

How Scouting Works: Year 2015



Pilot Roll-out

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2015 – The Vision

How Scouting Works In a Northern Star Council Pack/Troop/Crew

Everyone is familiar with the idea that we must know something about history if we are to avoid mistakes in the future. That said, once we have a grasp of our history, we can all agree that the future is more important than the past, and that healthy change is key to getting there.

This, then, is a story about the future – only a short distance into the future – but a story that will come to pass because our new five-year Council Strategic Plan shows the way.

In the year 2015, the volunteers, parents and youth members of Pack/Troop/Crew 101 are very proud of their Scouting program.

By virtue of Scouting's and 101's good reputation, their chartering organization gives active support to the administrative decisions and goals of the "Collective 101 Committee", and the neighborhood and community are well aware that local kids who are in Scouting are children with a bright future.

The adult volunteers are respected and thanked for their mentorship to kids, and the adults also have fun and are a well organized team that emulates a "Model Unit" program collectively for 101 and within each "Core Committee" for the Pack, the Troop, and the Crew.

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The local schools are supportive of the informal educational benefits of Scouting, and they conduct school field trips to the Base Camp at Fort Snelling. The principal at the elementary school cannot allow recruitment flyers to be delivered to the classrooms directly, but she does support the Pack volunteers in staging a skills demonstration in the lunchroom over lunch periods, on the day before the Parent Open House. At the Open House, the Pack runs a pinewood derby track for fun, a rain gutter regatta, and a marshmallow catapult for all kids – registering new Cubs and taking names for an invitation to a pizza party to learn more about Scouting.

The high school permits the Council to conduct an annual interest survey, which gives the school information about their students' career interests and provides the Crew Committee with leads on students with interests that match up with potential programming of the Crew.

The Pack has grown steadily over the past five years, and is now at 80 boys since implementing the Lion Cub program for kindergarten boys. A larger percentage of the families that would have been interested in Scouting have a chance to join before they get too busy with other choices available to kindergartners, now that kindergarten is a daylong program no different than the other grades in elementary school. They join, knowing that Scouting is a K-12 program that seamlessly supports them as parents, without interruption or significant distinction between Cubs, Scouts, or Venturers in the 101 family and Program progression.

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The Troop has also grown steadily, with more Webelos to include, and more interaction between the Pack and Troop under the guidance of the “Collective Scouting Committee” that coordinates planning and administrative needs for the Pack/Troop/Crew 101 Scouting family. With a return to a one year Webelos program, and the transition of fifth graders into a New Scout patrol at the beginning of the fifth grade year, there is a clearer focus on the progressively challenging levels of program within the Troop, with fifth graders learning basic skills and completing the Arrow of Light if needed



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TAs a result, the Troop is strong, with 60 Scouts and 25 registered committee members. 12- through 14-year old Scouts have age-appropriate programming within the Troop, focused on exciting outdoor activities, Scouting skills, merit badge work, and leadership development within their Patrols and the Troop. Scouters work with all the Scouts to help each find his own way on the Trail to Eagle, recognizing that each Scout is unique and can best succeed when he is supported and counseled, rather than pushed into an adult-designed path. Order of the Arrow elections are held each year, and 101 Scouts are active in the local Chapter and the Lodge.

The Crew is also strong and thriving. As Scouts in the Troop reach 14 or complete eighth grade, they are counseled by Troop Scouters to continue their tenure in the Program by moving into Crew 101 and graduating to the higher-adventure and older-adolescent programming of the Crew. That consistent focus on managing the older-Scout transition has resulted in over 60% of Scouts staying the 101 family through the Crew.

The 32 youth members of the Crew decide on and carry out their own challenging activities and outings, with the support of an Advisor and 7 Associate Advisors. In addition to working with the Troop to graduate older Scouts into the Crew, Crew 101 actively recruits siblings and friends of those Scouts, works the leads from the community high school, and welcomes girls who are or have been Girl Scouts and are seeking greater Scouting opportunities.

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The Committee Chair of each 101 Unit also serves on the Collective Committee. The Troop Committee Chair is chairing the Collective Committee this year, leading the “Unit Key Three” – the Collective Committee Chair, the Unit Trainer, and the Unit Commissioner. This steering committee meets quarterly or as needed to review Model Unit criteria for the Pack, Troop, and Crew, and to ensure key program planning and administrative tasks are on track within each Unit in the 101 family. They also provide a valuable link to members of the local District Committee and the Commissioner corps.

