



# Historic Trail Specifications

There are several hundred listed historic trails in the United States. Their number and use by the Boy Scouts of America are increasing yearly. Many are administered and maintained by local Scout councils. Some are administered by private groups.

While hundreds of trails have received national approval, not all are approved for Scouting use. Use the Camping and Conservation Service's Application for National Approval and Listing of Historical Trail to apply to use a historical trail in Scouting.

For a trail to be approved for use by Scouting members, it must meet certain historic trail specifications about

- Its historical significance
- Its layout
- The responsibility for its upkeep
- Its administration

These specifications are subject to local council and regional review and approval. Historic trails that do not meet these national specifications are not recommended for use by the Boy Scouts of America.

Trails approved for use by BSA personnel will be listed in our brochure, *Nationally Approved Historic Trails*, found on [scouting.org](http://scouting.org), as long as they meet all the specifications. The list of approved trails will be checked periodically as part of the normal council operating procedure.

BSA-used trails must meet all the following specifications unless otherwise noted and written approval is granted by the Camping and Conservation Service.

## Historical Significance

1. The area and terrain covered by the trail route should have genuine historic significance and/or wilderness beauty that will add to the education of members of the BSA and provide the opportunity for physical fitness and outdoor living.
2. The significance of the area must have been authenticated by recognized historic authorities.
3. The trail may follow the original journey or route taken by an important individual or expedition in history, or it may connect several specific locations of particular historical significance.
4. The historic event should appeal to young people.
  - There should be something of physical nature that can be seen, felt, or walked through—such as a fort, bridge, canal lock, cannon, or building—or evidence in the terrain, such as an Indian burial mound, canal, towpath, breastwork, sentinel lookout rock, or other natural phenomenon.
  - There should be things to do, such as visiting a museum, climbing a tower, reading a historical map, or looking at physical replicas.

- Where reasonable, there should be someone present or in the vicinity to explain what happened in the area, or, failing that, the availability of written material explaining the situation, event, or episode.

## Layout

5. Safety precautions should be followed by those setting up a trail. The trail should be well-marked and outlined. Hiking groups and leaders must be fully briefed on the types of markings that will be found along the trail. Trails should avoid highways. If highways must be crossed or used, proper safety procedures should be observed at all times to prevent accidents. Lightly traveled roads, or natural trails or bypaths along roads, should be used whenever possible.
6. Base camp (starting place) accommodations should be adequate and should include fuel, fire-building and cooking arrangements, tent area, latrine, washing facilities, and potable drinking water tested at least annually.
7. When laying out a new trail, every attempt should be made to keep hikers away from private buildings, particularly residences. If private property must be crossed, written permission must be obtained from the owners. Full precautions must be taken to ensure that all property—private and public—is respected. Campsites should be as isolated as possible so their use will not disturb persons living in the area. The principles of Leave No Trace apply.

## Responsibility

(Use specification 8 or 9, whichever applies to the trail.)

8. Responsibility for any historic trail that is operated in the name of the Boy Scouts of America rests with the local council. After determining its historic significance for boys, completing layout, and planning for administration and control of the historic trail, approval is given by the local council executive board, and a committee is appointed to be responsible for the trail.
9. When a historic trail is established, wholly or partially, in a local council area but is controlled and operated by persons other than the local council, the council will investigate the layout, administration, and financial policies of the trail before recommending its designation as an approved trail for use by Scouting personnel. If the trail administrators wish to advertise the trail for use by Scouting units, the trail must meet all standards set forth in these specifications and the trail administration must receive in writing the approval and consent of the local council, region, or national officer.

(Use 10 only if it applies to your specific trail.)

10. When a historic trail occupies land in more than one local council's territory, the trail may be the responsibility of the council where the trail is headquartered or the council

in whose territory the largest portion of the trail is located. Final decisions on all such trails rests with the Boy Scouts of America through the region.

11. The local council keeps accurate records regarding finances and use of the historic trail by Scouting personnel. The Historic Trail Report will be submitted biennially through the region to the Camping and Conservation Service.
12. Careful consideration must be given to the public liability involved in the administration of an historic trail as it affects both the council and the landowners involved. Proper steps must be taken to be certain that insurance coverage, written permissions, and agreements are in order and in accord with existing laws. Consult your local insurance advisers.
13. Close liaison must be established with local law enforcement authorities and health officials. Inform them of the purpose, layout, and program of the trail, and assure close cooperation in case of emergency.

