

# Troop 121 High Adventure Instruction Guide



## WHY HIGH ADVENTURE?

High adventure has been described as "frosting on the Scouting cake." It's one of those highlights that will linger in your memory throughout your life. It should put into practice basic Scouting skills that have been developed over the first two or more years of a Scout's career. It also offers another element of your unit's program that will keep and sometimes attract the older Scouts. It exposes your Scouts to new specialized skills or a higher level of knowledge. High Adventure affords opportunities to apply life skills like planning, budgeting, organizing, and teamwork. It also exposes our Scouts to new dimensions of nature: its wonders, its power, and the development of respect for it.

## WHEN TO START PLANNING

The usual rule of thumb is the earlier the better. Most high adventures take place during the summer months when Scouts are out of school and the climate permits access to mountainous regions and camping activities. However, shorter trips are offered during the year and are usually events that offer training.

## SELECTING ADULT LEADERSHIP

One of the key elements of a successful high adventure trip is having trained adult leaders. As is the case with most positions, you want to select the most qualified adults possible. Our unit has a HAT Chairman that is assigned to the task of overseeing high adventure program planning. This individual is the key resource in the adult recruitment process. We also have a HAT Committee who plan and attend events to insure safety. It is essential that from the first thought of a high adventure trip to the final trip report, our HAT committee is informed and their support and guidance sought on a number of issues including adult leadership. To become a member of the Troop HAT team an adult must attend a Council Basic High

Adventure Training Course and receive a number that registers the scouter as a trained HAT individual.

After completing the training and before you can plan a trek you must have back packed with the troop at least once and have had back packing experience planning treks with large groups. Otherwise you must gain experience by planning treks with the current high adventure team.

HAT training is available is Basic, Desert, Winter and Water. To lead a troop trek you need to be qualified in the area that you plan to lead.

## WHERE TO GO

It is good to offer different activities therefore; it's always smart to find out what most interests your Scouts. Do they like flat terrain, mountainous regions, desert cross country trekking or a water event like canoeing? Are there some places they would like to go such as a island, foreign countries, another state or a high adventure camp?

High adventure trips can be broken into four categories:



## BSA NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE BASES:

These are sometimes referred to as the triple crown in Scouting. They include the Philmont Scout Ranch, the Northern Tier Canoe Base, and the Florida Sea Base. Each offers an excellent program that will provide a lifetime of memories.

## COUNCIL OPERATED HIGH ADVENTURE PROGRAMS:

Orange County Council offers a range of high adventure programs. The second half of this information guide contains a complete listing of opportunities. While not necessarily in the same class as the Triple Crown, most of these programs offer an excellent experience and are willing to tailor the event to your needs. Keep in mind these programs fill up fast with local councils, so be sure to contact them early. Speak to the program director or camping chairperson who can give you the type of details necessary to help make a determination as to whether this program meets your needs.

## NATIONAL PARKS / RIVERS / FORESTS:

As Philmont, Northern Tier and Sea Base are Scouting's Triple Crown, national parks are the crown jewels of our country. They are the

most pristine, beautiful, interesting, and challenging places in the USA. A wide variety of program opportunities exist depending upon your interests and experience level. Many of our federal installations provide group camping accommodations and staff personnel are most willing to assist you in planning your program, especially if you talk to them during the off season. For some, planning their own trip and conducting their own program in a national park is the ultimate in high adventure experience.

## PLANNING THE ITINERARY

Be sure to confirm in writing all details of the arrangements. Date, approximate time of arrival, location, phone number, contact name, costs, what's included (floor, beds, linen, towels, showers, food, advance deposit, number of adults/youth) if you're going to be delayed or if plans change in anyway, please contact your host and notify them. Be sure that you have three copies of each arrangement, one sent to your host, one travel copy that goes with you, and one you leave at home with a support person just in case.