Administrative tasks have been streamlined and greatly eased with the implementation of the “Program First!” unit management plan by Northern Star Council four years before. The nine-step recruiting and rechartering plan, beginning August 15 with recruiting planning and ending with recharter downloading on October 1, means that all new youth and all continuing youth are registered once, for one fee and one application, annually for all thirteen grades, and that all leaders are identified and registered, by role and Den/Patrol/Crew assignment, at the beginning of the program year. All basic training certification is reported online, as required online training is completed by the Unit Trainer and the adult leaders within the Unit. Scouters are supported in completing position-specific training, and the Committee sets aside scholarship funds for Wood Badge tuition for 101 Scouters.

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2015 – The Vision

Every volunteer looks forward to the monthly web link to the “Do Your Best” and “Be Prepared” program planning materials, customized for the volunteer position that they serve in, by age group for Den Leaders, SMs/ASMs, and Advisors/Associate Advisors, and by function for Treasurers, Camping Coordinators, Committee Chairs, etc. The fillable forms give lots of choices and discretion, but quickly produce a top quality meeting plan/task list, with links to lots of exciting resources.

Innovation flows up and down through the Unit, District, and Council organization; application of technology improves every year; finances are strong with extra help going to those families who need it; every youth advances regularly in rank or receives new recognition; and every youth member has a resident camp or high adventure experience following completion of first grade. Life is good in Pack, Troop, and Crew 101 of the Northern Star Council!



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Year 2015 – The Goal

Improved Retention!

The approach: Addressing barriers within our units

- Reduce obstacles for youth – make it easy and fun
- Coordinated programs – supportive vs. competing
- Advancement flows between programs, no start and stops
- Shared leadership with parent involvement
- Unit Commissioner support

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Year 2015 – Progress being made

Better Unit Support

- Updated re-charter timing for 2013
- One fee/One application (annually K-12)
 - Working towards seamless support across programs
 - Ease of progression through Cubs, Boys Scout, Venturing
 - Simplify registration – face-to-face, electronic (future)
- Leader registration / Den Assignment at beginning of school year
- All leaders trained in advance of first meeting
- Unit activity and budget plan
 - *Established as part of 2013 Journey to Excellence*
 - *Look to coordinate between units as we mature approach*

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Year 2015 – Updates

- Webelos Program
- Community of units
- Coordinated Leadership – Core Committee
- Commissioner Role

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

- **Objective:**
 - Determine the most effective means to retain Webelos Scouts and enhance their Opportunity and afford them new Challenges.
 - Solution proposed is to explore a One Year Webelos Program.
- **Adjusted timeline(s)**
 - Fifth graders (start of school year) create a new scout patrol in troop
 - Focus on basic scout skills and completing Arrow of Light (as needed)
 - Arrow of Light presented in Nov/Dec
 - Re-charter with Troop at December
- **Smoother transition into troop setting**
 - Ease of transition for Webelos to Boy Scouts
 - ***AOL and Scout skills similar***
 - ***New challenges, camping***
 - Transition of parent leaders simplified
 - ***Den Leader works with new scout patrol, trains for ASM role***
 - Reduce or eliminate decision – Am I moving on?

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

Positive

- Transition to the Boy Scouts earlier thus increasing retention
- Achieve Webelos Badge within the one year framework
- Increase transition to more scouting adventures
- Reduce duplication: Cub Scout requirements for Arrow of Light & Boy Scout Badge
- New challenges and opportunities at a younger age
- Cub Scouts that want to advance are not held back
- Advancement is a consistent flowing process
- More seasoned campers
- No Scout left behind
- Seamless transition
- Den Leaders transition with Webelos to become New Boy Patrol
- Den Leaders are trained to be Assistant Scoutmasters
- Reduce Webelos Leader burn-out – get them engaged in adventure sooner
- Den Chiefs transition with the New Boy Patrol

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

Risks:

- Pushing too fast
- Not enough time to complete Arrow of Light
- Not allowing boys to grow up
- Maturity questions
- Scoutmaster not accepting New Boy Patrol
- Cubmaster losing boys early
- Den Leader can't transfer over
- Training of Den Leaders to be Assistant Scout Masters
- At present, we do fall recruiting and get a small number of 5th grade boys with no Cub Scout experience that join the pack as Webelos II's. Would they join the Troop and work on their Arrow of light with the New Boy Patrol? Do we have an age change issue?

