

The Great Sand Dunes Expedition

Summer
2021



Troop 56

EXPEDITION GUIDE

July 10th - 17th

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve



Location: Colorado
Sangre de Cristo Mountains
National Park

Established: September 24, 2004
National Monument
March 17, 1932

Size: 149,137 acres

Elevation: 7,520' to 13,604'

Nestled in a spot where the Sangre de Cristo Mountains buckle inward, the dunes within the borders of Great Sand Dunes National Park have been building and shifting for eons. The park features North America's tallest dunes, which rise over 750 feet high ... the result of the San Luis Valley's unique wind patterns. Great Sand Dunes became a National Monument in 1932 and became a National Park in 2004 with the passage of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act. The park includes alpine lakes and tundra, six peaks over 13,000 feet in elevation, ancient spruce and pine forests, large stands of aspen and cottonwood, grasslands, and wetlands...all habitat for diverse wildlife and plant species.

The wind-shaped dunes glow beneath the rugged backdrop of the mountains. A sandbox of epic proportions, the entire dune field encompasses 30 square miles of massive dunes. The kid in every visitor loves to sled down the sand and plunge into the soft-sand tracks of those who climbed ahead of them.

Aside from the dunes, you can find hiking and camping opportunities, the challenging four-wheel scenic drive on Medano Pass, picnicking, horseback-riding trails, the mysteriously appearing and disappearing Medano Creek, high peaks to climb, and ranger-led nature walks.

Guidebook by Tom Downs

© 2021

last updated: 04/22/21



2021 Great Sand Dunes Expedition Parent and Scout Program Guide

Greetings from Venture

Greetings Scouts and Scouters,

Welcome to the Great Sand Dunes Expedition of 2021!

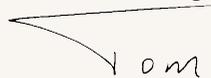
I would just like to take this opportunity to say how excited I am that our Scoutmaster and Troop Committee have the confidence to jump down the rabbit hole with me this year and take a radical turn away from the typical summer camp experience. My personal belief is that traditional Boy Scout summer camp is great, but after the 4th or 5th time it gets to be extremely stale for the average scout. If you have raised 3 boys through Scouting (and have been an adult volunteer for 20 years) like I have, you see traditional summer camps as mind numbingly tedious on a scale approaching the likes of watching a bridge rust; only less fun. But...I digress. This year, however, I am confident that all of the Scouts involved in our expedition will have a break from the tedium and look back on this trip as special. Hopefully the Great Sand Dunes Expedition will be a highlight in their Scouting Experience. I know I speak for all the members of the Venture Patrol when I say that we are very excited to be planning and hosting our troop's summer camp this year. We will endeavor to make it the most exciting trip possible!

The Boy Scout Program is a unique fellowship. From its founding by Robert Baden-Powell in 1908, its true purpose has had only one goal; to turn young boys into good men. I joined Boy Scouts at its apex in the 1980's. The program impressed in me countless skills, morals, and ideals. I use things I learned in Scouting every day without even thinking about it. Of all the programs I have ever encountered, few will ever have the moral compass and far reaching hold of the Boy Scout Program.

Since starting the Venture Program for our troop in 2015, it has always been my goal to provide our Scouts with the opportunity to see the beauty, wonder, and history of our great nation through hiking and backpacking experiences. Throughout my life I have travelled quite a bit, and have acquired a very unique and eclectic knowledge of our country. I am what some would call a National Park "junkie". I can't seem to explore and visit enough of our National Parks to satisfy me. Often times, my obsession works to the benefit of the Scouts. I have been able to leverage my travel experiences and knowledge of our National Park System to create a Venture Program that has been able to provide our Scouts with tremendous opportunity. It's extremely satisfying to know that I have introduced Scouts to new experiences and shown them natural wonders that many people will never see in their lifetimes. It's my "giving back" moment to the program that affected my life so much and helped shape me into the person I am today.

I didn't originally plan to put together an actual guidebook for our expedition, but all the preparation work I've done over the years for Venture trips, and the prep work for this expedition, has left me with plenty of information that I can bind together into a book. hopefully this guidebook will help answer your questions without creating a list of new ones in the process.

Yours in Scouting,



Tom Downs
ASM-Venture

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Signing Up for Camp

Since the Great Sand Dunes Expedition is being planned and operated by the troop's Venture Program, all people wishing to sign up are to contact Mr. Downs before 02/24/21.

After your name has been recorded on the sign up sheet, you will be asked to give the first deposit of \$400 to the Troop Treasurer for your Scout.

IMPORTANT:

There is ONLY one point of contact for sign ups. If you sign up with anyone other than Mr. Downs, you have not actually signed up for this trip...even if you made a deposit. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

There is limited space available on the expedition, so by signing up and paying the initial deposit you are serious about going on this trip. However, this is in no way a guarantee that you will be chosen to be a participant.

Participation Requirements

Although the Troop would like to have everyone participate in the expedition, this will not be possible. There is a limited amount of space available on the trip. This is dictated partly by the space available for gear in our troop trailer, but mostly by the number of seats we have pre-booked on the plane to and from Colorado. Troop 56 has 30 seats pre-booked for current members. This number does not include seats reserved for members of Venture. The Venture Patrol will be travelling separately from the rest of the troop. The limited availability of space has caused Venture and the Troop Committee to place some participation requirements on those wishing to go on this trip.

NOTICE: Troop 56 and Venture reserves the right to deny or restrict any adult from attending the trip that is not registered as a Leader on the Troop Charter for any reason.



Helicopter Parents and Separation Anxiety

The simple fact is that this trip is roughly 1660 miles away (as the crow flies). If you are a parent that has difficulties with your Scout being far from home without you being there to "supervise" him, this is probably **NOT THE TRIP FOR YOU**. In addition, if you are a parent that must be on every trip with your son, prepare for the possibility that you may not be chosen to be on this trip due to space limitations. If you not being chosen would mean that your son will not be able to go, please take this into consideration **BEFORE** you sign your son up and have to ride that emotional roller coaster.



Scout Participation Requirements

In the event of limited space issues on the trip, the following criteria will be considered when making final trip roster decisions in regards to the Scouts:

1 Rank

Keep in mind, that as a Scout it is assumed that you have worked hard to achieve your rank. That hard work is always rewarded. Rank has privileges.

2 Activity in the Troop

Active members in the troop will always be seen as more favorable as less active members. Scouts that only show up for big events or "fun stuff" are frowned upon.

3 Parental Volunteer Going on the Trip

It's just weird when a parent goes on a big trip and leaves his or her Scout behind.

4 Deposit or Deadline Issues

Things cost money and deadlines must be made. Don't miss a deadline and jeopardize your seat.



Adult Participation Requirements

It is the intent of the troop to limit adults on the trip to make more room available for Scouts. The following criteria will be used when making choices for the final trip roster in regards to Adult Participants:

1 Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters

Lets face it, we run the troop, volunteer the most time, have the highest level of training, and are planning this trip. We are first in line.

2 Adult Supervisors and MB Counselors

Trained Adults supervising patrols and our Merit Badge Counselors are essential for this trip.

3 Recently Aged Out Scouts

Venture has always made it a policy to allow Scouts that have just recently turned 18 years old to participate in the next available Venture Trip.

4 Committee Members

These people volunteer their time all year round.

5 Adult Volunteers (Useful)

Thanks for offering to come. We would love to have you on the trip if we the have room. Be prepared to be assigned a few jobs and be trained.

6 Adult Volunteers (Helicopter)

Thanks for offering to come. We'll let you know.

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Itinerary

Venture Trips have always provided travellers and parents with a “one-sheet” travel itinerary. This single point resource has always been used as a tool for everyone to know what is generally planned for each day of our trips. The sheet also lists other pertinent information such as budget costs, sleeping locations, sunrise/sunset info...etc. That practice will still be followed for this expedition. An example of the Master Itinerary Sheet is shown to the right. However, with so many people attending this trip (and so many “moving parts”), its impossible to condense all itinerary information onto one sheet. More detailed itineraries will be set up by patrol

Patrol Itineraries

Patrols will be planning their own activities for this expedition. Some of these activities may coincide with the Troop or other Patrols, but others will not. In order to keep track of all Scouts on this trip (for safety and logistics), individual Patrol Itineraries will be developed and printed prior to our departure for Colorado. These itineraries are to be used as guidelines. Although some people back home or on the trip may treat these itineraries as apocryphal, rest assured they are not. They are just a tool to help guide us. Some suggested activities for building a Patrol Itinerary can be found starting on page 27 of this guidebook.



Exploration Merit Badge

All Scouts attending the Great Sand Dunes Expedition will be required to participate in planning the itinerary for their Patrol (among other things). However, this planning process should not be wasted. The planning process, if done properly, will fulfill all of the points for REQUIREMENT 6 of Exploration Merit Badge.

Itinerary Basics

Patrols Itineraries should be simple and concise. It's not necessary to list every activity for your day. Just the major things. This is only a guideline to keep your Patrol organized. It also helps Troop Leaders know where you are and what you are doing (for safety). Don't get upset if you can't accomplish all of your planned activities, some activities get cancelled, or some "go off the rails". Just have a plan.

The Master Itinerary Sheet is posted on the Troop 56 website at: http://troop56-lacey.com/Summer_Camp/MasterItinerary.pdf





Expedition Costs

The cost for the Great Sand Dunes Expedition has been based on known factors from previous Venture Trips. As of the writing of this guidebook, the Venture Program has never exceeded their projected budget and has always been able to give participants a refund after each trip.

However, we treat every trip as a separate event and **DO NOT GUARANTEE** that the estimated budget is exact, or will not be exceeded. There are some factors that are always outside of our control when planning these trips (such as the price of fuel or the effects of COVID-19 on the national economy), so the final cost of the trip may change before departure. Please be aware of this **BEFORE** signing up for this trip.

The estimated cost for those participating in the Great Sand Dunes Expedition is:

\$795.00 **\$900.00**
Cumbres & Toltec RR

The estimated cost breakdown for the trip is listed below:

Estimated Trip Breakdown

Flight	\$365.00*
Food	\$140.00*
Van Rental	\$108.00
Fuel	\$20.00
Camp Fees	\$45.00*
Expedition Patches	\$8.00*
Trail Medals	\$16.00
Sandboarding (Rentals)	\$23.00 (1 day only)
Parking or Transport	\$35.00*
Troop Trailer Transport	\$35.00
Cumbres & Toltec RR	\$105.00*

* Indicates "Economy of Scale" Variable

Economy of Scale

These costs were based on a single, 15 person team traveling to Colorado. As anyone who works with these types of budgets will tell you, the more people that go on the trip, the better the price for all. This is called "economy of scale". It basically means that you can buy things better because you purchase in bulk and get better discounts because you have more participants.

