WELCOME TO THE WOODLANDS TRAIL PROGRAM!

ver. 2.0

//

Thank you for your interest in the Woodlands Trail Program of Trail Life USA. We have the opportunity to present a legacy project that will impact the lives of countless young men. The work of the Woodlands Trail requires perseverance and patience. It is demanding in both time and energy. However, the reward will be great.

The Woodlands Trail Development Team has gone to great lengths to provide a ready-to-deliver program that requires minimal preparation time and is fun to deliver.

The Woodlands Trail curriculum is a 2-year course of study for Trailmen (boys) in three age groups, called "Patrols":

- Foxes (Grades K-1)
- Hawks (Grades 2-3)
- Mountain Lions (Grades 4-5)

Within the age-and-grade Patrols, larger Troops may have smaller patrols that are frequently named by the boys.

Meeting plans revolve around a set curriculum to engage and teach program participants using six Program Emphases:

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Character
- Wisdom
- Heritage
- Faith

Meeting plans incorporate, directly or indirectly, the "Six F's":

FOCUS: The Focus portion of the patrol meeting is to provide an academic or instructional element. This is the emphasis of the patrol time together to lay a foundation that the other F's will build upon.

FINGERS: This portion offers an opportunity for the Trailmen to experience a project with "hands-on" learning. This is based from the Focus teaching segment. It is understood that boys learn to apply a lesson better when they can see and build or make something that would remind them of what is being taught.

FUN: This portion allows a time where Trailmen can burn off some energy. This is the time of the meeting for the Trailmen to play games or participate in a physical activity.

FAMILY: The Family portion of the meeting is simply the family emphasis for the principle taught. As the Trailmen learn throughout the years, it is the desire of Trail Life USA and the Woodland Trails Program to inform and involve the family in the learning process as much as possible.

FOREST OR BRANCH: Identifies the Branches taught and Steps focused on during a meeting for each age group.

FAITH: This final portion of the meeting communicates pertinent biblical truths, values, and wisdom corresponding to the lesson.

HIT THE TRAIL MEETING

While, generally, most of the meetings are indoors with an outdoor play option, Troops also conduct a monthly 'Hit the Trail!' meeting that includes an offsite activity, event, field trip, or community project.

WOODLANDS TRAIL AWARDS OVERVIEW

Awards can be earned at all Patrol levels within the Woodlands Trail Unit. Award criteria is designed to be age-appropriate for the boy's cognitive and physical levels of development.

The primary areas of study in Woodlands Trail are the seven "Branches" (detailed later).

The Trail Guide presides over the Patrol meeting and selects one Branch to work on at a time during the meetings. Each month, the learning portion of three weekly Patrol meetings should center on the Branch Steps, with the fourth week being the 'Hit the Trail!' activity.

THE AWARDS

When a boy joins any of the three Woodlands Trail program age Patrols, he may earn the Fox, Hawk, or Mountain Lion "Branch Patch." This joining patch will be worn on the right pocket of the uniform and shows that the boy knows the basics of Trail Life USA, which include the oath, motto, salute, sign, and handshake. It is here he will attach Branch pins as he progresses.

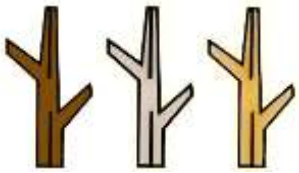


The Branch pins correspond to the seven primary instructional areas of the Trail Life USA program for all ages.

Branches in the Navigators and Adventurer Units are called "Frontiers."

Branch pins are earned by completion of the requisite number of Steps. A Branch pin will be given for each Branch completed the first program year.

The color of the Branch pin earned corresponds to the age group so that there is differentiation between Branches earned as a Fox (bronze), a Hawk (silver), and a Mountain Lion (gold).



Here is a helpful description of each Branch. The color indicates the leaves color on the Branch patch where a Trailman will attach his earned Branch:

Heritage Branch (Brown leaves): An exploration of American Heritage, Christian Heritage, and a boy's own family heritage. Emphasis is placed on upholding the finest traditions of the heritage we obtain from our forefathers.