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

Timeline Option A:

- April/May -Cub's transition from Bear to Webelos
- Summer -Attend Akela summer camp
- September 4th Grade- Begin new school year as Webelos & work on Webelos Badge
- April/May – Complete Webelos Badge (necessary pins); begin working on Arrow of Light.
- Summer - Attend Navajo Webelos Camp
- September (5th grade) - Become a member of New Boy Patrol at Troop
- Attend District Webelos Woods with the Troop (or spring depending upon District)
- November – Receive Arrow of Light at Pack Meeting
- December – Continue work on Scout Badge and on to 2nd Class.

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

Timeline Option B:

- September 4th Grade – Begin Webelos
- May – Finish Webelos Badge (necessary pins)
- Summer – Attend Navajo Webelos Camp
- September 5th Grade – Attend Troop; work on Arrow of Light portion that includes the Boy Scouts
- November – Receive Arrow of Light at Pack Meeting
- December – Continue work on Scout badge and on to 2nd class

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Year 2015 – Webelos Program

Frequently asked questions:

- **Why would the Boy Scouts even consider such a change?**
 - The Boy Scouts had a one year Webelos program in the 1960's and it successfully transitioned young Scouts to the troops.
- **How do the boys benefit?**
 - The Boys are given new adventures in Boy Scouts at an earlier age and will work with their Den Leaders in the New Boy Patrol for 3 months to complete their Arrow of Light interacting with the Troop. They receive their Arrow of Light at the Fall Pack Meeting. The boys in the Pack see the seamless transition to Boy Scouts and are anxious for their turn.
 - –Successful completion of the Summit Award
- **How do the parents benefit?**
 - The parents have a more engaged son, experiencing new challenges and opportunities.
- **How does the Council benefit?**
 - The Council retains more Scouts and increases the interest of youth in Scouting.

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Year 2015 – Community Based

Aligning Scouting units by Community

- Establish “community or family” of units (pack(s), troop, crew)
 - With community identity, pride, organization and support
 - Create community involvement like sports clubs and programs
 - Leverage existing community relationship
 - *Geographically – communities, neighborhoods, unit clusters*
 - *Align by School(s) to mirror school transitions*
 - *Faith based organizations alignment*
 - *Align by Charter Partner (where it makes sense)*
- Identifying natural pairings
- Commissioner facilitates unit discussions, parent understanding
- Requires a commitment to work through transition

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Year 2015 – Community Based

Positive

- Partnering with other units can help make decision process easier
- Units can support each other on various needs
- Families can work together through out the full program
- Makes it easier when family has youth in troop and packs
- Chartered organizations can engage to support a common program K-12+
- Units partnering can leverage many things:
 - Den Chiefs
 - Shared committee support
 - Opportunity to leverage shared space, equipment
- Parents can support others by sharing experience as their boys move through the program
- Parents collectively can partner to shape the complete program
- Develop consistency in policies, approaches across program (camp accounts, other)

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Year 2015 – Community Based

Risks:

- Youth feel like they have to move to the partner troop
- Parents may want different program for their youth
 - Options to move to other troop that aligns with needs
 - Opportunity to influence troop direction earlier to meet need if units work together
- Units are chartered by different organizations that may feel threatened or potential control issue

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Year 2015 – Community Based

Frequently asked questions:

- **How do we pair up Packs and Troops?**
 - Many situations will exist – do what is natural and what makes sense
 - Identify units with common base. Some examples are:
 - Chartered by same organization (church);
 - Same small community
 - School system; natural progression (what elementary school feed middle schools that feed high schools)
 - Look at historical transition of Webelos – where do they normally go.
- **What about where more than one pack goes to the same troop?**
 - There may be situations where more than one pack feeds into a troop
 - This can work fine if the relationship is fostered with both packs
 - Over time, increased retention of youth may enable a new troop to align more 1 to 1

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Year 2015 – Community Based

Frequently asked questions:

- **Do Webelos have to go to their partnered troop?**
 - While encouraged, the simple answer is no
 - Youth and their parents need to make decisions that are best for their situation
 - If many of the youth move together, most will want to stay with their friends.
- **How do we go about matching up and coming to agreement?**
 - District committee and commissioners can help provide background information and support to aid in making the right connections.
 - Meeting with leadership of corresponding units is key to come to alignment on approach and opportunity.
 - Evolve through partnership approach
- **Do packs & troops in a partnership have to be chartered by the same org?**
 - No – this is not a requirement.
 - It might be helpful, but only if it occurs naturally. We are not looking to displace or change charter partner relationships – unless it makes sense to the units and the chartered organizations.

