

First Year Camper Leader's Guide

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TrailsHead Leader's Guide

Introduction

TrailsHead is the first year camper program that has been running at Camp Olmsted of Goshen Scout Reservation for three years running. It is an all day program that runs Monday through Friday with several activities that will keep scouts interested throughout the week.

At its core, TrailsHead is just like any other first year camper program; that is, the scouts will learn what is needed for rank advancement such as knots, first aid, wood tools use and safety, compasses, and cooking. However, scouts attending the program will also earn four merit badges – swimming, mammals study, fingerprinting, sports – on top of whatever merit badges they choose to do at Handicrafts (there have been TrailsHead scouts who earned seven merit badges on top of the rank advancement).

Additionally, TrailsHead has two special activities during the week. The first, occurring on Wednesday night, is the overnigher. As this happens on tin foil dinner night, the scouts will be cooking their own meals at the place we are camping. After each scout is fed, they are allowed to go swimming in the lake (the camping ground is right on the water) and we have our own campfire ceremony near the end of the night – complete with smores. Our other special activity, the five mile hike, happens on Friday afternoon. The scouts will hike two and a half miles to a swimming hole called swinging bridge, which has rapids the scouts can play in, while fulfilling the second class requirement 1B.

Overall, TrailsHead will keep the scouts occupied during the entire week while also managing to keep each scout entertained.

TrailsHead Leaders Guide

What To Expect

Each scout who passes the swim test by Tuesday afternoon will walk away with at least four merit badges – swimming, mammals study, fingerprinting, and sports – and those who did not complete the swim test will walk away with at least three. Additionally, scouts can work on Handicrafts merit badges, such as basketry and leatherworks, in their free time. If a scout has their totin’ chip, which TrailsHead will cover by Tuesday morning, then they can also try for woodcarving.

Rank advancement, though, lies at the core of TrailsHead, and below is a list of all the requirements the scouts will fulfill:

| Tenderfoot | Second Class | First Class |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2 | 1a | 1 |
| 3 | 1b | 6 |
| 4a | 2b | 7a |
| 4b | 2c | 7b |
| 5 | 2e | 7c |
| 11 | 4 | 8a |
| 12a | 6a | 8c |
| 12b | 6c | 8d |

At the end of the week, each troop will receive back a progress sheet for the troop listing each scout. On the sheet, each requirement will be marked as to whether the scout mastered the skill, learned the skill, or covered the skill.

For continued reading enjoyment, there is also an overnighter and five mile hike supplemental attached to this document.

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Equipment Checklist for Scouts

The following is a checklist of what each scout should bring to him with camp. However this only a supplemental to that which the camp's checklist provides, and it is also not absolutely necessary for the scouts to bring everything below. Compasses, for example, can be borrowed from the TrailsHead program shed if need be.

- Compass
- Sleeping bag (overnighter)
- Ground Cloth (overnighter)
- Flashlight
- Two Quart Canteen (overnighter / five mile hike)
- Water Shoes
- Swimming Suit

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Overnighter Supplemental

Intro: Weather permitting, the overnighter will occur Wednesday evening starting at 5 pm. The scouts meet in a designated area, from which they walk a short ways to the campsite. As this is the same night as tin foil dinners, the scouts will be cooking their own meals once they arrive at the campsite (all food will be provided). Afterwards, they will each get to choose their own sleeping site, and will be given the option of sleeping outside, although each scout will help pitch a tent. They will then be able to go swimming since the campsite is right on the water, and a campfire ceremony conducted by the scouts will happen as night begins to fall.

Requirements Fulfilled: The overnighter is the best part of the week for everyone. But besides having fun, the scouts will be able to fulfill the tenderfoot requirements for pitching a tent and an overnight campout. They will also be able to fulfill those relating to cooking.

