Welcome to The Promise. It is the intent of the Central Region Outdoor Program Support Team (CROPS) to provide councils with information and tools to improve local outdoor program and help them to better deliver the Promise of Scouting.

**Our Vision:** To give every young person in Scouting the opportunity to obtain lasting values and a love for the outdoors, and to do so with safety, good facilities, and strong leadership.

**Our Mission:** To provide every council with sufficient tools to build a quality outdoor experience for young people in a safe and friendly environment, and to support the efforts of all councils to deliver the Promise of Scouting.

Look in this newsletter every quarter for news from the National Service Center, highlights from the Outdoor Program Task Forces and dates of upcoming events. Feel free to distribute this to any interested Scouter and we hope this will be beneficial to your work in the Scouting Movement.

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COPE AND CLIMBING

Professional Vendor Inspections

Three years ago, Councils in areas 1, 3, 4 and 7 collaborated to issue an RFP for their annual professional vendor’s inspection. In doing so they moved the inspections to the fall when the vendors were less busy which resulted in a cost savings for most of us.

That RFP expired last year, and we are in the process of issuing a new one. E-mails have been sent to all the participating councils to see if they are interested in participating in the new RFP.

If your Council was not part of the original RFP, but would be interested in participating in the new RFP or you would like additional information, please e-mail John Harrits — harrits@earthlink.net.

Educational & Training Opportunities

Join us for two opportunities for networking and learning at:

**Camp Friedlander**
581 Ibold Rd, Loveland, OH 45140

**April 5 – 8, 2018** – NCS COPE & Climbing Program Manager Course + Central Region COPE & Climbing Conference
Course starts at 9:00 AM on Thursday, April 5th and concludes before noon on Saturday, April 7th. Cost: $85.00 (includes course & conference)

The COPE & Climbing Program Manager Course is designed for those who will provide program management for council COPE and/ or Climbing programs. This course includes many opportunities for sharing best practices in COPE and Climbing programs.

Participants are invited to arrive Wednesday night and breakfast will be provided before the course begins on Thursday. The course will conclude with lunch on Saturday.

**April 7 – 8, 2018** - Central Region COPE & Climbing Conference
Conference starts at 9:00 AM on Saturday, April 7th and concludes before noon on Sunday, April 8th. Cost: $35

Please join us for a fun weekend of networking at Camp Friedlander. Experts will be onsite offering continuing education style classes in COPE and Climbing. We will also have an open roundtable in which you can share your experience and best practices with other participants. Participants are welcome to arrive Friday night and breakfast will be provided before the conference begins. The conference will begin Saturday morning at 9 am and will conclude with lunch on Sunday. Please bring comfortable clothing and sun protection.

For additional information, please e-mail John Harrits – harrits@earthlink.net.

To register for either the Program Manager course or the Regional Conference, please go online to: www.danbeard.org/COPEClimbingConference

NCAP
One of our regional goals is to have a COPE/Climbing NCS Trained Director or a Council Trained Level II person on the NCAP teams that are assessing either a COPE Course or a Climbing program. If you have not volunteered to take the NCAP Assessor training and offered to be on a team, I would like to encourage you to do so.

John Harrits
Outdoor Ethics continues to be a significant part of the Outdoor Program for the Boy Scouts of America. Segments of Outdoor Ethics are now part of the rank requirements in Cub Scouts. Chapter 7 in the current Boy Scout Handbook is devoted to Outdoor Ethics, as are chapters 7 through 10 in the Fieldbook.

In 2012 the first National Outdoor Ethics Conference was held in the Southern region at the Donald Reynolds Scout Training Center in Damascus, AR. This was followed by a second conference in 2014 in the Northeast Region at Camp Alpine in Alpine, NJ. A third conference was then held in 2016 in the Western Region at Camp Tracey in the Salt Lake City area.

This year the fourth conference will be held in the Central Region from October 18 - 21, 2018, at Nash Scout Reservation in Bonner Springs, KS, just west of Kansas City, KS. There will also be some pre-conference workshops available from October 16th through October 18th.

For all things Outdoor Ethics please check the Outdoor Ethics website provided by the BSA’s Outdoor Ethics Task Force at http://outdoorethics-bsa.org. You’ll find the latest information on conference updates, resources, trainings, awards and council and national contacts. Attendees at the conference include Leave No Trace Trainers and Master Educators, Outdoor Ethics Advocates (Council, Area and Region levels), National Outdoor Ethics Task Force Members, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics representatives and scouts interested in Outdoor Ethics and Conservation subject matter. Please come and join us.

Don Reinicker

Central Region Area 7 Outdoor Ethics Advocate
FISHING

Many key topics were discussed when the National Fishing Committee met February 23-25, 2018, in Key Largo, FL.