Hobbies Branch (Black leaves): An exploration of various indoor and outdoor hobbies that demand varying levels of knowledge, skill, or aptitude.

Life Skills Branch (Burgundy leaves): Teaching life lessons ranging from the practical and mundane to higher-level interpersonal skill sets.

Outdoor Skills Branch (Blue leaves): Gaining basic understanding of woodcraft, hiking, exploration, and camping skills.

Science and Technology Branch (Yellow leaves): An exploration of physical and natural science concerning our created world.

Sports and Fitness Branch (Green leaves): Having fun in the outdoors with sports and other activities.

Values Branch (Red leaves): Instilling Biblical-based values within the boys regarding any number of pertinent topics. The central focus of this branch is teachings of the Christian faith.



THE FOREST AWARD: The Forest Award is earned upon completion of all 7 Branches, typically through the course of a program year. This patch replaces the Branch Patch on the right pocket of the Trailman's uniform. It is here he will attach his Sylvan Stars as he advances. The Forest Award is unique to the Woodlands Trail program and is set aside as a keepsake once the Woodlands Trail Trailman crosses over to the Navigator Unit.

WHAT IS A SYLVAN STAR?

A Trailman who receives his Forest Award is eligible to earn Sylvan Stars through continued participation in the program within his age group. One Sylvan Star is awarded for each Branch completed, for a maximum of seven stars. The background embroidered Star colors on the Forest Award match the colors of the leaves on the Branch Patch.

The award representing each Sylvan Star earned changes with each age group so that there is differentiation between Stars earned as a Fox (bronze), a Hawk (silver), and a Mountain Lion (gold).



SPECIAL AWARDS

Special awards are provided for completion of certain activities, projects, or accomplishments.



Worthy Life or Faith Recognition Awards: The most important special award within the Trail Life USA program centers on faith. This can be Worthy Life Award, offered by Trail Life USA, or an award that fits the requirements that may be offered by a denomination or faith tradition. Requirements are different for different age groups.

On the Worthy Life Award (pictured) Crosses are awarded at each program level on completion of the Worthy Life Award requirements, with the first cross awarded along with the Worthy Life implement itself.

A Woodlands Trail Trailman can earn up to three crosses in his 6 program years. These crosses adorn the green ribbon. A fully-adorned Worthy Life Award will have 3 crosses on the green Woodlands Trail ribbon, one cross on the gray Navigators ribbon, and one

cross on the blue Adventurers ribbon. The Worthy Life or Faith Recognitions Award is one of only two awards that continue to be worn by the Trailman as long as he is a member of Trail Life USA.

Timberline Award: The Timberline Award is the highest award a Trailman can achieve in the Woodlands Trail program and it is available only to Mountain Lion Trailmen. It was developed to celebrate a boy's entrance into the new world of Trail Life USA's Navigators program.

Just as the tall timbers stop at the Timberline's edge, so must a Mountain Lion's time stop in the Woodlands Trail program. As the Trailman proceeds on his individual path, he leaves the Woodlands Trail and embarks on a new trail of exploration and experiences. The Trailman leaves with many good wishes and prayers that he will continue to Walk Worthy with the God Who created him, loves him, and guides him.



SUMMER MONTHS – "SUMMER ADVENTURE"

Summer meetings may consist of all ages, or a portion of the Troop as designated by the Troopmaster and Committee Chair.

If it is determined that Woodlands Trail will meet, Troops can plan an appropriate Summer Adventure for the Woodlands Trail Unit such as a day camp or overnight adventure. Wide latitude is given to the local adult volunteers for structure of these meetings and outings.

GUIDING TRAILMEN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

God has specifically crafted every person with a unique personality, behaviors, and needs. Trail Life USA offers its boys and leaders structure and consistency, both of which are vital for boys with special needs. Please discuss any special needs of your Trailmen with your Troop leadership who can refer you to the Committee that addresses advancement accommodations for Special Needs Trailman.