As time permits, be sure you take in the sites that your group might be interested in: national parks or monuments, restaurants, amusement parks, swimming beaches, museums, military academies, souvenir hopping and special community celebrations. Be sure to find out how much time you might have to spend at each place. Communicate this information to the Scouts. Keep in mind that living where we do sometimes requires extensive travel time in order to get to your destination. Traveling can be a tiresome activity itself. Allow enough time to acclimate once arriving at your destination before beginning your program. This acclimation may require resting up from a long trip, getting adjusted to different climate or altitude, etc. This typically takes 24 to 48 hours for your body to adjust. Once you've finalized your itinerary, make sure you distribute copies to each parent. It's mandatory to include exact name/location/phone number information just in case an emergency situation develops back home and someone needs to reach you. Speaking of home, it's also important that you initiate contact on a regular basis with your support people so they know where you are and that things are going well and according to plan.

For remote trips where phone access is not available, making plaster shoe imprints and taking a photo of the hikers prior to departure are good ideas. Contacting the ranger and providing trek information including entry and

exit locations, exact trek path and dates is important to the safety of all involved.

## TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Your choice of transportation will likely be dictated by destination, cost and time. Regardless of your choice (plane, train, motor vehicle) there are certain considerations. If traveling by commercial carrier talk directly to the provider (i.e., Airline or Rail) about conditions concerning group travel. Do they offer discounts since many do depending on the size of your group? Are there special instructions concerning baggage, backpacks or equipment? Are there restrictions on any items such as gas for backpacking stoves? Do they make special boarding and seat assignment accommodations for early boarding or sitting together as a group? Are connections guaranteed and if so, what is the contingency arrangement if connections aren't made? Is a passport necessary and if so, how long in advance do you need to obtain one? Are there travel warnings for restrictions for the country you are interested in traveling to? What about meal options and advance ordering? Does it have a trailer hitch and wiring harness or an overhead rack? Can you put a car top carrier on the roof? What is the insurance coverage and cost? Will your personal insurance company cover you so you can waive the added costs? What is the procedure in case of a breakdown? Does it have air conditioning and other amenities? Can you take a seat out and leave it with them if you need more cargo space and less seating?

If you're planning on any extended travel, consider passenger room and enough space for gear. Both require more than you think. Better to have too much room than not enough. Bus travel, you should again talk directly to the provider and ask detailed questions. Get information on the cost of travel time and distance per day, insurance, amenities and the age or condition of the equipment to be used. Ask for references and then follow through and check them. Don't necessarily let cost be the determining factor in choosing a bus company. Ask around to find out who people would recommend and who to avoid.

## BUDGET

Cost will be a determining factor for some as to whether they will participate in a high adventure activity. For this reason, it's important for those planning the activity to keep costs as low as practical, prepare the budget early so that maximum planning time is obtained, and finally

discuss and offer the opportunities to raise income through fund raisers. Note, however, conducting fund raisers can be a substantial time commitment especially if you're also planning and organizing the trip, as well as serving as an adult leader. This is an excellent opportunity for non-leader-parent to organize and conduct. See the fundraising chairperson for ideas. Most high adventure budgets can be broken into half a dozen expense categories consisting of activity fee, travel, lodging, meals, insurance, and miscellaneous. What should be considered in each area?

### ACTIVITY FEE

There are fees required to cover program costs such as entrance fees to national parks, state parks, monuments, amusement parks, outfitter fees, tour fees, wilderness permits and admissions. Each of these should be considered for an event.

### TRAVEL

Cost of ticket for public transportation; additional costs of local transportation (i.e., taxi or bus if reaching destinations by plane train) and rental fees for vehicles rental and any baggage handling fees.

### LODGING

Consider hotel, campground, boat or other sleeping quarter fees.

### MEALS

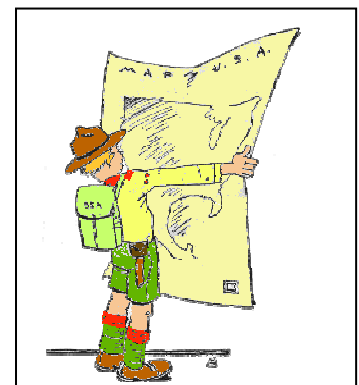
Include costs en route as well as after arriving at your destination; (NOTE - Are meals going to be prepared or purchased? Be sure if you're eating out that you set a reasonable amount such as \$30 per person per day.

### INSURANCE

Auto liability should meet the minimum BSA requires and group accident/health insurance maybe necessary when traveling a far distance or when changing modes of transportation several times.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Equipment such as fuel for camp stoves, training costs, patrol shirts patches for trading, gifts, photos, contingency funds for emergencies or unexpected costs.