The Mission and Vision of the committee were updated to read:

“The Mission of the National BSA Fishing Committee is to provide Fishing and conservation programs, and to promote progressive Scout and Scouter learning through education, advancement, programs, and resources.”

Our Goals/Our Vision:

• Promote the excitement and rewards of learning to fish, and increase a Scout’s desire to further his or her knowledge and skills.
• Provide fishing program resource information for Packs, Troops, and Crews to encourage and enhance unit-level programs.
• Develop and improve BSA high adventure activities to strengthen their fishing programs.
• Develop and certify instructors to teach Fishing, Fly Fishing and Fish and Wildlife Management.
• Provide fishery management guidance and resources for councils to help them deliver quality fishing programs.
• Develop and support national fishing events.

Winter Fishing Program Highlights:

Scout Ice Fishing at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta, Burlington, WI

BSA Certified Angling Instructors were joined by partners from the National Professional Anglers Association(NPAA), Future Angler Foundation and the USA Ice Fishing Team to support Scout Ice Fishing at Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta, Burlington, WI, on Saturday, February 3, 2018. Over 44 Boy and Cub Scouts, 8 scout siblings and 29 parents from the Northeast Illinois Council were educated on the science and art of ice fishing by Mike McNett and members of the USA Ice Fishing Team. They were joined by Steve Klubertanz, Area #7 Fishing Lead and BSA Certified Angling Instructor (NPAA #1014) and Robert “Nick” Schmal, Executive Director, Future Angler Foundation (NPAA #123) and BSA Angling Educator.

Before hitting the ice, the scouts and family members were treated to hot chocolate at the Main Lodge at Scout Camp Oh-Da-Ko-Ta, then given a safety briefing on hypothermia, ice thickness, and behavior while on the lake ice. Each scout was given a NPAA Future Pro t-shirt and a Wildlife Forever State Fish Art brochure. There was a morning and afternoon session with each lasting about 2 ½ hours. Hot chocolate, hot dogs, and cookies were provided to all participants.

While on the lake, all were taught how to use ice fishing combos, including how to tip the lures with live bait. USA Ice Fishing Team staff also showed scouts and parents how to use electronics and underwater cameras. Many of the young anglers caught fish including northern pike, largemouth bass, bluegill, red ear sunfish, and yellow perch. One large black crappie was also landed. Staff also explained how to rig standard tip-ups with live minnows for larger fish species.
It was a cold, windy, and overcast day but all enjoyed the experience. At the close of each session, the NPAA and Future Angler Foundation presented each angler with a brand new ice fishing rod/reel combo to take home and try their luck on the next fishing trip.

**Area 4 Changes**

David Ross has stepped down as the Area 4 Fishing Lead. He is being replaced by Ron Killian. Thanks to David for his service and we welcome Ron to the team.

**CR Fishing Chairman’s Comments:**

2017 again has been a success with CAI training at four High Adventure facilities (Northern Tier, Sea Base, Philmont and the Summit). We have CAI’s in Hawaii and Japan. Our greatest challenge is communicating to our council leadership the importance of the CAI’s for Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation of Scouts. The introduction of young ladies to fishing should be fun and rewarding. We continue to do our best to support the Outdoor Program of the Central Region.

For the latest listing of upcoming BSA Certified Angling Instructors please visit: [https://bcai.wildapricot.org/events](https://bcai.wildapricot.org/events)

If you do not see a BSA Certified Angling Instructor Training course in your Council, please contact your Central Region Area Lead – Fishing by clicking here:

[https://bcai.wildapricot.org/Central-Region-Area-Leads-Fishing](https://bcai.wildapricot.org/Central-Region-Area-Leads-Fishing)

Until we meet again, wishing you tight lines and FISH ON!

*Michael Brand*

Central Region Fishing Chairman

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**LIONS**

In February the National Executive Board of the BSA voted to make the Lion program an official part of Cub Scouting. This follows a successful pilot program that introduced Cub Scouting to kindergarten aged youth.

The Lions will wear the Lion t-shirt and there is a neckerchief and cap available as well.

The move now allows all packs to add this to their program starting the fall of 2018.
PHILMONT TRAINING CENTER

The Philmont Training Center (PTC) is the national volunteer training center for the Boy Scouts of America. Since 1950, the PTC has provided a unique environment for training volunteers, creating leaders, and hosting family friendly experiences and adventures. Each year, more than 6,000 Scouters and their families attend the PTC.

Every conference at the PTC features tools, techniques, audiovisuals, discussions, idea sharing, and activities led by a faculty of experienced Scouters. All registered Scouters are invited to attend training center courses; council approval is not required.

There have been many exciting changes to the Scouting program in the last few months and attending a training session at the PTC will give you the opportunity to learn how to make them work for you and your unit, especially Cub Packs, as we welcome young ladies into our Scouting Family.

