an annual plan.
- 2. CHECK MEETING DATES** – Before this time, check with your chartering organization and school calendar to confirm available dates for troop meetings and events.
- 3. REVIEW LAST YEAR'S PROGRAM** – Which activities worked and which did not? Decide the activities and special meetings you would like to do again. Also, determine whether or not your budget was adequate for them.

PROGRAM PLANNING (Cont'd)

4. **SET NEW MEETING DATES** – Review the available meeting dates with the patrol leaders' council and committee and set dates for the coming year. Write troop meeting dates in your council calendar, extra copies are available through the Service Center for your committee members and leaders. Be careful to avoid holidays and school-break dates.
5. **SET COUNCIL AND DISTRICT DATES** – Review the enclosed council and district calendar and mark dates on your program schedule for district and council activities, Camporee, Junior Leader Training, Webelos Woods, Roundtables, and the like.
6. **SET OTHER TROOP DATES** – Set the dates for special activities your troop will be doing during the year, and put them in your calendar. These may include:
 - Weekend Campouts and Activities
 - Troop Fund Raiser (Council Popcorn Drive)
 - Courts of Honor
 - Scout Anniversary Week
 - Friends of Scouting – January or February
 - Summertime Activities and Summer Camp
 - High Adventure Trip
7. **SCHEDULE YOUR MONTHLY COMMITTEE AND PLC MEETINGS** – Set and schedule dates for your monthly PLC and Committee meetings to plan out the next month's activities and meetings (i.e., in September, you should be planning for October.) You should have a committee meeting and PLC meeting every month.
8. **SELECT MONTHLY THEMES** – Select monthly themes from the Woods Wisdom or the enclosed Program Highlights pamphlet and schedule them into your calendar. This will equip you with a them for weekly meetings and monthly campouts. **You will know you are doing well when you have a written plan for every weekly meeting based on Woods Wisdom or other monthly themes you develop on your own.**
9. **DEVELOP A BUDGET**- Based on the meetings and activities you have planned for the year, number of boys who are likely to advance, and the number of youth and adult members of the troop, figure out what your approximate yearly expenses will be. You will need to plan enough fund raising activities to cover these expenses in the following order of priorities:

The Budget Planning sheet included in this program planning kit will help you figure your expenses and design a unit budget.
10. **DISTRIBUTE THE PLAN** – Parents and Scouts will better participate in meetings and activities if they have a copy of the plan. Make sure that every family receives a copy of the troop calendar and monthly themes.

These are the basic steps your committee will need to do to have complete annual program plan and calendar. This calendar will help ensure that everyone in the troop knows exactly what is happening from month to month during the year. More important, it will help you plan in advance and avoid being caught off-guard by rapidly approaching deadlines. Remember that September brings the start of a full year of activities. When you have a complete yearly calendar published for all members, old and new, you will find it is easier to recruit not only boys but adult leaders.