## PROMOTION of Event

An event presentation at a meeting by showing a video or power point presentation can help with the announcement. Conduct a special meeting inviting all of those Scouts and their parents who meet the minimum requirement for your trip. During the promotion talk about dates, expected costs, possible itinerary highlights, qualifications and sign up procedure, have a display of personal equipment Scouts will need. Provide some backpacking food samples for the boys to try.

## SELECTING Crew MEMBERS

Crew size usually consists of a maximum of 12, 10 Scouts and 2 adults or 9 Scout and 3 adults. Some programs may require smaller crews. It is possible to increase the number of adults and reduce the number of Scouts to 8 and 4 respectively.

It's a good idea to include a couple of alternates, both Scouts and adults, just in case. Qualifications in Troop 121 are specific and can be challenged by any scout by setting a meeting with the scoutmaster to discuss waving certain requirements. Qualifications are outlined in the High Adventure Requirements presentation found on the troop web site.

## MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

For high adventure activities the Annual Health and Medical Record No. 34414 form must be completed within the past 12 months by a licensed medical practitioner or a patients assistant for all youth and adults. These forms are required for the protection of every crew member and to inform the tour leader of special conditions or activity restrictions. These forms should be carried en route on the trip and left in a designated location or with a staff member at base camp. In some cases it may be wise to carry them with you in the field.

## LEADERSHIP DUTIES ADULTS AND YOUTH

High adventure trips can take months of careful planning, preparation, and training. The longer, more complicated the adventure the more work is involved before you leave home. After deciding which adults will be going meet and discuss who will do what to plan for the trek. Assign tasks and set up a time line. Set up additional meetings as follow up to insure the time line is being met. Involve the scouts whenever possible.

## EQUIPMENT

The type of trip will be the determining factor in the type of equipment needed. During a National or council sponsored high adventure program, they will frequently provide a list of suggested equipment. Terrain, weather conditions, and remote locations of most high adventure treks are no place for substandard equipment so follow their directions carefully.

## HIGH ADVENTURE TREK GEAR

Pack rain cover or Duck-back  
Sleeping Bag – Condition worthy  
2-Hiking shorts  
Sleeping Pad  
3 T-shirts 1 long pants  
1 Polar Fleece Jacket  
3 underwear  
Rain gear  
Pen or pencil  
3 Wool socks  
3 Wicking socks  
1-Two liter water bladder or equivalent  
Camera  
50' Nylon cord  
Small flashlight  
Knife  
Bandana  
Fire Starters and/or Bic-type lighter  
Hat or Cap  
Toothbrush/paste  
Soap - biodegradable  
Backpack towel  
Sun block  
Bug repellent  
Compass and Map  
Zip lock bags  
Cup / bowl / spoon  
Money  
Flash Light or head light  
Trek hiking poles  
Water Treatment Devise or tablets



## OPTIONAL:

Sunglasses

Camp shoes-sandals or sneakers

Gaiters

Cramp-Ons

Gloves

Sleep wear (Sweats or light weight pajamas)

Two way radio

GPS System

## TYPICAL HIGH ADVENTURE TREK CREW EQUIPMENT

Two Crew members to split items:

Tent 2 man

Ground cover

1 Large pot with lid

1 Frying pan with lid

1 Large spoon

1 Plastic spatula

Soap / bleach pad to clean with

1 Backpacking stoves

2-3 Fuel bottles Depending upon length of trek

1 Nylon water bag

1 Small plastic trowel

1 Roll Toilet paper

1 First Aid kit

1 packet of water purification tablets / crystals or water filter pump

2 Maps

Stove repair kit

Duct Tape

Garbage bags

Leatherman - type tool

Plastic measuring cup

Bear bags and rope

## CANOE TREK

Follow the outfitters recommendation. Otherwise, pack gear in a plastic bag then pack the plastic bag in a duffle bag so that your gear lays low and flat in the canoe. A second pair of dry camp shoes or sandals to let your feet dry out is recommended. As for crew equipment on a canoe trek, it is

the same as on backpacking. Add a portable folding saw for a camp fire and a small folding chair.