Payment Schedule

Unfortunately, things in life cost money and the troop does not have unlimited coffers to pre-pay all our needed expenses prior to our trip departure date. Therefore; all participants in the Great Sand Dunes Expedition will be following a strict deposit schedule to ensure that the troop can meet our financial commitments for the expedition.

Participants will be asked to make the following deposits/payments by the dates listed below:

02/24/21 \$400 Initial Sign Up	05/05/21 \$300 2nd Deposit	06/09/21 REMAINING BALANCE Final Payment
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Fundraising

It is the intention of the Troop to participate in fundraising events and activities throughout the year to try and bring down the cost of the trip for everyone. The goal is to "cap" the out of pocket costs per traveller at \$700. Therefore, It is extremely important that all Scouts and parents make every attempt to participate in troop fundraising events.



"A Scout is Thrifty"
 The Scout Law (point nine)



Pocket Money and OTHER COSTS

The amount of money a Scout brings on the Expedition is a personal decision. There will be places for Scouts to buy things. The Visitor Center offers NPS items and souvenirs, and the campground store has some groceries, snacks, and camping supplies. Most places accept debit and credit cards as well.

Activities that are outside the scope of the original Budget (such as an extra day of sandboarding) are not covered by the camp fee and are the responsibility of the Scout.

At no time does Troop 56 assume any responsibility or liability for cash, items, or valuables that a Scout brings on the expedition or purchases while away at camp.



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“How are we getting to Summer Camp?”

That’s a really good question. It will involve a lot of planning and logistics to make it all happen. Luckily, there have been a lot of Venture trips over the past 5 years that have paved the way for the rest of the Troop to be able to join us on a trip like this. Most of the planning (from the rental vans to the flights) has been done by Venture on previous trips before. We are confident that our experience can be “rolled out” on a larger scale to accommodate the troop.

Troop Trailer

The Troop Trailer will be the key to our success on this trip. This is the one thing on the expedition that Venture has never used on our other trips. However, we are confident that it is just another piece (albeit a large piece) of the puzzle that we need to make this trip successful.

The overall plan is to pack the Troop Trailer with all necessary troop equipment and all of the personal gear **PRIOR** to the troop departing for Colorado. The trailer will be transported overland to meet the troop when we arrive at Great Sand Dunes National Park.

Gear Muster July 7
 **Muster at Community Hall**
101 N Main St, Forked River
 **7:00 PM EDT**

- All gear is to be packed for transport
- The Gear Muster is supervised by the Campmaster and the troop Quartermaster

Distance: 1880 miles
Time:  29 Hours
Primary Route:

- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- West Virginia
- Ohio
- Indiana
- Illinois
- Missouri
- Kansas
- Colorado



Suggested Departure
July 8



Required Personal Gear Storage

Sterlite 16 gal Storage Locker

- Lightweight
- Stackable
- Handles
- Lockable

If all your personal gear doesn’t fit in this box, you brought too much stuff!



Timeline

- ◆ September 2020
 - Quartermaster Assigned 
- ◆ Oct-Nov 2020
 - Campmaster Chosen 
- ◆ Jan-Feb 2021
 - Assessment of gear and trailer
- ◆ March-May 2021
 - Recon or Mods of Troop Trailer
- ◆ June 2021
 - Final Trailer checks
- ◆ **Gear Muster**
July 7, 2020 (Wednesday)

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Airlines

Most people going on the trip will be flying to Colorado. Flying can be stressful under even the best of circumstances, and let's face it; flying with hoards of Scouts could make using thumbscrews on yourself seem like an enjoyable hobby. However, Venture has done this process many times and we have found what we feel is the best and safest way to move Scouts and their leaders through airports and beyond. There are 30 seats pre-booked for troop use. This does not include seats reserved for the members of Venture. The Venture Patrol will be travelling separately from the troop.

Troop 56 Airport Travel Guidelines

- All Scouts and Adult Leaders will be travelling to and from Summer Camp in Field Uniform.
- Travellers **WILL NOT** be checking any bags. Our group flight rate does not include any checked bags or bags that go in the overhead compartments. You can bring a personal bag as long as it fits below the seat.
- Travellers **MUST** comply with all TSA guidelines and regulations regarding airline travel and security.
- Scouts travelling without a parent or guardian **MUST** fill out the standard PERMISSION TO TRAVEL FORM that we use on every Venture trip and have it notarized.
- Movement of the Troop through airports will be done by assigned Patrol.
- Adult Leaders assigned to patrols are responsible for:
 - Travel Papers (back up copies will be held by Overwatch and the Scoutmaster)
 - Airline Tickets for the Scouts
 - All aspects of the Scout's passage to, through, and from the airport



"What's the Field Uniform?"

The Field Uniform is basically a Class A uniform with no medals, merit badge sash, or dangling awards hanging from it.

- The uniform helps identify us as a unit as we travel and helps us in the airport.
- It is also a sign of pride in our troop and our commitment to upholding the traditions of Scouting.

Flight Information

The troop has been able to secure a block of 30 seats with United Airlines for our trip out to Colorado. We will be departing from Newark/Liberty International Airport and arriving at Denver International Airport. The basic flight information is listed below:

OUTBOUND	JULY 10	RETURN	JULY 16
	SATURDAY		FRIDAY
	UNITED		UNITED
	UA 2444		UA 2487
	8:15AM		11:15PM
	Arrival 10:19AM		Arrival 5:00AM
	Denver International Airport		Newark International Airport

RED EYE FLIGHT
Begins on Friday Night

Trip Muster



Muster at Community Hall
101 N Main St, Forked River

4:00 AM EDT

■ **DO NOT BE LATE FOR THE MUSTER!**
(Rumors that Mr. Downs will leave you behind if you are late are not exaggerated)

Timeline

- ◆ **February 2021**
 - Take deposits for the trip
- ◆ **March 2021**
 - Book final tickets
- ◆ **April 2021**
 - Required Travel forms to Scouts
- ◆ **May 2021**
 - Collect Travel forms from Scouts
- ◆ **July 10, 2021 (Saturday)**
 - **Trip Muster**
 - **Drive to Newark**
Appx. Drive Time: 1.5 hours



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Patrol Vans

Since the first Venture trip to the Grand Canyon in 2016, we have always used the Patrol Van concept to transport Scouts and gear. It is a proven concept that has served us well. The only difference on this trip is that the vans will not be used to transport our gear; that will be done by the troop trailer (see page 6 for more info on the trailer).

The Van Concept

- Like a standard Venture Trip, each patrol will be built around a single 15 person passenger van.
- Each van will contain the following:
 - 3 Trained Adult Leaders (2 minimum)
 - 10-12 Scouts
- The van concept is designed to provide the following
 - Better supervision of smaller/more contained groups by Adult Leaders (increased safety).
 - Increased flexibility for each patrol.
 - The daily activity choices of individual patrols do not affect other patrols or the troop.
 - Ability for patrols to travel "off-site" to other activities or locations within range.
- Multiple vans at our Basecamp helps the entire troop.
 - Daily Supply Runs
 - Medical Emergencies
 - Extreme Weather Situations

Valid Drivers License Required



Please note that **ALL** adults assigned to supervise a patrol **MUST** have a valid drivers license, insurance, and be ready and able to drive the Patrol Van.



NOTE: Higher Speed Limits
The speed limit on many of the major highways in Colorado is 75 MPH. You're from NJ, don't let it surprise or intimidate you!



Utah Speed Limits
If somehow you and your patrol make it all the way to Utah, you may see a speed limit of 80 MPH.

Off Site Locations

The use of patrol vans allows a great deal of flexibility. Although Great Sand Dunes National Park is around 233 square miles in size and holds plenty of exploration opportunities, the surrounding region holds many more. The possibilities are almost limitless on what a patrol could do for an activity, or where they could explore for the day. No patrol is required to stay at the park or at Basecamp all of the time. It will be up to the individual patrols to plan their own agendas and activities for their free time.

Possible Off Site Locations/Activities

Site/Activity	approximate Mileage	approximate (1 way) Travel Time
Zapata Falls Sangre de Cristo Mountains	12	15 minutes
Fort Garland Museum-Historic Site	30	34 minutes
Alamosa City in Colorado	35	35 minutes
Curecanti National Recreation Area	148	2H 41M
Old Bent's Fort National Historic Site	159	2H 44M
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument	166	2H 49M
Capulin Volcano National Monument	167	2H 42M
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park	195	3H 33M
Mesa Verde National Par	202	3H 49M
Denver International Airport	254	3H 52M



Additional Fuel Costs

A Note from Overwatch

The troop encourages patrols to take advantage of the opportunities they have to explore while out West. However, the trip budget only covers the minimal van expenses necessary to get to Summer Camp and back. Any extra exploring by the patrol will be an additional expense that will be shared by the **PATROL ONLY** and will not be covered by the troop. Take this into consideration when planning any off site excursions. If you need help with trip planning, Overwatch will be happy to assist you.



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Basecamp Piñon Flats Campground

"A week of camp life is worth six months of theoretical teaching in the meeting room."

~ Lord Baden-Powell

The troop will be staying within the boundaries of Great Sand Dunes National Park at the Piñon Flats Campground. The campground is located one mile north of the park's Visitor Center. For most of the week, Troop 56 will be occupying the entire Group Campsite Loop.

The camp is over 60 years old and has easy trail access to the dunes. The campground offers modern restrooms with flush toilets, running water, dishwashing sinks, and water spigots.

Campsite Amenities



Rest Rooms

- Flush Toilets
- Sinks
- Water Spigots
- Dishwashing Sinks



Campfire

- Grates



Amphitheater

- Ranger Programs



No Electric



Picnic Tables



Campground Store



No Showers



Hot Showers

There are no hot showers available at Piñon Flats. Shower facilities are available nearby at the Great Sand Dune Oasis.

Camp Operations



Campmaster

All operations for the campsite for this trip will be supervised and managed by the Campmaster.



Senior Patrol Leader

The SPL will work with the Campmaster to make sure the campground runs safely and efficiently.



Quartermaster

The Troop Quartermaster is responsible for all troop gear.



Outdoor Ethics Guides

OED's will make sure that the troop maintains all outdoor ethics while on this trip. An OED will be assigned to oversee each campsite and will report to the SPL with a camp status of each day.



Bears

Black bears are potential visitors. All food and aromatic items will be stored in the bearproof lockers provided at each site.