Location & Time: The scouts will meet for the overnight at 5 pm and leave by 5:15 from the field in between the Trading Post and the Administration/First Aid Lodge. The campsite we use is called Club Med and is still inside Olmsted, so if a scout needs nighttime medication, then he can walk back with a buddy to get them. We will leave from the campsite at 6:45 am, the scouts will be woken up at 6, and they will be back in their campsite by 7:05 at the very latest, in time for breakfast.

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Five Mile Hike Supplemental

Intro: What is the five mile hike you may ask? Well it's just the most fun the scouts will have during the entire week! It starts out in the field in between the Trading Post and the Admin, goes out toward the Camp Olmsted sign, across the dam, then takes a right through Camp Bowman's shooting sports. We then follow this trail for about a mile and a half, and we eventually arrive at the Swinging Bridge Resort, which is the best swimming hole for at least a thousand miles around. The scouts can go swimming there, plus, as we are leaving before lunch, we'll get to have a picnic once we get there. The scouts get in the water, splash around, and we leave after a couple hours of swimming.

Preparation: The physical activity for the hike is not strenuous so most scouts will be able to complete it with little trouble. However, each scout does need to be prepared, and the most important item is water and plenty of it too. Also, as swinging bridge is a swimming hole and since we will be spending a considerable amount of time there, all scouts will need a swimming suit and a towel. Water shoes are strongly recommended, as well as compasses since we will be fulfilling a requirement for second class (1b).

Location & Time: We leave for Swinging Bridge at 11:30 am, arrive around 12:30 pm and stay until 3:30 pm. Scouts will be having lunch at swinging bridge and since we'll be getting back before 5 pm, scouts will get back to camp in plenty of time for dinner.

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FAQ

Are leaders needed on the overnighter or five mile hike?

Leaders are never required to attend any of the TrailsHead activities. Of course, though, leaders are always invited.

Is TrailsHead useful for scouts that are already tenderfoot? Second class?

During the course of the week, a tenderfoot scout may find that he already knows the material being covered. However, a tenderfoot scout will find that there is still plenty of new material for him to learn. Also, all scouts will be able to earn at least three merit badges (four if they pass the swimming test). A second class scout, though, will most likely be bored for the majority of the week.

What is the focus on merit badges versus rank advancement?

Monday is the only day that will specifically devote to merit badges. Throughout the remainder of the week, only swimming continues to be addressed. We complete mammals study and fingerprinting the first day, and we tie in the requirements for sports merit badge into the rank advancement. To sum up, rank advancement is the core of TrailsHead and the four merit badges a scout can earn are secondary, although we will ensure that each scout is able to complete each merit badge to the best of his ability.

Will the schedule change?

On Sunday night, each troop will receive a TrailsHead program schedule. However, depending upon weather or the progress of scouts, the schedule may change from time to time. But, we will not change the schedule without informing troops first, and we will not make any major changes. We will also definitely cover everything on the program schedule without exception.

Will scouts have fun?

YES! Having fun is the primary goal of TrailsHead as a scout will not remain in boy scouts unless his first time at summer camp is a good experience.

TrailsHead Program Schedule

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------------------|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 9 – 10 am | Swimming | Swimming | Swimming | Swimming | Swimming |
| 10 – 11 am | Fingerprinting | Cooking, Wood Yard Safety, Pocketknife Safety, Fire Building | Overnight Preparation | Knots | Leadership Building Exercises |
| 11 – 12 pm | Mammals Study | | Compass and Maps | | |
| 2 – 3 pm | Sports | First Aid | Orienteering Course | Pioneering Projects | Five Mile Hike |
| 3 – 4 pm | Mammals Study | | | Ecology | |
| 4 – 5 pm | Rifle, Archery, Handicrafts, Free Swim | Rifle, Archery, Handicrafts, Free Swim | Rifle, Archery, Handicrafts, Free Swim | Rifle, Archery, Handicrafts, Free Swim | |
| 7 – 8 pm | First Aid; CPR | Clothes Flotation | Overnighter (into Thursday morning) | Overnighter Rain Check | Free Boating |