#### ADDITIONAL ITEMS NEEDED ARE:

Canoes Canoe paddles

PFD – Coast Guard Approved

Swim suit

100' Heavy duty poly-type rope

Make sure regardless of the type of backpack used that it's properly fitted and adjusted with a load. Be prepared to spend time on this with your Scouts before or during your first training outing. The clothes listed includes a set to wear. Look for things that can serve a double purpose. Use the rain jacket as a windbreaker. The web belt could be used for a pack strap. The sleeping bag stuff sack becomes a pillow case. Small nylon bags are very handy for personal gear such as sunscreen, cameras, snacks on backpacks or canoe trips.

#### PACKING

Organization of your equipment is a key element in locating important items quickly. The more frequent the use over the course of the day the closer or more accessible it needs to be. Food and trash should be packed in a bear bag and place on the outside of your back pack.

Two -man tent split items - One person carries the actual tent and the other carries the rain fly, ground cloth, tent poles and stakes. Fill the bottom with ground pads, tent, followed by sleeping bags followed by clothes and other personal gear. For the small stuff that you may need while on the water, bring along 1 day pack per canoe. In it put things like rain gear, water bottles, camera, sun screen, food, snacks, etc.

#### TRAINING

As indicated previously, planning is essential to a successful high adventure experience. Training is no less important. Divide the training into two general areas. The first is more preliminary informational or educational. The second is the physical training. The first step is to try and determine what you and your crew needs to know or skills needed to have a safe and successful trip. Contact the host agency (if there is one) and ask them for help. Many times they have printed information that will give you some insight into how to prepare. Review the resource list for books that give you the how to information. Once again, talk to people who have been

there or at least have some experience with the type of activity you will be doing. Next, make a list of the information and skills. Set meetings with the crew on a periodic basis several times before the trip for a variety of reasons; including collecting money, determining leadership roles, developing expectations, communicating information and training. As in Woodbadge we're taught to utilize our resources, so who can help you share information or teach skills? Don't be afraid to assign each crew member a topic to present. Be sure and give them the resources they need and talk to them about the important elements to be covered. Invite the parents to the meetings. Items to include for the informational and educational session.

Foot care  
Equipment and how to pack it  
Water purification  
Hypothermia Hydration / dehydration  
Food preparation  
Proper dress - layering  
Weather and climate  
Use / care of backpack stoves  
Knots  
First aid  
Sanitation  
Map and compass skills  
Swimming skills / water safety



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Part of the fun of doing any high adventure is getting ready for the trip. Start slow and start early and take a five mile hike with daypacks some evening in your own community. From these you might want to progress to day hike with a camp stove lunch.

A duty roster to organize the crew leadership is essential. Have the crew take turns reading the map and using the compass or setting the pace. Be sure to reinforce positive actions and strongly discourage negative ones. Develop some crew expectations with everyone contributing input. At the end of the day, conduct debriefing session. What did we do right? What went wrong? How can we improve? Include comments about teamwork and personal dynamics.

Besides crew training, it's important to comment about personal training, especially the adult members of the crew. To best enjoy the trip you need to be in tip-top shape. The better conditioning you are in, the more you will enjoy your adventure. In addition to improving your aerobic conditioning, you will want to make sure anyone who is doing backpacking trip and has new boots, breaks them in. Even with the non break in boots, 50 miles of walking and break is required. This will also help condition your feet. Finally, be sure to check on any specialized training that might be required. For example, Philmont and Northern Tier requires at least one adult adviser per crew be certified in CPR and basic first aid. Other programs may have similar special training requirements.