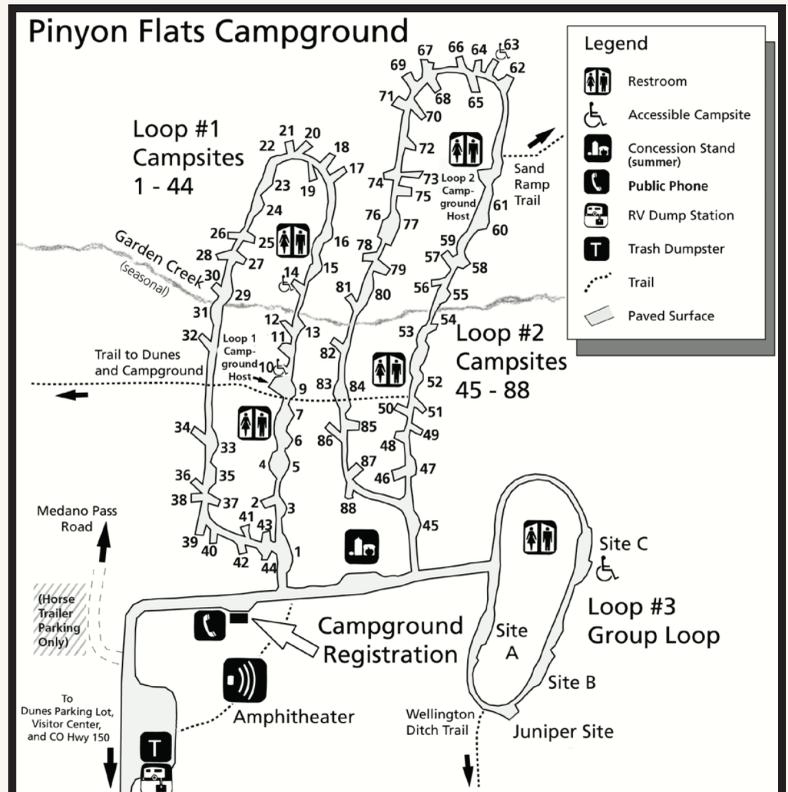
Firewood



Firewood can not be brought from outside the San Luis Valley. Firewood can spread insect pests and diseases that kill native trees.



Quiet Hours
10PM-6AM



Camp A



Eagle



Raptor

Camp B



Yeti



Venture

Camp C



Adults



Set Up

July 10, 2021

- Complete Set-up



Break Down

July 16, 2021



The Patrol Method

Campsites will be set up by patrol and follow the guidelines of the Patrol Method.



Patrol Leader

Leads the patrol and reports to the SPL.



Adults

Adults (both Leadership and Accompanying) will set up their tents in Campsite C as a patrol.

- Adults WILL NOT be sharing tents with their children.



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Planning your Itinerary

It's important for patrols to have a basic plan for each day. These plans will be decided prior to attending summer camp and filed with Overwatch and the Campmaster.

Keep in mind that the patrol plan is not an exact rule that must be followed to the letter. It is simply a guideline. There are many things that could happen during the expedition that could alter a planned itinerary. The weather, ranger programs, or just discovering something new and exciting could alter your plans. However, a patrol should always have a basic plan in place at all times.

Too Many Activities Planned?

Venture has always found that it is far better to have too many activities planned than too little. It's always easier to drop or move a planned activity than it is to come up with a new one "on the fly". Overplanning is always better than underplanning, so don't feel bad if you don't accomplish every item on your schedule for the day. Just have fun doing the ones you can.

The are two reasons for setting up a patrol activity plan prior to summer camp:

Safety: A Scout looking for something to do is more likely to get himself into trouble than a Scout that already has a plan. Plus, troop leaders have knowledge of where you are and what you are supposed to be doing.

Time: We will be far from home with a limited amount of time. It is best to maximize your time out West by having a plan instead of wasting time trying to figure out what the patrol wants to do for the day and then wasting more time debating about it.

12

MONDAY

Great Sand Dunes
National Park and Preserve

Sandboarding
the Great Sand Dunes

Distance: Variable
Difficulty: Mod-Stren
Time: 3-5 Hours
Elev Chg: 600 feet ↑

Zapata Falls

Trail: Zapata Falls
Distance: 1 mile

Ranger Program
Amphitheater Campfire

Stargazing
on the Great Sand Dunes

Distance: Variable
Difficulty: Mod-Stren
Time: 2-3 Hours
Elev Chg: 600 feet ↑

Piñon Flats Campground
Great Sand Dunes National Park

Sunrise: 05:54 AM

Sunset: 08:25 PM

This is an example of a solid and achievable Patrol Plan for a day.

Morning

- 06:00AM-06:30AM Reveille/Wake Up
- 06:30AM-07:30AM Breakfast
- 07:30AM-08:00AM Clean-up
- 08:00AM-12:00PM Patrol Activity

Afternoon

- 12:00PM-01:00PM Lunch
- 01:00PM-02:00PM Siesta
- 02:00PM-06:00PM Patrol Activity

Evening

- 06:00PM-07:30PM Dinner
- 07:30PM-08:00PM Clean-up
- 08:00PM-09:00PM Ranger Program
- 09:00PM-11:00PM Troop Night Activity
- 10:00PM-06:00AM QUIET HOURS



Plug 'n Play Planning

The objective of this expedition is for all Scouts to maximize their fun and have a great experience. Venture could plan out all aspects of this trip, however we don't feel that is a good idea. Partly because it would be a lot of work on our part, but mostly because it's not our place to plan everything you do for an entire week.

Part of being a Scout and being a member of a patrol is planning your activities with your Patrol Leader and fellow Scouts. The large details of this expedition have been planned for you, however, it is the Patrol's responsibility to figure out the details of your days at camp.

There are numerous activities listed towards the end of this guidebook to help get you started. Each activity can easily be "plugged" into a time slot for you to "play". It is also highly suggested that you spend some time on the Internet (with your parent's permission) searching for other activities that you, your Patrol, or the Troop might enjoy. Share what you have learned and help make this trip great!



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Daily Activities

“It is important to arrange games and competition so that all Scouts of the troop take part.”

~ Lord Baden-Powell

As much as Venture criticizes the monotony and humdrum nature of the typical Boy Scout summer camp, they are still very well thought out places. One of the many things they understand thoroughly is that young boys need routine. There is nothing more disorienting to a scout than not knowing what he is supposed to be doing while at camp. Scouts lacking this knowledge tend to run the gambit from panicked indecision to rampant chaos.

The Venture Program at Troop 56 tries to ride that fine crest on the wave between static order and total chaos. We want our scouts to experience the new thrills, but know that there is a plan and purpose behind what we do. We like looking into the face of chaos and laughing at him.

The Daily Grind

The typical day is broken into 4 main parts. Most of these parts are centered around (you guessed it) meals. It's funny how all BSA Camps revolve around the meal schedule. It's even more humorous when scouts begin to realize that the only real details they seem to remember about camps is how good or bad the meals were. All the other things about the typical summer camps seems to blur with the monotony of sameness.

On the Great Sand Dunes Expedition, we don't want the Scouts to remember this trip because of the meals. We have already made the assumption that the meals made by the scouts will taste terrible. Scouts are notorious for being very poor chefs, so nobody is expecting 5 star meals on this trip. However, sometimes they surprise you (so maybe it will be good eatin'....maybe). In reality, we are hoping all the Scouts will remember the great sights and activities they will see and do on this trip; not the food. However, like a typical camp, most parts of a Scout's daily routine start with a meal.

General Schedule



Morning

- 06:00AM-06:30AM Reveille/Wake Up
- 06:30AM-07:30AM Breakfast
- 07:30AM-08:00AM Clean-up/Patrol Assembly
- 08:00AM-12:00PM Patrol or Troop Activity



Afternoon

- 12:00PM-01:00PM Lunch
- 01:00PM-02:00PM Merit Badges/Skills
- 02:00PM-06:00PM Patrol or Troop Activity



Evening

- 06:00PM-07:30PM Dinner
- 07:30PM-08:00PM Clean-up/Patrol Assembly
- 08:00PM-10:00PM Ranger Programs/Camp Time



Nighttime

- 10:00PM-00:00AM Patrol/Troop Night Activity
- 10:00PM-06:00AM QUIET HOURS

NOTE: The above General Schedule is only a guideline and not a strict rule. It reflects the overall schedule that will be set for Basecamp. The reason for this is so that everyone in the troop knows that the schedule for Basecamp is a constant.

Individual patrols are to create their own schedules based on their chosen activities for the day. These chosen activities could conceivably take up more than one time period. That is for the patrol to decide. However, all activities **MUST** be cleared for the day through Overwatch and logged with the Campmaster. This is to ensure that there are no scheduling conflicts with events that require the entire troop, and so that the Campmaster knows the location of every Scout at all times.



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Curriculum

No summer camp would be complete without the Scouts being able to work on awards and skills. With the approval of the Troop Committee, Venture has put together a curriculum for the Great Sand Dunes Expedition that revolves around the following:

■ Merit Badges

The merit badge choices for camp are based on:

- **Outdoor Skills:** Scouting is an outdoor program and summer camp is the big trip for the year. Summer camp in Colorado may possibly be the “big kahuna” of your entire scouting career. You will never be more outdoors than when camping in a National Park out West for a week.
- **Historic/Culture:** The region of the country we will be staying in has a very deep history and ties to many unique cultures. It is the perfect time to take advantage of the opportunity to earn some badges and learn some interesting stuff.
- **Scientific:** How often in your home state of NJ will you be able to sleep at 8,000 feet, stand below snow covered mountains, climb endless sand dunes, hike through forests of ancient aspen, and look out upon the shores of a pre-historic fossilized sea all in one place? Take advantage of the scientific opportunities that this brings by earning a badge.

■ Service Projects

Scouting was founded on the premise of doing a Good turn daily. Service is very important in the character-building process and, as Scouts, we have made the commitment to give back to our communities. Our National Park Service is underfunded by our Congress and currently has an almost \$12 billion maintenance backlog. What better way to give back to our nation than to help our National Parks by offering to do a service project to for our country. Heck...you can even earn a great award for doing it!



“The most important object in Boy Scout training is to educate, not instruct”

~ Lord Baden-Powell

■ Rank Skills

Traditional summer camps have a specific program for first year scouts.

The program is usually called Brownsea (after the island where Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell spent time testing his ideas for Scouting) or some other scout sounding name. Troop 56 doesn't have an island, a sea, or a fancy scout name for our program.