Philmont offers exciting and fun activities for children and spouses, making a visit to the PTC a memorable family vacation.

This year the Central Region is hosting week 7, July 22-28.


2017 MERIT BADGE STATS

The top 10 (with Eagle-required badges included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Citizenship in the World</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
<td>Citizenship in the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Citizenship in the Nation</td>
<td>Citizenship in the Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>Camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Personal Fitness</td>
<td>Personal Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Personal Management</td>
<td>Citizenship in the Community</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The top 10 (with Eagle-required badges excluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fingerprinting</td>
<td>Rifle Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rifle Shooting</td>
<td>Fingerprinting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leatherwork</td>
<td>Archery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>Leatherwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wood Carving</td>
<td>Wilderness Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wilderness Survival</td>
<td>Wood Carving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>Kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>Canoeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>Chess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
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Bottom 10

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
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<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Bugling</td>
<td>Bugling</td>
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<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>American Business</td>
<td>American Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Surveying</td>
<td>Stamp Collecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>American Labor</td>
<td>American Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Stamp Collecting</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>Surveying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>Drafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Composite Materials</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>Composite Materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REGIONAL CAMP PROPERTIES REVIEW UNDERWAY

If you attended one of this year’s Outdoor Program conferences, you already know that our region has begun a review of BSA properties within the region. It was council reported NCAP data that led us to conclude a review was appropriate. From that data we discovered:

- Collectively we have over 300 council owned properties in the region.
- 22% of our councils have three or more resident camps.
- 55% of our councils have 11 or more resident camps within 100 miles of their council headquarters (89% have at least five).
- Only 125 of these properties provided resident camp programs.
- On average, the resident camps that did operate were doing so at less than 30% of their capacity.
- 50% of these camps were losing money (i.e., they were a drain on their council’s budget) and only 20% were covering at least 5% of their council’s annual budget expenses.
- Our camps are heavily dependent on out of council campers with 75% of our councils having in-council attendance rates of less than 50% of their resident campers.
- There is significant variation in program quality across our resident camps, while many camps excel in some program areas, few excel in all.

The chart below provides a graphic image of this initial data. The blue dots are the various council camps in the region. The circles are 100-mile radius circles drawn arbitrarily to provide a picture of how many
camps are within a circle which represent about a two-hour drive. As you can see, it’s rare to find a location where there are not many camps within a 100-mile radius of wherever you place the circles.

This initial data suggests several things:

• As a region, we have more capacity than we need.
• Many of our councils, particularly smaller ones, have camp operations which are a drain on their budget thereby sacrificing investment in other areas that would enable us to better serve our youth such as hiring more unit serving executives.
• Our existing properties provide an opportunity to consolidate and cooperate.
• We can potentially optimize around camps both by property and program quality.

As stated previously, this is preliminary data and it is recognized that both the quality of reporting and the consistency of those reports can vary across councils. It is for that reason that a more targeted review has begun under the Region’s Vice President for Outdoor Adventures, Virgil Reed.

The first step is to gather more targeted data from councils and ensure what we are seeing is indeed comparable across the region. That process is underway through the Area leadership.

Once this data is collected and reviewed, recommendations for appropriate next steps will be discussed.

If you’d like to get a jump on this review within your local councils, there are some simple questions you can ask:

• How many in-council and out-council resident campers do we host each year?
• What percent of our council’s camp capacity are we utilizing over the summer?
• Do we really understand the full cost of operating our camps?
• What contribution are our camps making to our council operating budget?
• What alternative camp properties are within a reasonable driving distance of our camps?
• Should we consider a different model of delivering the outdoor program within our council that leverages surrounding camp properties more effectively?
• What opportunities might that provide?

Stay tuned for more information as this initiative unfolds.

Dan McCarthy
After five years of steady increases, the average age of Eagle Scouts fell in 2017.

It’s now at 17.21 years — or 17 years, 2 months and 15 days. That’s the lowest mark since at least 2009, the first year for which detailed Eagle Scout statistics were made available to me.

What caused the average to drop by nearly two months? Does this reflect any type of change in your troop? I welcome your comments.

Average age of Eagle Scouts, 2009 to 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Year/Month/Day Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17.32</td>
<td>17 years, 3 months, 27 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>17 years, 2 months, 28 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17.32</td>
<td>17 years, 3 months, 26 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>17 years, 2 months, 23 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>17 years, 2 months, 26 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>17 years, 3 months, 22 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>17 years, 4 months, 2 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2016  17.35  17 years, 4 months, 6 days  
2017  17.21  17 years, 2 months, 15 days

Note: The year/month/day equivalent was calculated using a 365.25-day year.