## AWARDS

The biggest award a youth receives from a high adventure trip is the experience, the sense of accomplishment, teamwork and personal development. That alone will be revered by many of your Scouts, as their greatest Scouting achievement. However, recognition of achievement is part of the Scouting program and high adventure participation for both Scouts and leaders warrants special recognition. As you plan your adventure be sure to think about advancement and recognition opportunities. Merit badges are good examples. Some merit badges might be earned as a result of your high adventure and some careful advanced planning (hiking, sailing, cycling, backpacking, etc.) For Venture Scouts, most high adventure activities fulfill advancement requirements for Bronze, Gold and Ranger awards. In addition to merit badges, other opportunities await. The most prominent is the 50 Miler Award. It has special requirements beyond traveling fifty miles by foot or float so be sure to check it out. You might also have an opportunity, depending on your itinerary, to earn historic trails award or international activity patch (if traveling outside the USA). If your adventure is to a national Scout base or local council sponsored activity, you will probably receive some sort of participation patch. If you are going to some place that doesn't issue participation patches, look for other opportunities. Many national parks have patches they sell through their concessionaires or through various volunteer support agencies. You might also consider designing and ordering your own patch. Finally, don't overlook the generic BSA High Adventure patch available at the Scout shop.

## TOUR PERMITS

Either local (less than 500 miles) or national (500 miles or more) a tour permit is required as part of your high adventure trip. All BSA sponsored programs will require that you present your permit upon arrival. The permits are available at the council office in Santa Ana and in Laguna Hills. Instructions are printed on the form.

## PICTURES

Crew pictures, both formal and informal are an important method of recording your high adventure event. I believe all three national bases do formal group picture

## PRE-TRIP MEETING

After everything is complete reconfirmed all travel arrangements, purchased all the extra items schedule the final pre-trip information session. Attendance with at least one parent should be mandatory. All crew members should bring their packs / bags with all personal gear. Issue the final itinerary detailing all of the travel plans and go over it with parents. Talk about sending money and any special arrangements. Conduct complete item by item equipment inspection. Have everyone empty the entire contents of their packs and with parent's assistance and run through the list to ensure nothing is missing. At the end of the meeting all the packs are loaded into a vehicle for transport to the train station, airport, bus, etc. Give out the Class B travel shirts, if you have one (have permanent markers available to put names into the shirts immediately) and review uniform expectations.

Talk about behavior expectations.

1. Safety first. All decisions should be based on the group and individuals best welfare.

2. All crew members are expected to conduct themselves by the Scout Oath and Law and should never do anything that would cause harm or discredit to themselves, our crew, or the name of the Boy Scouts of America.

3. A brief meeting by the crew chief that explains that everyone is required to have fun however, we work first, and then play. You may wish to suggest some topics for the crew chief to discuss in advance.

## TIME LINE

High adventure trips require extensive planning which takes a fair amount of lead time. A typical trip can take approximately a year in lead time. However, the 3 BSA national bases are becoming so popular that reservations are required anywhere from 1 ½ to 3 years in advance to secure a spot. Being flexible can insure a shot at Northern Tier with 9 months lead time. Contact the Program Department at the Council office and inquire about the reservation procedures for the bases of interest, but do it well in advance of when you think you might want to go.

## Boy Scout Camps With High Adventure Programs

### High Sierra

The High Sierra Adventure Base, fifty miles east of Fresno, at a seven thousand-foot elevation, has 7- to 8-day wilderness backpacking expeditions into Kaiser, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes and Ansel Adams Wilderness areas. The aquatics camp has Hobie Cat sailing, water skiing, and BSA Lifeguard program.

### Southern Sierra Council

2417 M St. Bakersfield, CA 93301

Tel: 805-325-9036 Fax: 805-325-2122

E-mail: [bkdscoouts@hotmail.com](mailto:bkdscoouts@hotmail.com)

### Kern

Camp Kern is located in the Sierra National Forest between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks on Huntington Lake, at an elevation of 7,000 feet. It has a high adventure program that includes mountaineering, hiking, advanced outdoor skills, backpacking treks in the Sierra Nevada's, mountain biking, low C.O.P.E., Aquatics Camp (sailing, water skiing, knee boarding, and other aquatic activities), wilderness treks, swimming in natural mountain stream pools under a water fall, rugged hiking to Kaiser Peak, rock climbing and repelling. Programs can be customized to fit a troop's needs. The camp also has a very large merit badge program, aquatics program, fishing, shooting sports, nature hikes, nature and conservation program, candle making, black powder rifle shooting, gold panning, canoeing, mountain biking, nature hikes, climbing wall, obstacle course, astronomy, and tomahawk throwing.