What Troop 56 offers for our younger Scouts is to work throughout the year on their scout skills with our Troop Guide, Instructors, and adult leaders. The whole purpose of the Patrol Method is to teach young scouts the basics of Scouting by exposing them to these skills on every trip...not just at summer camp. The skills are reinforced through repetition and constant use during all Scouting activities. However, summer camp is an excellent opportunity to build on these skills and teach additional ones to help scouts move up in rank. The Troop Guide and Instructors will focus on the younger Scouts everyday to help them achieve their goals.



■ Specialty Awards

There will be plenty of opportunity for all Scouts participating in the Expedition to earn a number of medals, award segments, and trail awards.



Great Sand Dunes Expedition Patch

All participants will be receiving the Expedition Patch.



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Merit Badges

Merit badges give scouts the opportunity to investigate different areas of knowledge and skills. The merit badge program plays a major role in the scouting advancement program and participation can begin as soon as a scout registers with a troop. Each scout can explore topics that interest them. The only limitations are their ambition and availability of adult merit badge counselors to offer instruction.

Believe it or not, Troop 56 has a lot of merit badge counselors willing and able to assist our scouts. The Great Sand Dunes Expedition will leverage all of the counselors available for our trip. However, this trip will not be a merit badge factory. We are travelling to Colorado to experience adventure and excitement, not to sit all day in a merit badge class.

Applied Skills vs The Merit Badge Factory

Scouts spend the bulk of their time at summer camp going to merit badge classes. In some ways, the typical scout camp has been compared to a "merit badge factory"; where counselors or CIT's push scouts through classes in an assembly line. Assembly lines are all well and good in the post apocalyptic factories of Skynet, but we're not building Terminators...at least not yet.

Somewhere along the line, summer camp became less about what it is really intended for, and more about collecting merit badges. Summer camp is supposed to be about outdoor adventure and applying all the skills that a Scout has learned throughout the previous year. How this all changed is one of the great mysteries of Scouting. It's doubtful that even Scooby-doo and Mystery Inc could uncover how everything changed and solve that mystery.

The Great Sand Dunes Expedition is **NOT** a merit badge factory. All merit badges offered for the trip will be started **BEFORE** the troop leaves for Colorado. For many, this will be a once in a lifetime scouting trip and it is a waste of that time to spend it cooped up in Basecamp working on merit badges. Therefore, anyone wishing to work on merit badges must sign up for the badges before the trip. Time will be allocated to merit badge counselors at our troop meetings. The intention here is that most of the requirements for each merit badge will be completed prior to our arrival in Colorado. The only merit badge requirements that will be worked on are the field requirements that can't be done prior. For example: you can't do a 10 mile hike at a meeting.



Merit Badge Sign-up Deadline

May 8th, 2021

Merit Badges must be chosen early for planning purposes:

- Determines interest in the badge (class size) and if a Counselor is actually needed
- Allows for merit badge class time to be scheduled at meetings.
- Extra-curricular activities can be planned and executed for the trip properly.



Don't run outtatime

Determine your merit badge choices and sign up before the deadline!

Available Merit Badges

 Camping	 Citizenship in the Nation
 Hiking	 Astronomy
 First Aid	 American Heritage
 Environmental Science	 Exploration
 Cooking	 Forestry
 Fishing	 Soil and Water Conservation
 Fly Fishing	 Climbing
 Railroading	 Indian Lore
 Geology	 Weather
 Geocaching	

Please see the **Page 27** for more merit badge details



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Rank Skills

The advancement program for Scouts is symbolized by the earning of seven ranks. The advancement program is divided into two phases. The first phase from joining up to First Class is designed to teach Scoutcraft skills, how to participate in a group and to learn self-reliance.



The Road to First Class

An active Scout can easily reach First Class rank in 10 to 12 months and really should reach First Class within 18 to 20 months. The troop meeting is where new scouts will start to learn skills. Scouts should be learning and using their skills on every trip and at every meeting. Scouts should be taking an active role in seeking out people to teach them new skills. Our adult leaders, Troop Guide, and Instructors will take time out each day on the Expedition to help our scouts learn new skills and reinforce old skills in order to help them advance.

Special Awards

Scouting has always had special awards for Scouts who “go the extra mile”. This trip will have ample opportunities for Scouts to earn some special awards above and beyond the typical summer camp trinkets. Some of these awards are:

Hike a National Park Medal



Created to commemorate the first Venture Expedition in 2016. The Hike a National Park Medal rewards Scouts and Scouters for hiking over 35 miles in our nation’s National Parks. The Great Sand Dunes Expedition is a perfect opportunity to earn this medal since we are staying inside Great Sand Dunes National Park. If a Scout can’t hike 35 miles in a week...you probably shouldn’t be a Scout.
NOTE: See Appendix for Medal Requirements

Old Spanish Trail Medal



The Old Spanish Trail became the 15th National Historic Trail in December 2002. Known as, “the longest, crookedest, most arduous pack mule trail in the history of America,” (1829-1848) was best-known during the Mexican period of southwestern history. The trail started in Santa Fe and terminated in Los Angeles, and had several variants. The North Branch of the trail passes right through Great Sand Dunes
NOTE: See Appendix for Medal Requirements



Service Projects

Service time and service projects are a way of life for Scouts. On this trip Scouts can actually earn two awards for doing service projects. However, there is one specific award that can only be earned by doing a project in a National Park.

Resource Stewardship Scout Ranger Award

This program invites Scouts to participate in educational and/or volunteer service projects at National Park sites. The goal is to spark the Scouts’ awareness of the National Parks while giving them the opportunity to explore the parks and learn more about protecting our natural and cultural resources. Scouts are awarded certificates and/or patches for participating in the program.



Scouts can earn a certificate or patch by participating in:

- Organized NPS educational programs
- Volunteer service projects in a National Park

Troop Certificate Troops must participate for a minimum of 5 hours at one or more National Park sites

Scout Patch Scouts must participate for a minimum of 10 hours at one or more National Park sites

Qualifying organized educational programs:

- Ranger-guided interpretive tours
- Junior Ranger programs
- Environmental education programs
- Any other official NPS education program (campfire program, ranger-led hike, etc.)

For more information, visit www.nps.gov/subjects/youthprograms/scout-ranger.htm



Historic Trails Award

Love of America and devotion to our country depend upon a thorough appreciation of the ideals, principles, and traditions that have made our country strong. The Great Sand Dunes is located along the Old Spanish Trail and our trip is a great opportunity for Scouts to earn the Historic Trails Award.

NOTE: See Appendix for Award Requirements

National Outdoor Awards

When a Scout excels in outdoor participation, there are awards to show for it! This program includes a series of six badges designed to recognize a Scout, who has exemplary knowledge and experience in performing high-level outdoor activities.

NOTE: See Appendix for Award Requirements



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Hiking

The Troop 56 Venture Program is based around one main thing: hiking. Every trip involves hiking in some way. Some of the hikes we do are rather easy day hikes like the Battle of Monmouth. Some are body punishing extremes like the Chilkoot Trail from Alaska to the Yukon River. However you look at it, there is one common theme that all Scouts have to like if they want to join Venture; they have to like hiking. If you don't like to walk, then Venture is not the program for you.

With that being said, there will be plenty of opportunities to hike on this expedition. Some of the available hikes will be fairly easy to moderate, and some will be downright strenuous. So make sure you choose the right hikes for your patrol during the patrol planning stages for the trip. We will be spending most of our time in a National Park, and you just can't see the most beautiful places in our National Parks from a van. You have to get out and walk to them. So expect to walk and be prepared.

"Of all the paths you take in life,
make sure a few of them are dirt."

~ John Muir

Proper planning and preparation is necessary anytime you venture into the great outdoors. A day hiker's checklist is a great way of helping you prepare for your hike, while helping to make your trip safer and more enjoyable. Of course the gear you need to carry will vary according to the type of hiking you've planned: the length of your hike, the time of year, as well as the destination and the terrain you'll be traveling over.

Environment



There are many things to think about when you decide to go hiking. Consider the weather, terrain, altitude, and environment where you will be hiking. Arid, hot southwest hikes require more water and less insect protection than cooler, humid northeast hikes. It is important to modify your gear as needed.

Gear



When it comes to gear, it's all about weight. The more weight you carry, the more tired you will become on your hike. Buy or carry only what you need. If you will only be hiking on groomed trails, you won't need gaiters. Buy a light, inexpensive headlamp rather than one with eight different brightness levels. (unless you really need that for some reason). Pack light, but BE PREPARED.

Advice



Get Advice from other hikers. Ask them for recommendations. If you see someone on the trail with a piece of gear you're interested in, ask how it's been working out for them.

10 ESSENTIALS FOR HIKING

1

NAVIGATION

- MAP (WITH PROTECTIVE CASE)
- COMPASS

2

INSULATION

- SEE CLOTHING OPTIONS BELOW

3

ILLUMINATION

- HEADLAMP OR FLASHLIGHT
- EXTRA BATTERIES

4

FIRST AID SUPPLIES

- HIKING FIRST AID KIT

5

NUTRITION

- FOOD FOR THE DAY
- EXTRA FOOD

6

SUN PROTECTION

- HAT (BILLED)
- SUNGLASSES
- SUNSCREEN
- SPF RATED LIP BALM

7

FIRE

- LIGHTER OR MATCHES (WATERPROOF CONTAINER)
- FIRESTARTING MATERIAL

8

REPAIR TOOLS

- POCKETKNIFE OR MULTI-TOOL
- REPAIR MATERIALS

9

HYDRATION

- WATER BOTTLES OR HYDRATION SYSTEM
- WATER FILTER OR TREATMENT SYSTEM

10

SHELTER

- EMERGENCY SHELTER
- EMERGENCY BLANKET



BASIC DAYHIKER CHECKLIST

ESSENTIAL GEAR

BACKPACK/DAYPACK
PREFERABLY WITH HYDRATION SYSTEM

FIRST AID KIT

KNIFE OR MULTI-TOOL
WITH REPAIR MATERIALS

MATCHES OR LIGHTER
IN WATERPROOF CONTAINER

INSECT REPELLENT

EMERGENCY SHELTER
TARP, TENT, OR REFLECTIVE BLANKET

FOOTWEAR

HIKING SHOES/BOOTS
BROKEN IN AND GEARED FOR THE TERRAIN

WATER

SUNSCREEN

SUNGLASSES

FLASHLIGHT
WITH EXTRA BATTERIES

FOOD

WHISTLE

HIKING SOCKS (2 PAIRS)
SYNTHETIC OR WOOL BLENDS (NO COTTON)

CLOTHING ☠️ COTTON KILLS ☠️

CONVERTIBLE PANTS
SWITCH FROM PANTS TO SHORTS (NO COTTON)

LIGHT JACKET
FLEECE OR SYNTHETIC BLEND (NO COTTON)

UNDERGARMENTS
WICKING MATERIALS/SYNTHETIC BLENDS

WIDE BRIMMED HAT
"NO HAT, NO HIKE"

LONG SLEEVED SHIRT
WICKING MATERIAL/SYNTHETIC BLEND (NO COTTON)

RAIN GEAR
EMERGENCY PONCHO OR RAIN JACKET

ACCESSORIES (OPTIONAL)

TREKKING POLES

GAITERS

GPS DEVICE

TOILET PAPER

WALLET/MONEY

50' NYLON ROPE

BINOCULARS

GLOVES



COTTON KILLS





Sandboarding

"Life's a mountain, not a beach"
~ author unknown

There's plenty to do at Great Sand Dunes National Park, but sandboarding is without a doubt the most novel activity you will find. The shapes and patterns of the dune field changes constantly, depending on the prevailing wind patterns, but the dunes remain the tallest in North America.