Average age by region

Eagle Scouts tend to be slightly younger than average in the Southern and Western Regions. In the Northeast and Central Regions, they're slightly older than average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>16.99</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>17.06</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>17.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>16.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>17.36</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>17.56</td>
<td>17.57</td>
<td>17.55</td>
<td>17.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>17.35</td>
<td>17.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEET THE CROPS TEAM!

Chair .......................... Aaron Randolph  aranjr@mcshi.com
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Cub Camping Resource .......... Jim Forrest  jcforrest@comcast.net
Cub Camping Resource .......... Jay Oakman  bsafox@yahoo.com
Camping Task Force/Newsletter . Dan Gille  dcgille@gmail.com
Outdoor Ethics Task Force ...... Toby Green  greentoby58@gmail.com
Cope & Climbing Task Force ...... John Harrits  harrits@sbcglobal.net
Shooting Task Force ............. Todd Cook  scout@firearmssedu.com
Fishing Task Force .............. Mike Brand  Michaelbrand314@gmail.com
Aquatics Task Force ............ Terry Budd  paddler@ameritech.net
National Support ............... Brian Gray  Brian.gray@scouting.org
Strategic Analysis & Facilities
Management Task Force ........ John Makowski  johnmakowski@live.com
Editor’s Note:

We would like to offer a special thanks to Keith Christopher. Keith has been an invaluable “set of eyes” who has graciously helped us edit *The Promise*. Keith has done a great job catching typos and errors as a last review before we send out *The Promise*.

After a career spanning nearly five decades, five local councils, and 13 years at the National Service Center, Keith Christopher will retire from the Boy Scouts of America after 44 years of service effective June 1, 2018.

Thanks Keith and enjoy your retirement! I hear it gets hot in Tampa in the summer!

---

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Aaron Randolph  aranjr@mcshi.com

In January the CROPS Committee held two Outdoor Program Conferences, one in Des Moines, IA and the other in Indianapolis, IN. Our attendance this year was around 80 participants and staff at each conference, comparable to last year and roughly double the number when we ran a single conference previously. The same program was offered at both locations, with special sessions on FiiX software, and another on Youth on Youth Abuse. In addition to small group presentations on NCAP we also held a general session run by Virgil Reed and Dan McCarthy that reviewed the findings of the Central Region Camp Utilization study. (see Dan’s article on pages 9-10) The Region has now conducted studies in 3 of its Areas and plans to continue with the other Areas in the near future. Feedback from the participants was very positive and we plan to hold 2 conferences again in January next year.

Once again Rich Koch is busy preparing Camp Visitation Team training sessions to be held this spring, and is also working with councils to schedule camp visits for this summer. Working closely with Rich is Dr. Dennis Ward and his team as they prepare for year five of the accreditation program. Dr. Ward will be stepping down as our NCAP chair at the BSA National Meeting this May, and has been busy training his replacement, Dan Hunt.

If you haven’t heard yet, there is a special ‘Adult Adventure Weekend’ planned for June 20 – 24 this summer. It’s designed to give all us ‘overgrown’ kids a chance to try out the programs areas at the Summit that we’ve heard about, but haven’t got to play on YET. Get all the details at:
summitbsa.org/aaw  The Central Region promo team is committed to recruiting 500 Central Region Scouts for this activity. Join us in June for the Adult Adventure Weekend.

Our other current focus is recruiting youth and adult participants and adult staff for the 2019 World Scout Jamboree.

YITSOG  
(Yours In The Spirit Of Gilwell)  
Aaron Randolph  
National Adventures Group  
Outdoor Program Support - Central Region Chair  
aranjr@mchsi.com  
(H) 319-377-0497  
(C) 319-721-6733

Editor: Dan Gille  dcgille@gmail.com  
Special Thanks to Karen Gille and Keith Christopher for proofreading and layout.

Future Publication Date: June, 2018
2018 SILVER ANTELOPE RECIPIENTS

The Regional Silver Antelope Selection Committee acting through the National Court of Honor is pleased to announce the 2018 class of recipients of the highest award the Central Region, BSA can bestow on an adult volunteer, the Silver Antelope Award.

Created in 1942, the Silver Antelope Award is awarded to those persons who give extraordinary leadership in distinguished service to youth. This award recognizes registered Scouters for their noteworthy service of exceptional character provided within the region’s territory.

The presentation of the awards will be made during the Central Region Recognition Luncheon at the BSA National Annual Meeting on Friday, May 25, in Dallas, Texas. We would like to congratulate these outstanding volunteers for a job well done.

Ronald Blaisdell from the Michigan Crossroads Council

Julie Dalton from Quivira Council

Darryl Dillenback from Buckeye Council

David Erlich from the Michigan Crossroads Council

Dan Gille from Three Harbors Council

Jeffrey Hahn from Bay-Lakes Council

Al Kent from the St. Louis Area Council

Robert Palmer from the Crossroads of America Council