

Preparing for a Crew Expedition



A Venture Scout Crew Expedition looks something like:

- A crew hiking (or walking, cycling, sailing) and camping independently
- A Crew Leader and an Assistant Crew Leader leading the crew
- Venture Scouts being able to organise and run the event with little help from adult Scouters
- Venture Scouts organising their own route and camping points
- The crew working and cooking independently
- Venture Scouts progressing in their Suas and Trasná and the Adventure Skills
- Venture Scouts practising Leave No Trace
- Venture Scouts developing leadership and teamwork skills along the way
- Scouters and Families encouraging
- SI campsites and activity centres supporting

The following elements are important to organising an expedition:

Programme Cycles: We use Plan/Do/Review to run our activities, this is called a programme cycle. Each programme cycle focuses on a main activity. Use programme cycles throughout the year to build up your scouting skills, such as hiking, cooking, backwoods etc, and then develop your Crews.

Roles and leadership: Every Venture Scout should have a role in organising the expedition. While members of the Exec can take on more responsibility, such as being Expedition Lead or Treasurer, everyone can do their part, from planning the route to organising the menu.

Practice Makes Perfect: Don't be afraid to plan and run a few smaller hikes throughout the year. This will be great practice and will help the ventures develop the skills they need for the more difficult expedition.

Link up: Why not plan the expedition with another Unit, or an international Scout Group? Or, at least meet up with other groups along the way.



Venture Scout Meetings

Weekly meetings are a crucial part of the Venture Scout Programme which gives you the opportunity to learn the necessary skills that they will put into practice during your activities. Although Venture Scout Meetings will take a different style than Cub scout or Scout ones, they should still happen weekly and in the main part of your meeting place. The meetings can be less structured than the younger sections but must still contain the criteria for a successful meeting:

Organised: The meetings should be well planned by both the Venture Scouts and Scouters. There should be a clear outline of what is planned for the meeting with an appropriate timeline.

Opening/Closing: There should be an official start and end to the meeting. This can take many forms. It does not need to be as formal as the younger sections with 'falling in' to their crews for a formal inspection/flag raising ceremony etc. A Venture Scout meeting should not be a drop-in centre with people arriving and leaving when they like

Uniform: Venture Scouts and Scouters should agree on what is appropriate uniform for their meetings.

Active: Weekly meetings are a great time to practice or brush up on Scouting skills to use on your activities. You can also try out different skills or have an expert come in to help. Having a balance is important – there can be a time for sitting around chatting but there should also be active components to the meetings for games and challenges.

Crew Time: Part of the meeting should allow a time for the crews to meet to work on badge work or plan upcoming meetings and activities. It is recommended that each Venture Section run a 6-8 week programme cycle which ends in an adventure.

Get out! It is recommended that in a programme cycle the Ventures should aim to meet two or three times outside of their standard meeting place.

Link-Up: Due to the size of different Venture Units, it may be necessary and worthwhile to link up with other similar sized Venture Units.



Expedition Routes

Way-marked trails facilitate expeditions and offer a flexibility to walk sections over a weekend or the whole route over a few days. Pick the route that is accessible to you and which suits your needs.

Waymarked Trails

There are 44 waymarked trails in Ireland that offer patrols different opportunities to go on expeditions. Go to irishtrails.ie for more details on each trail.



Pilgrim Paths

There is a network of pilgrim routes across Ireland, which follow medieval pilgrimage paths. By walking these, you can combine hiking, spiritual reflection, and some cultural exploration. Pilgrim Path map from www.pilgrimpath.ie



European long-distance paths

For international expeditions, there is the European long-distance paths network. They link up national walking routes to offer interesting trails across the continent. For more info go to: www.era-ewv-ferp.com/walking-in-europe/e-paths/



Image: By Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumwa) - Own work, using this file by Pyfisch which uses this base map by Alexrk2. The information of the contents is from the following sources: ERA Foundation Waymarked Trails: E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10, E11. Traildino, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40964569>

Feather Sticks

A feather stick or a fuzz stick is an excellent fire starting hack, particularly in an area with little or no dry tinder.

Begin with a dry, dead length of wood and shave off the outer layer of bark and wood (if wet or damp) using a sharp knife. Do not cut live branches or use fresh green sticks!

Next, use your knife to carve shavings and curls of wood.

Collect any shaving or curls which fall off to use as additional tinder.

A number of fuzz sticks should be made in order to start a large fire successfully.

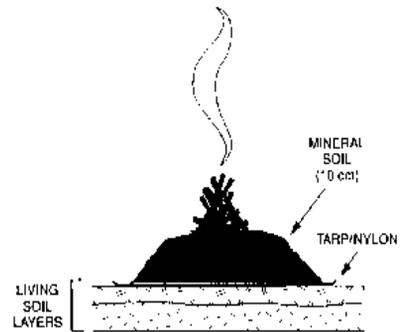
Experiment with different types of woods as harder wood may be more difficult to carve while softer wood will burn far quicker.



Mound Fire

It creates an a layer of insulation between the fire and soil, which is important for safety & Leave No Trace.

1. Gather mineral soil from underneath a fallen tree, or sand from along a stream.
2. Clear a small area for the fire and cover it with a base. This can be a small piece of groundsheet or nylon (about a metre square), or a fire blanket, or in an emergency you can use a large flat rock (once it isn't shale).
3. Build up the mound of soil/sand on top of this base. The mound should be 10-15cm thick and about 60cm in diameter.
4. Make your fire in the centre of the mound.
5. Afterwards, return the mineral soil/sand to where it came from. The base allows you to remove an trace of the fire.



Messengers of Peace Award

The Messengers of Peace Award aims to promote world peace through the positive activities of young people.

Any Scout who has voluntarily invested more than 10 hours in a community service project is eligible for the award. This can be anything from running a fun day for the disadvantaged in your local community, to coordinating a book donation for a school in need. Any community project that brings a positive change to an area - its health, environment, social circumstances, safety or addresses conflict – is a Messengers of Peace project.



Requirements

Complete a service project which involves at least 10 hours of effort. Your project should include the following:

- Service to a community: The project should address a need in the community.
- Sustainable: It should have a lasting impact
- Personal Progression: All of the Scouts should be involved in organising and doing the project.

Messengers of Peace

Steps to getting the Award:

1. The Unit or each Crew registers by emailing betterworld@scouts.ie (include your Group details, numbers participating, and your project)
2. Plan: Learn about a local social issue (meeting) and decide on ways in which you can help (meeting)
3. Do: Crews organise a community project (weekend)
4. Review: Evaluate your project and its impact, and commit to maintaining if required (meeting, on-going). Submit an application.
5. Celebrate your achievement!