Basics of Sandboarding

Hiking the dunefield is among the most beloved activities in Great Sand Dunes National Park; sandboarding down the massive dunes is even better. There aren't any designated trails on the 30-square-mile dunefield; you can just take off from the Visitor Center and explore as you wish.

The "High Dune," visible from the parking lot and the Visitor Center on the first ridge of the field, is a popular destination. At nearly 700 feet tall, it's not the highest dune in the park, but it certainly provides an excellent view. It's about three-quarters of a mile to get to the smaller slopes, and a mile and a quarter to get to bigger, longer slopes to board down.

Sandboarding can be customized depending on fitness and how adventurous the Patrol is feeling. Less adventurous Scouts can stick to smaller slopes near the Visitor Center. Those looking for a wild ride can hike up to the taller dunes and ride all the way to the bottom. Scouts should look for the slopes with a gentle runout at the bottom; that way, if you get going faster than intended, you won't crash and burn.

SAFETY

No outdoor activity is completely risk-free, but sandboarding doesn't involve the same fast speeds as snowboarding or skiing; you'll likely be moving faster than you could run down the dunes, but not at breakneck speeds.

Sandboarding will be restricted to early morning or evening during our trip to avoid the 150 degree sand temperatures and possible thunderstorms.



Sandboard Rentals

It's crucial to rent an actual sandboard for an excursion onto the dunes. Snow sleds, snowboards, and skis don't slide unless the sand is wet, a rare occurrence at Great Sand Dunes; cardboard, saucers, and soft plastic don't slide, period.

We can rent sandboards at two local concessionaires. The Oasis Store is immediately outside the park and Kristi Mountain Sports in Alamosa. The budget for this trip is based on one 24 hour rental from Kristi Mountain Sports. Any additional days of sandboarding would be an additional expense that would **NOT** be covered under the camp fee.

Sandboard Rental Vendors/Costs



3223 Main Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-9759

\$20⁰⁰
per day



7800 Highway 150
Mosca, CO 81146
(719) 378-2222

\$22⁰⁰
per day



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The Great Sand Dunes is one of the best locations in the United States to enjoy the night sky. Its distance from urban areas, dry air, and high elevation makes for excellent star viewing. The dunefield has the most open views of the sky. Just a short stroll into the sand from our campground will provide excellent viewing. Ranger programs are offered at the Amphitheater, just below Piñon Flats Campground, on many evenings during summer.

In 2019, the Great Sand Dunes was designated as an International Dark Sky Park. This designation recognizes Great Sand Dunes for the exceptional quality of its dark night skies and for the park's commitment to preserving and educating about the night sky. Great Sand Dunes joins three other National Park sites in Colorado and approximately two dozen National Parks around the country that have been designated as International Dark Sky Parks.

"Astronomy's much more fun when you're not an astronomer".

~ Brian May



"What is an International Dark Sky Park?"

An IDA International Dark Sky Park (IDSP) is a land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment.

Phases of the Moon



The night sky over the planet Krikkit is the least interesting sight in the entire universe.

~ The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy



Stargazing on the Great Sand Dunes

MONDAY 12th

 **9:00 PM - 12:00 AM**



Distance: Variable
Difficulty: Mod-Stren
Time: 2-3 Hours
Elev Chg: 600 feet ↑



Astronomy Merit Badge

Counselor: Downs
This event will fulfill all of requirements 4 and 8

Complete your field work for Astronomy Merit Badge by going on a hike and stargazing party on the dunes.



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Weather

The weather is always a factor at summer camp. The old saying “if it ain’t damp, it ain’t camp” has always been a sore point with Venture. That saying is a misnomer. Camp, as the troop typically experiences it, is damp because we are always camping in the northeastern part of the country. Geography is always a factor when it comes to the weather. No matter how many humorous proverbs you hear grumpy scoutmasters spew to make scouts feel less miserable about being damp and cold at summer camp, the truth remains that it’s not always damp at camp.

Compared to the northeast, the climate for the Great Sand Dunes is excellent for camping and outdoor activities. The park is in what is considered a high desert region of the country. What that typically means is that there is less humidity due to the high elevation (no damp). However, being a desert environment, there is a larger swing in temperatures between the day and night.



“The weather started getting rough,
the tiny ship was tossed.
If not for the courage of the fearless crew
the Minnow would be lost.”

~ The Ballad of the S.S. Minnow

Typical Weather Conditions for July



Daytime

- Daytime air temperatures rarely reach 90°F, with the average temperatures in the very comfortable 70°-80°F range.



Nighttime

- Nights are surprisingly cool, due to the higher elevation of 8200'
- Even in the summer, warm layered clothing is recommended, as lows may drop into the 40s.
- After dark, a warm coat or a blanket are necessities.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	67 (19)	63 (17)	72 (22)	78 (26)	89 (32)	96 (36)	94 (34)	90 (32)	87 (31)	80 (27)	67 (19)	60 (16)	96 (36)
Average high °F (°C)	35.1 (1.7)	39.2 (4.0)	46.8 (8.2)	56.3 (13.5)	66.2 (19.0)	76.6 (24.8)	80.8 (27.1)	77.9 (25.5)	71.5 (21.9)	60.5 (15.8)	45.5 (7.5)	36.4 (2.4)	57.7 (14.3)
Daily mean °F (°C)	22.4 (-5.3)	26.5 (-3.1)	33.9 (1.1)	42.1 (5.6)	51.5 (10.8)	60.9 (16.1)	65.6 (18.7)	63.2 (17.3)	56.6 (13.7)	46.1 (7.8)	32.8 (0.4)	23.9 (-4.5)	43.8 (6.6)
Average low °F (°C)	9.8 (-12.3)	13.9 (-10.1)	21.0 (-6.1)	28.0 (-2.2)	36.8 (2.7)	45.2 (7.3)	50.5 (10.3)	48.5 (9.2)	41.7 (5.4)	31.7 (-0.2)	20.1 (-6.6)	11.3 (-11.5)	29.9 (-1.2)
Record low °F (°C)	-25 (-32)	-22 (-30)	-9 (-23)	-6 (-21)	15 (-9)	25 (-4)	31 (-1)	33 (1)	22 (-6)	2 (-17)	-12 (-24)	-19 (-28)	-25 (-32)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	0.44 (11)	0.37 (9.4)	0.77 (20)	0.89 (23)	1.09 (28)	0.86 (22)	1.79 (45)	2.00 (51)	1.22 (31)	0.86 (22)	0.49 (12)	0.36 (9.1)	11.13 (283)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	6.8 (17)	5.3 (13)	8.3 (21)	5.7 (14)	1.4 (3.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.1 (0.25)	2.6 (6.6)	4.7 (12)	5.6 (14)	40.5 (103)

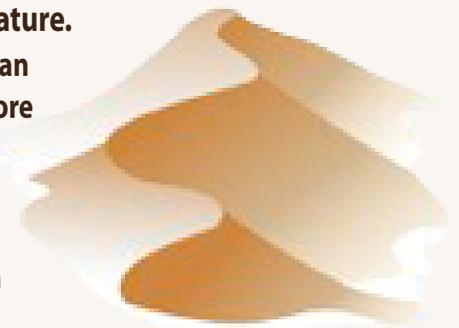


Thunderstorms

- Afternoon thundershowers are common in July
- Be prepared to leave the dunes promptly if thunderstorms threaten
- In the event of an emergency, follow BSA Hazardous Weather Training

Sun and Sand

- Summer temperatures are usually pleasant, but temperatures on the sand can be much, much higher than the air temperature.
- Temperatures on the sand can reach as high as 140°F or more during the peak of the day
- Activities on the dune field will be restricted to early morning and late afternoon



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Medical

Safety is of paramount importance on this expedition, but let's face the grim reality; accidents happen. However, our motto is "be prepared", so the Troop will take every precaution and steps to ensure the safety of every Scout on this expedition.

Scout Welfare

The Troop Committee has assigned a Committee Member the specific task of overseeing Scout Welfare for this trip. The position watches over and assess all of our Scouts on a daily basis regarding physical, medical, and emotional issues or concerns. Concerns or issues are reported to the Scoutmaster and Overwatch. Pressing medical issues are to be relayed to parents or guardians immediately.

The leader in charge of Scout Welfare on the trip is:



Caralyn Crepezzi Committee



Camp Medic Working directly with the Committee Member in charge of Scout Welfare will be our camp medic. That person is:



Ralph Colasanti Committee



Wilderness First Aid

The troop has Adult Leaders trained specifically in Wilderness First Aid by the American Red Cross. This is a more advanced form of first aid training specifically designed to deal with medical catastrophes in remote environments where immediate help is far away or nonexistent.

Adult Leaders trained in Wilderness First Aid are:



Tom Downs ASM-Venture/Overwatch



Bill Elmer Campmaster/Committee

NOTE: The number of adults trained in Wilderness First Aid may increase by the time of our trip due to training in May 2021



COVID-19

The global pandemic is definitely a concern. Please refer to page 26 for more information.



MEDICATIONS

Medications should clearly be marked with the Scout's name, medication name, and dosage and will be stored in the Trailer Trailer and administered by the Campmaster



Hospital Information

Although it is rarely in anyone's plans to visit the hospital, life happens. The closest hospital to Great Sand Dunes National park is 38 miles away in Alamosa. That is about a 30 minute drive. The irony is that a Scout could probably reach the hospital in Alamosa faster than if he went to a hospital in NJ and had to fight through summer traffic.



