

Troop 23

**Summer Camp
New Parent / New Scout
Information**

**Napowan
Adventure Base**

2011

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Troop 23. The summer camp program is an excellent opportunity for your boy to get to know the other members of the troop, begin to understand how the troop operates, earn merit badges and start to advance in rank. We have found that boys who attend summer camp their first year are more likely to remain in boy scouts and enjoy it more. Napowan summer camp offers a wide range of activities that are sure to appeal to your boy. We highly recommend that they attend for two weeks if possible. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions and answers about summer camp.

When is summer camp and how much does it cost?

Our troop will be attending summer camp from July 10 to July 22. The fee for the two week period is \$540 and for the one week period is \$290. This fee covers transportation to and from camp, tent camping, three meals a day served family style by the camp plus special evening snacks, all programming except for special fees as listed in the summer camp handout (e.g. rounds for rifle and shot gun shooting, craft kits for basketry and space exploration, etc), and a trip to the water park during the middle Saturday with pizza afterwards.

What is there to do at camp?

Napowan offers many activities including water sports, shooting, crafts, outdoor skills and fine arts. It has two lakes, one that is strictly for swimming and a second where sailing, kayaking, rowing, canoeing and skiing take place. The shooting ranges include rifle, shotgun and archery.

Each area of the camp has counselors present to assist in working on merit badges. Boys spend part of their day working on merit badges and part of the day trying out other activities. For example, the shooting ranges are set aside for part of the day for merit badge classes and are open the rest of the day for free shooting. Fun evening programs and games take place after dinner. Some merit badges take a week of daily effort to earn, others can be earned with a few hours of activity over a couple of afternoons.

A typical schedule for a first year scout:

7:45 Flag Raising

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 Swimming Merit badge class

10:00 Rowing Merit badge class

11:00 Canoeing Merit badge class

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Basketry/woodcarving/metalwork merit badge work

4:00 Free time to swim, free shoot, work on additional merit badges at nature/scoutcraft/fine arts areas, fish, etc

6:00 Dinner

6:45 Flag ceremony

7:00 Special evening activities

9:30 Bedtime

How do you decide what merit badges to select and when do you have to make this decision?

A scout should be able to complete 4 or 5 merit badges in a week. Some get a few more, some a few less. We strongly recommend that first year scouts work on their swimming, rowing and canoeing merit badges their first week at camp. Our troop does many outings that require good swimming and boating skills so it is important to get these done as

soon as possible. These are also difficult badges to get other times of the year.

Additionally we recommend selecting 2 or 3 of the craft merit badges such as basketry, leatherwork, woodcarving or pottery. These make a nice change from the physical water sports and are not real difficult to complete.

If your scout is attending a second week, he can select a second set of merit badges. Good choices for a second week include: small boat sailing, lifesaving, orienteering, mammal study, astronomy, geology, space exploration, additional craft activities, and the fine arts classes.

We do not recommend shooting sports merit badges for first time scouts unless they have previous experience. These skills take a while to learn and the guns are harder for younger scouts to handle. They can practice this year during free shooting times and be ready to work on the merit badges next year. We will be having a meeting to sign up for merit badges on April 29th. At that point in time, we need each scout to select 4 to 5 merit badges for each week and fill out the merit badge forms. Some of the badges require attendance at a daily class to complete (swimming, boating, environmental science). We must sign the scout up for these classes at the beginning of the week. Once the scout gets to camp, they may find other badges that look interesting to them. They can get a merit badge card from any troop leader and start to work on these additional badges any time during the week. If they do not complete a badge a camp, the partial card is brought home and they can work on completing it at home, or take it back to camp and complete it next year. Some merit badges have requirements that cannot be completed at camp. If you son is interested in one of these, they should get a merit badge book and work on the requirement before they get to camp so they can complete the badge once they get there.

What do I do if my scout is not a good swimmer?

All scouts are tested when they arrive at camp to see how well they swim. They must pass at least the basic swimming test in order to do the swimming and boating merit badges. Since these experiences are an important part of summer camp, we would like everyone to be able to participate. If your son is a weak or non-swimmer, we recommend signing them up for swimming lessons at the park district or YMCA before summer camp to let them gain some of the basic skills. The camp will work with kids who can swim some, but unfortunately do not have the staff to work with kids who are really inexperienced swimmers.

What can I do to make sure my son has a good time at camp?

Make sure they are prepared and have packed the proper equipment and prepared, if necessary, for the merit badges they want to work on. Review the typical day listed above so they know what to expect.

Homesickness is a concern of many parents if their son has not been away from home before. Please read our homesick scout note. Be positive and supportive. Don't promise your son he can come home if he doesn't like it. Don't ask him to telephone. Phoning home is against camp rules and tends to encourage, not discourage homesickness. Do send a cheerful letter as soon as he leaves so he gets it soon. Most boys quickly adapt, make new friends and get so busy that they don't have time to be homesick for long.

How can I as a new parent help?

We are looking for new parents to come and help at summer camp. We are not looking for a big commitment only three

days of your time (if you can come for a longer period, great!). We need parents to drive the boys up to camp and bring them back home again. We also need adequate staffing during the weeks to make sure the boys remain safe, have fun and get done what they need to do.

This is a great opportunity for you to get to know some of the other parents and boys in the troop, in a relaxed setting. We will make sure that there are always experienced adults present. New parents can help chaperone boys to the various parts of camp, help keep them focused on what they should be working on, help with the paperwork and other activities. We do not want parents coming up to spend time with their son or to make sure they are not homesick.

However, you will be able to see and appreciate the great time your son is having.