## Administration

14. Daily hiking should not exceed 14 miles or 25 miles for two-day hikes. Permission for longer, one-day trail hiking schedules should be submitted in a specific request to the Camping and Conservation Service. Reasons for the exceptions must be stated.
15. It is recommended that youth members use the trail only as part of units traveling under competent adult (over 21) leadership. Two-deep leadership must be in effect at all times.
16. All historic trails administered by the Boy Scouts of America must be open to all members of the Boy Scouts of America regardless of race, sex, color, or creed.
17. Special trail regulations—i.e., trail manners, requirements, maps of the trail and surrounding areas, and the like—should be drawn up and sent to all groups before the trip to ensure efficient administration and proper conduct on the trails.
18. Information regarding local facilities should be compiled and made available to all groups. Information on facilities for camping, religious services, food supplies, meals, local authorities, medical services, maps of the area, etc., should be listed.
19. An official tour permit must be required from all Scouting groups. Local groups traveling from home (500 miles or less) should have a local tour permit issued by their local council. The Local Tour Permit Application, No. 34426B, is used to apply. Scouting groups traveling more than 500 miles from home must have a national tour permit. This is issued by the regional service center through the local council, using the National Tour Permit Application, No. 4419B.
20. Proper uniforming is strongly recommended and encouraged.
21. Cost (if any) to individual boys who participate should be kept to a minimum and based on the specific services rendered. Use of trail fees is not recommended. Advanced charges for materials sent should be avoided whenever possible and kept at cost if used.
22. Trail insignia, emblem, badge, and the like must have the approval of the National Insignia and Uniform Committee. The Camping and Conservation Service will submit the insignia to the national committee when received. The cloth badge that is worn on the uniform (center right shirt pocket) must include one of the following: (1) corporate name (Boy Scouts of America); (2) corporate initials (BSA); (3) BSA fleur-de-lis (universal with Eagle or plain one-color).  
Under present regulations regarding badges and insignia of the Boy Scouts of America, only one trail or pilgrimage ribbon medal may be worn on the uniform at one time. If trail awards are considered necessary, careful consideration should be given to the following:
  1. Providing a larger trail patch designed to be sewn on the hiker's pack, not the uniform.
  2. Providing the pocket piece without the ribbon. They may be attractively displayed on plastic coin display panels.
  3. Providing a ribbon-type trail medal. The Supply Division of the Boy Scouts of America will furnish estimates on awards on request.
23. Awards of any type that are offered for successfully hiking the trail and meeting all the requirements must be strictly optional and not a requirement for hiking the trail.  
Charges for such awards or medals must not be excessive. Trails are not designed as money-making enterprises, but as program facilities. Trail fees and charges for awards should be minimal, covering the cost of administering and maintaining the trail.  
Extra charges for campsites, firewood, meals that might be served, and awards should be listed separately, and the cost of extra service should be clearly defined.  
Advance payment for trail awards should not be required, nor should payment in advance for awards be implied, suggested, or made optional.  
A tentative reservation without payment is recommended and approved. This allows the Scouting leader to increase the size of his group as more boys become interested in participating. When deemed absolutely necessary, each participant may be charged a nonrefundable trail maintenance fee, not to exceed 50 cents. This should be deducted from the cost of the awards.  
A boy should not pay for an award before he earns it. This policy should be stated clearly in the printed literature.
24. A statement regarding these specific procedures by which the historic trail is to be administered, including such matters as trail headquarters, reservation procedures, fee schedule (if any), and cost and method for sale or awards, must be submitted in writing to  

Camping and Conservation Service, S209  
Boy Scouts of America  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015-2079

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**APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL APPROVAL AND LISTING OF HISTORIC TRAIL**

Instructions: To apply for approval of a new trail, or to apply for reinstatement of a trail not listed in the Nationally Approved Historic Trails listing on scouting.org, use this side. To renew a currently approved trail, use the other side. Approval or renewal is based on compliance with the Historic Trail Specifications.

*Read Historic Trail Specifications in detail before completing the application.*

We request the Boy Scouts of America give national approval (subject to approved report every second year) to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and location of historic trail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsored by: Name and address

TRAIL SUITABILITY—APPROVED FOR USE BY:

Tiger Cubs \_\_\_\_\_ Boy Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Varsity Scouts \_\_\_\_\_

Cub Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Venturers \_\_\_\_\_ Family Campers \_\_\_\_\_

This historic trail meets all the requirements as listed in the Historic Trail Specifications and as checked below:

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: 1\_\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_\_

LAYOUT: 5\_\_\_\_ 6\_\_\_\_ 7\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBILITY: 8\_\_\_\_ 9\_\_\_\_ 10\_\_\_\_ 11\_\_\_\_ 12\_\_\_\_ 13\_\_\_\_

ADMINISTRATION: 14\_\_\_\_ 15\_\_\_\_ 16\_\_\_\_ 17\_\_\_\_ 18\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_

20\_\_\_\_ 21\_\_\_\_ 22\_\_\_\_ 23\_\_\_\_ 24\_\_\_\_

We have attached the following information as required:

1. Trail regulations and information regarding trail facilities. See Administration items 17 and 18.
2. Statement regarding specific procedures by which trail is administered. See Administration item 24. Include both this form and the application for award form.
3. A report by a member of the council camping committee, or health and safety committee, or a designated council Scouter who has actually walked, inspected, and approved this trail in accordance with the Historic Trail Specifications.

NAME OF COUNCIL \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_ REGION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout executive's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional approval

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approval of Camping and Conservation Service

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CAMPING AND CONSERVATION SERVICE, S209

Boy Scouts of America  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015-2079

**HISTORICAL TRAIL REPORT  
AND RENEWAL APPLICATION**

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Attach the following:

- Financial report for the past year
- Latest copy of trail information pamphlet and requirements
- Trail registration form
- Trail report form

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Name of trail Date

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Address of trail if other than council address

TRAIL SUITABILITY—APPROVED FOR USE BY:

Tiger Cubs \_\_\_\_\_ Boy Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Varsity Scouts \_\_\_\_\_

Cub Scouts \_\_\_\_\_ Venturers \_\_\_\_\_ Family Campers \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIL PARTICIPATION DURING THE PAST YEAR:

No. of Groups \_\_\_\_\_ Total Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Total Leaders \_\_\_\_\_

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Council name and number

I certify that the above subject trail meets and operates within the Historic Trail Specifications.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout executive's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional approval

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approval of Camping and Conservation Service

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date