106 Blanca Avenue
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-2511



First Aid

The troop has a comprehensive first aid kit within the troop trailer and each patrol van will be equipped with an emergency first aid kit for the trip.

Personal First Aid Kits

Each Scout should pack a personal first aid kit with their gear. This is a habit they should keep for every trip, not just this expedition. A first aid checklist (for hikers) is available on the troop website and in the appendix in the end section of this guidebook.



National Park Service

National Park Service Rangers are trained as EMS



Altitude

Altitude of over 8000 feet is considered HIGH ALTITUDE, and the lowest point in Great Sand Dunes National Park starts at around 8000 feet. This may be a challenge for some people on the trip before they adapt to the change.

As altitude rises, air pressure drops. The human body reacts to high altitudes. Decreased air pressure means that less oxygen is available for breathing. One normal effect of altitude is shortness of breath, since the lungs have to work harder to deliver oxygen to the bloodstream. It can take a little while for someone to adapt to the change; therefore strenuous activity will be restricted for our first couple of days in Colorado.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness is a disorder caused by being at high altitude, where oxygen levels are low, without gradually getting used to the increase in altitude. It is also known as acute mountain sickness (AMS). The campground we are staying at is right on the cusp of the "high altitude" line. Troop leaders, and especially Scout Welfare, will monitor all Scouts for signs of AMS at all times. The most common and easily treated symptoms of altitude sickness is headache and dehydration.



"I want to see mountains again,
Gandalf, mountains."
~ Bilbo Baggins

Asthma Concerns

In general, climate and altitude do not affect asthmatics who are in stable condition and whose symptoms are well controlled. As altitude increases and air pressure falls, the amount of oxygen available with each breath decreases. This leads to a fall in the oxygen concentration in your bloodstream and tissues that could affect asthmatics in the following ways:

- Asthmatics who are not stable, may have difficulties adapting to the new environment.
- Those who suffer from allergic asthma may actually find things easier as there are less allergens in the air at this altitude.

Asthmatics and Inhalers

The troop **REQUIRES** all asthmatics (even if you think you only have a minor problem) to carry their inhalers with them at **ALL TIMES** and register that they are an asthmatic with Scout Welfare and Overwatch prior to leaving on the Great Sand Dunes Expedition.



Dehydration

The largest challenge for people when they reach high altitude areas is staying hydrated. Drinking enough fluids is the key to keeping altitude sickness under control (that and air). The average person in America today is usually mildly dehydrated. People just don't drink enough water on a daily basis.

 The average person needs to drink **96 OUNCES** of water daily at sea level.



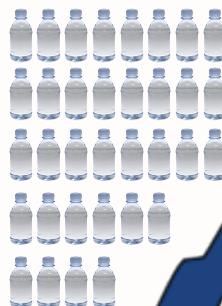
That's the equivalent of 12, 8 oz water bottles!

HYDRATION GEAR REQUIRED →



At an altitude of 8000 feet the average water needs increases to **272 OUNCES**

That's the equivalent of 34, 8 oz water bottles!



Because of the extreme need for keeping hydrated on this trip, **ALL SCOUTS** will be **REQUIRED** to have personal hydration gear with them at all times. Please make sure your Scout has this gear packed with their personal items for the Gear Muster.



2021 Great Sand Dunes Expedition Parent and Scout Program Guide



Food and Supplies

Nothing tastes better than a delicious meal cooked outdoors, especially if you are on a Boy Scout camping trip. Or at least that's what we are told when drinking the kool-aid.

Food and supplies are always a chief concern for Scoutmasters and Quartermasters. People need to eat and it's always bad if you run out of toilet paper. This trip will have some unique, but easily conquered challenges to overcome regarding our meals and supplies.

Meal and Supply Planning

During the Patrol Planning Stages for our expedition, it will be up to the Patrol to plan out their meals and figure out what supplies they will need prior to our departure. Once all Patrol meals and gear are properly planned, the requests will be sent to the Troop Quartermaster and Campmaster to be organized.

Having all of this "mapped out" prior to leaving will help the Patrol and Troop save money and time while we are out in Colorado.

■ Non-Perishables

In order to save money and time, non-perishable food and supplies will be purchased in NJ and transported via the Troop Trailer to Colorado.

- Non-perishable food will be purchased in bulk based on Patrol Menu selections.

■ Perishables

Perishable food and ice will be purchased in Colorado on a daily basis through supply runs set up by the Campmaster.

■ Other Supplies

All other supplies (such as firewood) that can not be brought with us from NJ will be purchased as needed on daily supply runs.

Firewood



Firewood can not be brought from outside the San Luis Valley. Firewood can spread insect pests and diseases that kill native trees.

*"An army marches on its stomach."
~ Napoléon Bonaparte*

Supply Runs

One of the advantages to using the Van Concept is that the Campmaster has access to vehicles in order to do the supply runs necessary to support Basecamp.

- The supply run schedule will be set up the Campmaster and Quartermaster.
- Daily supply runs will be scheduled and posted on the Troop Information Board.
- Adult Leaders on the expedition will be **REQUIRED** to participate in any supply run when asked. Please work with the Campmaster if a scheduling conflict or other issue would prevent you from doing an assigned supply run.

Grocery and Supply Stores

Mosca (outside the park entrance)

Great Sand Dunes Oasis

7800 Highway 150 North
Mosca, CO 81146
(719) 378-2222



Alamosa (38 miles Southwest)

3 Full Grocery Stores

SAFeway 

1301 Main Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 587-3075

City Market

131 Market Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-2492

Walmart 

3333 Clark Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-9071



2021 Great Sand Dunes Expedition Parent and Scout Program Guide



Adult Leadership

Leadership is a quality that's important for success. An effective leader can be the difference between a Patrol (or Troop) that succeeds and one that fails. Every leader has a different style that can affect people in different ways. The level of detail and planning that has gone into this expedition would make it seem like the Venture Program is simply an exercise in an extreme and painful micro management style of leadership. That's far from the case. The goals of the Venture Program is to teach Scouts to plan thoroughly, place the right people in the right positions so they can excel, and to train accordingly. The high degree of planning for every trip helps all of our leaders and Scouts have a more enjoyable time. The members of Venture understand that if there is a well thought out plan in place, it makes it easier to deal with the unexpected things that crop up from time to time.

Adult Leadership

The fact is that troops are boy led, but they are never boy run. Adult Leaders on the Great Sand Dunes Expedition come in 5 main categories:

■ Scouts BSA Trained Leaders (High Level Training)

- Highest Degree of Scout Training (Classroom/Internet)
 - Multiple levels of training; including ITOLS, YPT
 - Multiple Event Specific Training, High Adventure Training, Hazardous Weather, Powderhorn, Wilderness First Aid, etc.

■ Trained Adults (Mid Level Training)

- Mid Level Scout Training (Classroom/Internet)
 - Training includes ITOLS, YPT, Hazardous Weather, Some Event Specific Training, Wilderness First Aid, etc.

■ Trained Adults (Limited Training)

- Limited Scout Training (Internet)
 - Training includes YPT and Hazardous Weather

■ Adult Youth (aged out/limited training)

- Training includes NYLT, YPT, and Hazardous Weather

■ Accompanying Adults

- Training MUST include YPT and Hazardous Weather

"Scouting is a game for boys under the leadership of boys under the direction of a man."

~ Lord Baden-Powell

SAFETY

The safety of all Scouts and Adults is the primary concern of Troop Leadership. Nobody wants to see someone injured, lost, or killed on a trip.

Let's face it....

- Injured Scouts whine a lot and their tears soil their uniform.
- Finding lost Scouts takes up a lot of our valuable time.
- Dead Scouts cause a lot of dreary paperwork and just aren't very fun at parties (although they sometimes smell better towards the end of the camp week)

Adult Leadership Positions at Summer Camp

The Troop doesn't really function much differently than normal while we are away at summer camp. However, there are a few positions that are unique to this trip:



Scoutmaster
Frank White

- The Big Cheese
- Cheerful Frontman
- Leadership



Overwatch
Tom Downs

- Trip Planning/Logistics
- The Man Behind the Curtain
- Curriculum (Merit Badges, Skills, Projects)
- National Park Service Point Person



Campmaster
Bill Elmer

- Camp Layout/Set Up
- Camp Operations (Supply Runs)
- Watch Schedule "Basecamp" A, B, Γ (8 Hour Shifts)
- Outdoor Ethics



Scout Welfare
Caralyn Crepezzi

- Scout Welfare
- Works closely with the Medic
- Works with Adult Resources



Adult Resources
Michele Bamert

- Adult Interface
- Works with Scout Welfare
- Shields Overwatch from Adult complaints/issues



Medic
Ralph Colasanti

- Emergency Medical



- Merit Badges
- Troop Support



Adult Patrol Leadership

- Supervises a Patrol



Equipment

The equipment used by the troop will be a vital resource. All equipment used at Basecamp **MUST** be inspected and approved for use prior to our departure. This will be done during the final trailer inspection by the Campmaster and Quartermaster in conjunction with Overwatch. Personal gear is exempt from this inspection process.

Personal Gear for Troop Use

Scout or adults wishing to volunteer personal gear for troop use must have the gear brought to the Troop's attention prior to departure for inspection and approval. This isn't because the Troop wants to check out your personal stuff, but to make sure the gear you want to bring is appropriate for use by everyone. It is also to cut back on redundant items carried to Colorado in the Troop Trailer. For example, there may be no need for you to bring a collapsible canopy if other people have already volunteered to bring one. In addition, the Troop can't allow a canopy to be brought that has a logo or slogan plastered on it that's considered inappropriate (such as a the logo of a beer brewery or a creepy yellow and red clown waving a cheeseburger).

New Troop Gear

The Troop will be investing heavily in new gear to both support this expedition and for our future. New equipment needs are determined by the following people:

- Scoutmaster
- ASM-Venture (Overwatch)
- Campmaster
- Assistant Scoutmasters
- Troop Quartermaster
- Senior Patrol Leader

"We have the tools, and we have the talent!"

~ Winston Zeddemore



Cell Phones

Normally, the Troop Leaders would be dead set against Scouts carrying cell phones with them on a camping trip. However, in this particular case, Scouts are encouraged to keep their cell phones with them at all times. We will be far from home and in unfamiliar terrain. Safety dictates that Scouts should have their cell phones with them in case of an emergency. In addition, their phones are usually their primary means of taking pictures, so we wouldn't want to deprive them of capturing memories.

