

Adult Leaders and Cost are listed first because these two items constrain your choices. Notice that a week of backpacking in southwest Arkansas can be done for less than half the cost of a council summer camp.

I. ADULT LEADERS

- 1. Get Specific Commitments to Specific Dates, with an Extra Leader, and Remind Frequently**
- 2. Age and Number**
 - minimum of two adults, one 21 and one 18, one registered and one registered or parent
 - an additional leader for every ten boys
 - 18 year old high school seniors can be adult leaders, but inform parents ahead of time
 - remember, some backcountry sites limit crew size to 10 or 12
- 3. Certifications** – see [Tour Permit Form](#) and [Guide to Safe Scouting \(pdf download\)](#) or ([online html](#))
 - set up account for online training and tour permits at BSA myscouting.org & [online learning center](#)
 - also reread the applicable portions of the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#)
 - A1. Youth Protection (all trips) – one adult and all non-parent adults, every 2 years, free online
 - A2. Weather Hazards (all trips, new) – one adult, every ??? years, free online
 - A3. CPR (all trips) – one adult, every year, \$85 through redcrossdallas.org / [take a class](#)
 - B1. Safe Swim Defense (swim, canoe) ([outline](#)) – one adult, every 2 years, free online
 - B2. Safety Afloat (canoe) ([outline](#)) – one adult per ten boys w/ min two adults, every 2 years, free online
 - B3. SSD & SA both *recommend* having a BSA Lifeguard – good for 3 years
 - C1. Trek Safely ([outline](#)) – one adult, every ??? years, free online
 - C2. Trek Safely *recommends* Wilderness First Aid Basics (WFAB) as the appropriate first aid training
 - one adult, every year(?) – monthly over two Saturdays through redcrossdallas.org / [take a class](#)
 - / wilderness first aid, cost \$130 plus another \$30 to add CPR
 - D1. Climb On Safely ([outline](#)) – follow it, but a Rock Climbing Instructor will already be certified in it
 - D2. Climb on Safely requires a certified Rock Climbing Instructor, one adult every 2 years
 - spring & fall most years, cost \$50, through [Circle Ten Council](#) (scroll to bottom of page)
 - with at least 5 students you might get a separate non-Sunday course
 - reciprocity with all 5 major Texas councils (FW, SA, Hou, Aus), but probably not BTSR
 - E. Shooting (NRA Firearms Instructor), one adult every ??? years
 - cost \$130, through [Circle Ten Council](#) (scroll to bottom of page)
 - NRA certification should be recognized nationwide by all councils
 - F. consult Guide to Safe Scouting about any other risky activity like COPE, horses, snorkeling, etc.

II. COST

- 1. Gas**
 - \$3.00/gal at 20 miles/gal x 5 people/van x 2 round trip = \$0.06/mile of destination distance each person
- 2. Food & Related Supplies**
 - can easily do for \$65.00 per person for a week – see [Sample Backpacking Trip Budget & Food](#)
- 3. Camp Fees**
 - national forests and grasslands are free
 - national parks and wildlife refuges are fairly cheap
 - scout camps are usually cheap when unstaffed but expensive when staffed
 - state parks can be expensive, but the stake has had a youth pass for entrance (not campsite) fees
- 4. Other High Adventure Costs**
 - checking out rock climbing gear from Circle Ten Council is cheap
 - canoes, horses, and rock climbing guides cost more
- 5. Stake is currently chipping in \$65.00 per youth with a desire that each youth earn the rest**

