

Patrol Camping Trip Planning

One of the most challenging leadership elements in your term as Patrol Leader is the Patrol Trip. This is a fun opportunity to do a trip with your patrol, to get advancement and to practice leadership. The following may help you in having a successful one:

- You must present a written proposal to the Troop Committee the month before the trip. So, if your patrol trip is in February, you need to present your plans at the January meeting. The proposal should say where you plan to go, the dates, what you will do (theme), and what the cost per person will be. Include any other details that the Troop Committee should know.
- Picking the Date: The PLC and Troop Committee have designated “recommended” weekends for patrol camping (see troop calendar). However, if this weekend presents scheduling conflicts for you/your patrol, you may select a different weekend in the same month. Remember, though, that there will be no “perfect” weekend—you have to set a date and move forward.
- Picking the Theme: It’s a good idea to get feedback from your Patrol members on this, but you will probably find that they are willing to go along with your preference, if you can make a good case for it being fun. Was there a trip that didn’t get enough votes for the troop calendar but still sounds fun? Some past successful trips have included fishing; aviation; biking; or any idea themed around a merit badge (geology, veterinary medicine, canoeing, etc.). Patrol trips are a great opportunity to focus on skills like pioneering, too!
- Picking the Location: This will often follow from the theme—for instance, Silver Comet Trail for biking; Warner Robins AFB for aviation; etc. Ask your patrol members about any family connections they have for camping property. State parks are another great resource. You can also use Camp Rainey Mountain, Scoutland, or Camp Rotary for free if they are available (contact Scout office).
- Setting the Budget: Food costs are usually \$2/meal/person. If you are camping at a paid campsite, determine the expense. Are there any programmatic costs for what you plan to do? Do you need to purchase any equipment?
- Other Planning Details: If you go outside our 10-county Cherokee District, there needs to be a Tour Permit filed with the Council office (available on our website). Also, you must have at least 2 adults from the troop attending the trip. Start recruiting them as soon as possible!
- Your patrol trip can be done in conjunction with another patrol if you choose, but both PLs should work together in that case! You can also invite the SPL and other non-patrol junior leaders to come on your trip.

A couple other pointers—Don’t worry if you have a small group, as this is often the most fun and flexible. But, the more you can start “promoting” the trip in advance, the better chance that it will make it onto your patrol members’ schedules. You can also help keep your numbers up by actively involving patrol members in the planning of the trip. But remember, the ultimate responsibility is up to you to make it happen! Good luck and happy camping!