Southern Sierra Council  
2417 M Street Bakersfield, CA. 93304  
Tel: 805-325-9036 Fax: 805-325-2122  
E-mail: bkdscoouts@hotmail.com  
Camp Kern  
E-mail: campkern1@lightspeed.net  
Web: <http://www.lhcbsa.org/>

### Log Cabin

From early to late July, the Log Cabin Wilderness Camp, fourteen miles from Yosemite National Park, has a two-week program for crews from 6 to 32 people. The first week is spent at base camp training. Programs include cross-country backpacking, peak bagging, COPE, glacier course, glacier climb on Mount Connes (12,590 feet), solo quest, use of crampons, ice ax, etc. Some personal special equipment is not supplied by camp. Tents, stoves, cooking utensils, fuel and food are provided. This is not a coed program. From late July to late August, the camp has a 7-day highcountry gateway backpacking program for crews up to 15 people with guide and center camp staff available to plan and lead backpacking trips into Yosemite National Park, Hoover Wilderness, Inyo National Forest, and Mono Basin Scenic National Forest Area. Staff can also provide instruction in cooking procedures, back country first aid, back country ethics, sanitation and water purification, and map and compass skills. Coed groups are handled. Custom treks can be organized. Tents, stoves, cooking utensils, fuel and food are provided. The camp can provide freeze-dried food and backpacks.

Los Angeles Area Council  
2333 Scout Way Los Angeles, CA 90026-4995  
Tel: 213-413-4400 Fax: 213-483-6472  
Web: <http://www.boyscoutsla.org/>  
Web: <http://www.trappertrails.org/>

### Northern Tier

During the summer, Northern Tier operates three program bases. The oldest is Charles L. Sommers, situated on the southern edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. It has 6 to 10 day canoe trips into the BWCA and Quetico Provincial Park in Canada. The newest is the Atikokan, Ontario canoe base that has trips north of Quetico. The Northern

Expeditions base in Bissett, Manitoba, Canada also offers 10-day Fly-in/Flyout canoe and fishing expeditions. Each crew has an experienced guide along with them. Food and equipment are provided. Applications are accepted in the beginning of April for the following year. In the winter, the Okpik program has cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, ice fishing, instruction in winter camping, and camping in snow shelters. Scouts are provided cold-weather inserts to use in their sleeping bags. Participants need to supply their own cold weather clothing. Program brochures are available. To talk to people who have been to Sommers or look at comments about the camp, send a message to "Canoe@dynapolis.com".

#### Northern Tier

P.O. Box 509 Ely, MN 55731-0509

Tel: 218-365-4811 Fax: 218-367-3112

E-mail: [info@ntier.org](mailto:info@ntier.org) Web: <http://www.ntier.org/>

#### Pendola

From late June to early August, the Pendola high adventure base, located at Camp John Mensinger in the Stanislaus National Forest above Beardsley, California offers six-day programs that include mountain biking, rock climbing, caving, cycling, inner tubing, and C.O.P.E. All equipment except personal gear is provided.

#### Greater Yosemite Council

4031 Technology Dr. Modesto, CA 95356

Tel: 209-523-5694 Fax: 209-523-2836

Web: <http://www.bsa-gyc.org>

Fax: 715-234-1147

#### Philmont

The Philmont Scout Ranch has 5 to 28 day backpacking trips of various degrees of difficulty, 8-day horseback trips in the beautiful Sangre de Christo mountains in northern New Mexico. There are instructional stations along the treks. Many consider this the premier Scout camp. The training center offers a wide range of conferences and courses for Scouters throughout the summer. Call or write for the latest activity program. Applications for treks are accepted in early April for the following year. If you cannot get in then, you can sign up for two years away. In the winter, Philmont has Kanik, an Okpik winter camping program comparable to that provided by Northern Tier, Tomahawk, Tahosa, and several other winter

camp. To talk to people who have been to Philmont or look at comments about the camp, send a message to "Philmont@dynapolis.com".

Philmont Scout Ranch  
Cimarron, NM 87714  
Tel: 505-376-2281  
October Reservations:  
Tel: 407-875-8991

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Now that you have made it to the bottom of this long document, remember this program is all about the BOYS, so please keep this in mind as you plan for a fantastic time.

Thank you for volunteering,

Mike Pennington  
Co-Founder – Troop 121