III. PAPERWORK

- 1. Permission from Carrollton Stake via email needed:**
 - if it is over 500 miles as crow flies (north or east Ark, northeast NM, maybe southeast NM)
 - or if it is a major activity and not at a scout camp
- 2. Reservation / Permission from Landowner (if needed)**
 - plan early: some sites may be fully reserved six months to a year ahead of time
 - make sure your crew is not too big; many backcountry sites cap crew size at 10 or 12
- 3. Tour Permit**
 - file with council office two weeks before departing
 - [Local Tour Permit](#) if under 500 miles, [National Tour Permit](#) if over 500 miles driving distance
 - information about filing [online tour permits](#) through [myscouting.org](#)
- 4. Physicals** – [new form](#) beginning January 1, 2010
 - only good for a year
 - need all parts if activity is over 72 hours long, a resident camp, OR involves a service project or a high adventure level of exertion
- 5. Swim Checks** – there is no single national form, but these are typical: [Sample 1](#) and [Sample 2](#)
 - although not required by the Guide to Safe Scouting, councils often require that swim checks be administered by a BSA or Red Cross certified Lifeguard
- 6. Permission / Consent Forms from Parents** – [BSA form](#) is not required but it is very good
- 7. Leave Copy of Itinerary with Parents**
- 8. Check the weather**
 - get the zip code by city from [usps.com](#), then the weather from [weather.com](#)
 - I also pay attention to the sunrise/sunset time and the moon phase
 - there is no paperwork for this, but this is the stage at which to do it

IV. FOOD

- 1. See my [Sample Backpacking Menu](#)**

V. GEAR

- 1. Wearing a Backpack** – this is the most important hint I can teach you quickly
 - good hipbelts are now widespread, but most shoulder straps are still deficient on external frame packs
 - good shoulder straps attach not only above the shoulder, but also behind the middle of the back
 - this allows you to raise and lower how the pack rides when you cinch the shoulder straps
 - see my longer comments in [Backpack Basics](#) and check your gear! **THIS MATTERS.**
 - shakedown hikes won't get boys in shape, and most are already in better shape than the adults
 - what shakedown hikes can do is teach the boys how to wear their packs and to pace themselves
- 2. Backpacking Weight**
 - 1/6 of bodyweight is ideal, 1/4 of bodyweight is max unless very experienced
 - see [Backpack Basics](#) and [Sample Backpacking Gear Checklist](#) to see how it adds up
- 3. Master Checklist**
 - use the attached [Sample Backpacking Gear Checklist](#) as a starting point to develop your own list
 - never take everything, but do make a conscious decision about whether each item goes

VI. DESTINATION-ITINERARY

or now that your are out the door, where do you go?

1. The Rules about Getting There

- A. BSA says all driving except short trips is to be in daylight – [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) p.49 #7
- B. BSA says max drive time is 10 hrs/day with frequent stops, more stops if not switch drivers – #10
 - driving distance/time calculator at mapquest.com/directions
- C. Stake says 500 mile limit as the crow flies
 - distance calculators at mapcrow.info and geobytes.com
 - there is only a 10 mile difference in distance by crow to the north and south trailheads at Guadalupe Mtns, but it is a 2 hour difference by car
- D. Stake says don't stay out over Sunday (Stake may waive C& D for Philmont)

2. Practical Limits that these Rules Place on Where You Can Go

Permissible:

- Texas: anything that is not close to the Rio Grande Valley
- West Texas: Guadalupe Peak, Carlsbad Cavern, Davis Mtns, BTSR, Big Bend
- SE New Mexico: can probably get permission for Cloudcroft (507 miles) or Ruidoso (514 miles)
- Oklahoma: anything worth driving to like Wichita Mtns, Illinois River, etc
- SW Arkansas: anything in the southwest quarter
- NW Arkansas: Camp Orr, Buffalo River, Buffalo Trail, Spring River, west portion of Ozark Trail
- SE Arkansas: east half of Ouachita Mtns, but why drive past the west half?

Prohibited:

- Hueco Tanks in El Paso, White Sands
- northern New Mexico (although Philmont can be a special case with permission)
- western New Mexico (why go there anyway?)
- the extreme northeast corner of Arkansas
- any state that does not border Texas, including Colorado

Conclusion: I miss the mountains of Colorado and northern New Mexico, but there is still more than enough good stuff available within the spirit of the Church's budget allowance program and these safety rules to accomplish your goals in the lives of young men

3. [Places to Go Camping, Etc.](#)

- look at the clusters of dots on the map
- see the list of campsites
- see the list of activities
- see the maps and photos that go with each campsite
- see the 25 week-long high-adventure itineraries
- please [email me](#) your comments and photos for inclusion

END