With that being said, some guidelines on cell phone use need to be established for all Scouts to follow:

- Protect your cell phone from the elements by having a protective (and waterproof) case.
- Turn your WiFi "OFF". There is no WiFi and it will drain your battery.
- Turn your cell "OFF". There is only sporadic cell coverage and your battery will drain quickly if your phone is always looking for a cell tower.
- **DO NOT** take selfies in dangerous areas or doing stupid things. Nothing ruins a trip faster than doing something stupid. So don't be stupid.
- **DO NOT TEXT** while hiking, sandboarding, or doing any other activity. (see "don't be stupid" above)
- **DO NOT PLAY APPS** while doing activities either. Mr. Downs loves to play Pokémon Go, but you will never see him playing while he is hiking in a National Park. Don't make him angry; it's more dangerous than being stupid.
- **DO NOT** take inappropriate pictures or do inappropriate things with your cell phone.
- **CELL COVERAGE** is usually terrible in any National Park. GSD has fairly good cell coverage near the visitors center (Verizon works best), but expect to lose coverage in the dune valleys or mountains.
- **NO ELECTRICITY** Remember, our campsite has no electricity. Unless you have an extra battery packed, you really should limit cell phone use to emergencies, taking pictures, and telling your parents that you are still alive every once in a while.





Training

“Every Scout Deserves a Trained Leader”

A trained leader is knowledgeable and more confident in the role being performed. Trained leaders exhibit a knowledge and confidence that is picked up by the people around them. Trained leaders impact the quality of programs, leader tenure, youth tenure, safety, and a whole lot more. A trained leader is better prepared.

Training Requirements



Since the Troop will be using multiple vehicles that may not always be at Basecamp (or even travelling together), training requirements have been established to ensure the safety of our Scouts and the Troop. Two deep leadership protocols must also be maintained for all troop activities.



Patrol Vans

Each Patrol Van is treated like a small troop. Therefore, the same requirements for a regular troop activity or trip are in effect every time a Patrol Van transports Scouts away from Basecamp. The training requirements for adults traveling in a Patrol Van with Scouts are:

- 1 Adult **MUST** have the following additional training:
 - ITOLS (Introduction To Outdoor Leadership Skills)
- * A minimum of two deep leadership **MUST** always be maintained



Merit Badge Counselors

Counselors need to have the following additional training:

- **MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR**
- **ACTIVITY SPECIFIC TRAINING** (i.e. Climb on Safely)



Scouts in Leadership Roles



The Senior Patrol Leader, ASPL, and all Patrol Leaders **MUST** have the training:

- **NYLT (National Youth Leadership Training)**
- * Although not required, all APL should be trained

Additional Training (High Adventure)

It is recommended that all Scouts and Adults wishing to participate in current or future Venture programs get the following training:



Red Cross Wilderness First Aid



“Can we not interpret our adult wisdom into the language of boyhood?”
~ Lord Baden-Powell

REQUIRED TRAINING

All adults going on The Great Sand Dunes Expedition **MUST** complete and show proof of the following Scouts BSA Training prior to departing for Colorado:
■ **YOUTH PROTECTION** ■ **HAZARDOUS WEATHER**

Upcoming Training Opportunities

**JOSEPH A CITTA
SCOUT RESERVATION**
229 Brookville Rd
Barnegat, NJ 08005



ITOLS Training Scoutmaster Specifics

April 10-11, 2021
Registration **\$10** (in council)
Before March 26



National Youth Leadership Training

April 30 - May 2
May 7 - 9
Registration **\$175** (in council)
Before April 16
Registration **\$200** (in council)
After April 16



Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Training

April 9-10
7PM Friday-8PM Saturday
Registration **\$150** (in council)
Before March 27

NOTE: If the Troop has enough people willing to sign up for the training, a private weekend session can be scheduled for just members of our troop.

“What Should I Bring to Summer Camp?”



That’s one of the top 10 questions parents and scouts ask. It’s not always an easy one to answer. This trip is also a unique situation since a parent won’t be able to just “drop by” camp and drop off something that their Scout forgot to pack. Included below is a suggested list of things that you should pack for the trip. The list is meant to be used as a guideline and should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual Scout.

SUMMER CAMP CHECKLIST

(CLOTHING & PERSONAL GEAR SHOULD BE TAGGED WITH THE SCOUTS NAME.)

CAMPING GEAR

- FOOTLOCKER
- FLASHLIGHT/HEADLAMP
(WITH EXTRA BATTERIES)
- WATER BOTTLE
(OR CANTEEN)
- DAYPACK

BEDDING

- SLEEPING BAG
WITH 1-2 BLANKETS
- PILLOW
(WITH PILLOW CASE)
- FOAM PAD
(OR AIR MATTRESS)
- FLAT TWIN SHEET
(FOR WARM NIGHTS)

CLOTHING

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> UNDERWEAR (7 PAIRS)
CHANGE DAILY! | <input type="checkbox"/> SWEATSHIRT
(WICKING MID-LAYER) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOCKS (4-6 PAIRS)
CHANGE DAILY! | <input type="checkbox"/> RAINGEAR OR PONCHO
IF IT AIN'T DAMP, IT AIN'T CAMP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T-SHIRTS (4-6 PAIRS)
(SOME T56 CLASS B) | <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA PAIR OF SHOES
NO OPEN TOED SHOES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHORTS (2 PAIRS)
(LIGHT WEIGHT) | <input type="checkbox"/> PAJAMAS
OR OTHER SLEEPWEAR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LONG PANTS (2 PAIR)
(CONVERTIBLE TO SHORTS) | <input type="checkbox"/> HELMET (OPTIONAL)
(FOR SANDBOARDING) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIKING BOOTS
(WELL BROKEN IN) | <input type="checkbox"/> BATHING SUIT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRIMMED HAT
NO HAT, NO HIKE! | <input type="checkbox"/> JACKET
(OUTER LAYER) |

OTHER ITEMS

- MEDICATIONS*
CLEARLY LABELED
- TREKKING POLES
- INSECT REPELLENT
(DON'T BE A TASTY MEAL)
- NOTEBOOK/PAPER
(PENCILS OR PENS)
- HIKING FIRST AID KIT
- BOY SCOUT HANDBOOK
REQUIRED
- POCKET KNIFE
(MUST HAVE TOTIN' CHIT)
- SUNSCREEN
(DON'T GET BURNED-USE IT!)
- GAMES
(BOARD GAMES/CARD GAMES)
- WALLET/SPENDING MONEY
(SUGGESTED \$50-\$100)
- DIRTY LAUNDRY BAG

BSA UNIFORM

- FIELD UNIFORM
(CLASS A - KHAKI SHIRT)
- SCOUT PANTS
(CONVERT TO SHORTS)
- SCOUT BELT
- SCOUT SOCKS

TOILETRIES

- TOWELS (1-2)
INCLUDING 1 BEACH TOWEL
- SOAP AND SHAMPOO
(IN CARRIERS OR PLASTIC BAG)
- COMB OR BRUSH
- TOOTHBRUSH AND PASTE
- DEODORANT (OPTIONAL)
(DON'T BE A STINKER)



FIELD UNIFORM

Summer Camp requires that all scouts and leaders be in field uniform for certain functions and events. Bring it.



FOOTLOCKER

Troop 56 highly recommends packing your items in a footlocker or other storage device that can be locked. The best size to get is around 16 gallons



Rule of Thumb: If all your summer camp gear doesn't fit in your footlocker, you probably brought too much stuff!



CLOTHING (The Grim Reality)

Packing clothes for summer camp is often a challenge. The awful reality of summer camp for parents of first year campers is that Scouts **DO NOT WEAR** all of the clothing that they pack. Consider the reality of this **FACT** when deciding what to pack for summer camp. A fresh pair of underwear and socks for each day is a **MUST**, but fresh shorts and shirts for every day may not be. Scouts tend to re-wear certain clothing over and over again. This is not something that the parents like to hear, but it's the grim truth of summer camp. **DON'T OVERPACK!**



MEDICATIONS

Medications should clearly be marked with the Scout's name, medication name, and dosage and should be stored with Scout Welfare in the Troop Trailer.



DO NOT KEEP FOOD IN YOUR FOOTLOCKER



Bears, and other critters **LOVE** midnight snacks.



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COVID-19

The global pandemic known as COVID-19 has caused major issues with Scouting activities and caused the postponement of the original Great Sand Dunes Expedition scheduled for 2020. It's been a difficult and stressful time for everyone.

However, life goes on, the earth continues to rotate on its axis, and nature follows its natural course. By the time that the Scouts and adult participants leave for the Great Sand Dunes Expedition we will be at:

481 of 15 Days to Slow the Spread

Obviously COVID-19 doesn't follow government schedules. It's assumed by Troop 56 that all participants are aware of the health risks involved with going on the trip. However, for the sake of clarity, the following guidelines and information are being provide to help all participants:

Masks

For at least the time being, masks are here to stay and are considered a way of life and sign of obedience to the state. No matter what legitimate science says, we will just have to deal with this issue. All participants will be REQUIRED to bring masks on the Expedition. It's suggested that each participant have at least one reusable mask and a backup mask.

With that being said, it is unreasonable (and impracticable) for participants to be "masked up" for the entire Expedition. Since we will be traveling and staying together as a group, the Troop will only require participants to be masked when necessary to comply with government regulations and mandates. If you have a problem or issue with this policy, this is not the trip for you.

Hand Sanitizer

If you haven't been using hand sanitizer over the past year, then you've been hiding under a rock until the pandemic goes away....which it won't. All Scouts should carry hand sanitizer whenever they go on a trip or hike anyway, so its not much of a stretch for all participants to be REQUIRED to have it with them on the trip. Make sure you have it in your pocket at all times.



Official Scouts BSA COVID-19 Guidelines

<https://www.scouting.org/coronavirus/>

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-057.pdf>

ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY
RELATING TO CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread easily from person to person contact. As federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people.

By participating in the Great Sand Dunes Expedition, Troop 56 of Lacey Township and Scouts BSA cannot guarantee that either you or your child will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, by attending the Expedition you understand that you are increasing the risk of either you or your child contracting COVID-19. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that either yourself or your child may be exposed to, or infected by, COVID-19. By attending the Expedition, you assume the risk to yourself or your child that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, or death. You understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 on the trip may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of yourself and others, including, but not limited to, the Scoutmasters, Committee Members, Volunteers, and the other trip participants.