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Year 2015 – Coordinated Leadership

Establishing community of units “Core Committee”

- Core leadership across family of units (pack(s), troop, crew)
- Key shared roles (potential)
- Who should be included:
 - Both committee chairs
 - Program leaders (Cubmaster, Scoutmaster)
 - Training coordinator
 - Commissioner
 - Others as needed, ad hoc needs
- Shared “core committee” meets to coordinate between units
 - Quarterly meeting (or as needed) to sync calendars, share direction
 - Leverage resources (other leaders, tools) as needed
 - Headed by one of Committee Chairs
 - Leverage prior experience of leaders

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Year 2015 – Coordinated Leadership

Establishing community of units “Core Committee”

- Potential to leverage other roles across units
 - Fundraising (popcorn chair), FFOS leader, Treasurer, other
 - Camping coordination
 - Leverage parent skills, share on broader level
- Core unit leadership continues (CC, CM, DL, SM, ASM, etc.)
- Supports coordinated calendar, partnership, familiarity
 - Sync up calendars to show where joint support is possibility
 - Look at joint service projects (where appropriate)
 - Leverage opportunities for joint camping
- Establishes relationships and consistency

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Year 2015 – Coordinated Leadership

Positive

- Strengthen Relationships between Packs-Troops-Crews
- Leverage previous experience and knowledge; many troop leaders were pack leaders
- Develop consistency between units on policies, approaches
- Opportunity to leverage leadership on other aspects
 - Common training chair
 - Common fundraising chairs (coordinated programs around popcorn, others)
 - Common FFOS coordinator
 - Others as makes sense for the units
- Coordination of unit calendars to support each other
- Pack leader exposure to troop leadership and change in roles (program) will ease transition.

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Year 2015 – Coordinated Leadership

Risks:

- Leadership voids that currently exist make coordination tough
- Dominant leaders may influence inappropriately
- Additional meeting expectations of small few; benefit to many
- Trying to go too fast, to quickly – need to maintain two unit committees to support unique needs of each (cub scout parent involvement in program versus boy scouts)

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Year 2015 – Coordinated Leadership

Frequently asked questions:

- **How do you fit in additional meetings of parents already highly tasked?**
 - Need is for core team from each to meet periodically (quarterly)
 - Additional meetings can aid in identifying opportunities to leverage for reduced time in other areas.
 - Upfront coordination will make program stronger, engage more and help retention
- **Who should lead the coordinated committee?**
 - It is up to the unit leadership – do what makes sense for your team
 - Troop or Crew leadership have experience – been through it before
 - Key is involvement and coordination.
- **What are the key objectives or needs of the core committee?**
 - Coordination between the units
 - Coordination of leadership and parent involvement – strong leadership
 - Ensure trained leaders who can deliver the program
 - Other opportunities as defined by the core committee

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Year 2015 – Commissioner Role

Commissioners play an integral role in supporting the 2015 approach

- Commissioners assignments based upon community based units
- Commissioners support pack(s), troop and crew within “family”
- Should be an active member of the core committee approach
- Can aid in bringing broader experience to the joint team and approach

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Year 2015 – Commissioner Role

Positive

- Leverage continuity and relationships across units
- Other....

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Year 2015 – Commissioner Role

Risks:

- Commissioners need to understand role, objectives and be aligned to support
- Commissioner assignments may be different than some want or expect
- Others....

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Year 2015 – Pilot Approach

2014 is pilot year – year to test and learn

- Pilot in select districts and in select communities
- Committee developed, available for roll-out support
- Evolve, enhance, clarify based upon learning
 - Start, learn, adapt, expand, learn, adapt, expand...
 - Adapt and enhance based upon experience
 - Share learning for districts, units, communities to expand
- Need to determine how we measure success
 - Improved Webelos retention
 - Improved Webelos transition
 - Effectiveness of units (qualitative)

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