I voluntarily agree to assume all of the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to my child or myself including, but not limited to, personal injury, disability, and death, illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that I or my child may experience or incur in connection with participating in the Great Sand Dunes Expedition. On my behalf, and on behalf of my children, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless Troop 56, Scouts BSA, the Scoutmasters, Committee Members, Volunteers, and Scouts of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or resulting therefrom. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of Troop 56, Scouts BSA, the Scoutmasters, Committee Members, Volunteers, and Scouts whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in the Great Sand Dunes Expedition.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF AND BY SIGNING BELOW, I AGREE TO THE ASSUMPTION OF RISK FOR MYSELF OR MY CHILD AS FOLLOWS:

NAME: _____ (Print Participant's Name)

SIGNATURES:

Legal Parent or Guardian's Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____

Adult Participant's Signature: _____

I hereby certify that _____ (Legal Mother, Father, Guardian or Adult Participant) personally appeared before me and executed this document going assuming the risk and agreeing to the waiver of liability for the adult or child named above. I enter this instrument in record with authority and voluntarily, without being coerced by the above signers. I read and read for the purposes of executing their agreement.

Date: _____

Notary Public Signature: _____

Country of: _____

State or Commonwealth of: _____

My commission expires: _____

NOTARY SEAL

COVID Release

Being the overly litigious society that we are, the Troop has a form that all participants MUST fill out prior to leaving on the Expedition. The form basically spells out an assumption of risk regarding COVID-19 and protects the Troop from being sued due to COVID-19 health issues.

This form is REQUIRED to be signed, notarized and, returned by no later than June 9th, 2021.



Airlines

The TSA and Airlines REQUIRE that all travelers wear a mask and practice social distancing while at an airport or on a plane. There are no exceptions to this. In addition, the TSA only allows liquids in bottles of 3.4 ounces or less to be brought on a plane. Make sure your hand sanitizer bottle is the right size.



Tents

The Troop has enough equipment for every Scout to have his own tent. Unless Scouts BSA Guidelines change before our trip, all Scouts will have their own tent and will sleep alone. Although there are some extra tents available, the troop can't provide a tent for all of the adults going on the trip. Adults must provide their own tent on this Expedition.



National Park Service

Due to a government mandate, all people on Federal property are technically REQUIRED to wear a mask. Wear it around non-Troop 56 people.



Vaccinations

"What if I've been vaccinated?"

You've been vaccinated...that's awesome! However, it doesn't really make a difference. The "science" says that you still have to wear a mask. Yay Science!



Activity Planning

Great Sand Dunes National Park is one of Colorado's best kept secrets. The dunes are also surrounded by a variety of environments, including grasslands, wetlands, aspen forests, and alpine lakes. There are more things to do at the dunes than you might expect. Medano Creek, a popular stream for tubing and beachside activities, curves through the edge of the dunes in the late spring and early summer. Minimal light pollution allows for a clear dark sky, which is ideal for stargazing and nighttime photography. These sand slopes are the perfect spot for sandboarding and sand sledding, as well as hiking or even backpacking. East of Great Sand Dunes National Park is more public land—Great Sand Dunes National Preserve, Rio Grande National Forest, and BLM land...where there are more trails for hiking and backpacking.

The activities listed in this guidebook are just a small sample of the things you can do while out in Colorado. Your Patrol can choose to do some of the things listed here (add them to your itinerary), or discover new things to do through your own research. Just make sure your Patrol has a proper plan and itinerary picked out prior to leaving for Colorado.

Merit Badge Choices



Astronomy
Counselor: Downs



American Heritage
Counselor: Downs



Camping
Counselor: Downs



Citizenship in the Nation
Counselor: Downs/Morris



Climbing
Counselor: Colasanti



Cooking
Counselor: Morris/Orlando



Environmental Science
Counselor: Gerber/Elmer



Exploration
Counselor: Downs



Fly Fishing
Counselor: Elmer



Fishing
Counselor: Morris/Elmer



First Aid
Counselor: Colasanti



Forestry
Counselor: Downs



Geocaching
Counselor: Jennings



Geology
Counselor: Gerber/Elmer



Hiking
Counselor: Downs



Indian Lore
Counselor: Downs



Railroading
Counselor: Moeller/Downs



Soil and Water Conservation
Counselor: Downs



Weather
Counselor: Devaney





Outdoor Activities



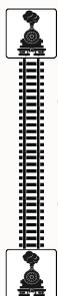
Cumbres & Toltec Railroad

Activity Type: Historic Railway (Offsite)
Location: Colorado and New Mexico
Estimated Time: 10 Hours
Additional Cost: \$100 (Trip #2)



The railroad was originally built in 1880 as part of the Rio Grande's narrow gauge San Juan Extension, which served the silver mining district of the San Juan mountains in southwestern Colorado.

- ◆ U.S. National Register of Historic Places
- ◆ U.S. National Historic Landmark District



Antonito, Colorado to Osier, Colorado

🕒 **Departure from Antonito**
10:00 AM

- Pass through Toltec Gorge
- Stop in Osier (Lunch)

🕒 **Arrival in Antonito**
4:40 PM

Osier, Colorado to Antonito, Colorado



A Trip on the Railroad will fulfill Requirement 2A.



A Trip on the Railroad will help fulfill all of Requirement 4.



A Trip on the Railroad will help fulfill all of Requirement 8.

www.cumbrestoltec.com



Stargazing on the Great Sand Dunes



Distance: Variable
Difficulty: Mod-Stren
Time: 2-3 Hours
Elev Chg: 600 feet ↑

Complete your field work for Astronomy Merit Badge by going on a hike and stargazing party on the dunes.



Hiking Merit Badge

This event/activity will fulfill Requirement 4 (5 mile hike).



Astronomy Merit Badge

This event will fulfill all of Requirements 4 and 8.



Sandboarding

Activity Type: Extreme Sports
Estimated Time: 3-4 Hours
Additional Cost: \$20 - \$22



\$20⁰⁰ per day

One sandboard rental is already included in your camp fee. For those patrols wishing to do additional sandboarding, you can rent them at two local concessionaires for an additional cost.

Great Sand Dunes Oasis

\$22⁰⁰ per day

See page 17 of this guidebook for more information regarding Sandboarding



Zapata Falls

Activity Type: Waterfall Hike
Estimated Time: 4-5 Hours
Additional Cost: NONE

Trail: Zapata Falls
Distance: 1 mile

Zapata Falls is a waterfall located in the San Luis Valley near the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The falls a secluded 30-foot waterfall sheltered in a rocky crevasse. The falls is a short, 10 minute drive from Piñon Flats Campground



Sand Dunes Swimming Pool

Activity Type: Swimming (Artesian Water Hot Spring)
Estimated Time: 4-5 Hours
Additional Cost: \$8 (group rate 20+ people)
 CLOSED THURSDAYS

1991 County Road 63
 Hooper, CO 81136
 719-378-2807

<http://www.sanddunespool.com>

The Sand Dunes Swimming Pool is a family owned, natural artesian hot springs pool. The pool is kept around 98-100 degrees Fahrenheit and the spa is around 105-107 degrees Fahrenheit. The water comes out of the ground at this temperature. The pool area also offers sand volleyball courts and a basketball court for those that need a break from the water. The pool has amazing views of the Great Sand Dunes National Park as well as the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range. The pool is located approximately 25-30 minutes drive from our campground.



Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center

Activity Type: Historic Museum
Estimated Time: 4 Hours
Additional Cost: \$3.50 Youth (6-16)
 \$5.00 Adults

🕒 **Open Daily:** 9AM - 5PM

Fort Garland is a short, 30 minute drive from Piñon Flats Campground

◆ U.S. National Register of Historic Places



Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge

A Trip on the Railroad will fulfill Requirement 2A.



American Heritage Merit Badge

A Trip on the Railroad will help fulfill all of Requirement 4.

Fort Garland was built in 1858, ten years after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, during American expansion into the west. Today, visitors can explore life in a nineteenth century military fort by walking the parade grounds and touring five of the original adobe buildings. Learn about the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry who were stationed at the Fort from 1876 to 1879. Discover Colorado's role in the Civil War in the West exhibit.

Rich in military history, Fort Garland highlights the women and children who brought a bit of home to the fort. From the Fort, plan a visit to Pike's Stockade, where Zebulon Pike and his men camped in the early 1800s





Hiking



Dune Loop (High and Star Dunes)

Total Distance: 8 (10) miles

Trail Distance: 8 miles
Trailhead Distance: 2 miles

Difficulty: Mod-Stren

Time: 5-6 hours

Elev Gain: 1325 feet ↑



This is a lightly trafficked loop trail through the ever-changing sand dunes. It features an ascent up Star Dune (the tallest in the park at 750 feet) and High Dune (695+ feet). This is a highly recommended hike.



Hiking Merit Badge

This event/activity will fulfill Requirement 4 (10 mile hike).



Indian Grove

Total Distance: 8 (10) miles

Trail Distance: 8 miles
Trailhead Distance: 2 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 5-6 hours

Elev Gain: 245 feet ↑



This hike brings you to a grove of ponderosa pines where trees were peeled by Ute and Jicarilla Apache people. The bark was used for shelter and medicine. It is the only grove of trees on the National Register of Historic Sites.



Hiking Merit Badge

This hike will fulfill Requirement 4 (10 mile hike).



Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge

This hike will fulfill Requirement 2A.



American Heritage Merit Badge

This hike will help fulfill all of Requirement 4.



Montville Nature Trail

Total Distance: .5 miles

Trail Distance: .5 miles
Trailhead Distance: 1.8 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Time: 30 minutes

Elev Gain: 88 feet ↑



Montville Nature Trail is a 0.5 mile moderately trafficked loop trail that features a river and is good for all skill levels. This hike a good option for afternoons as an escape from the heat of the dunes. The walk from the campground to the trailhead is longer than the trail itself.



Wellington Ditch Trail

Total Distance: 1.8 miles

Trail Distance: 1.8 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Time: 1 hour

Elev Gain: 157 feet ↑



Wellington Ditch Trail is a 1.8 mile moderately trafficked out and back trail linking the Piñon Flats Campground and the main visitor center area. It will be a major path used by the troop while staying within the Great Sand Dunes.



Mosca Pass Trail

Trail #883

Total Distance: 7 (9) miles

Trail Distance: 7 miles
Trailhead Distance: 2 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: 5-6 hours

Elev Gain: 1459 feet ↑



Rio Grande National Forest



Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

This is a heavily trafficked out and back trail. The trail follows a small creek to the summit of a low pass in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, winding through aspen and evergreen forests. The main reason for hiking, in spring and summer, is the large number of wildflower species; at least 50 of them can be found, producing blooms of many different colors.



Hiking Merit Badge

This event/activity will fulfill Requirement 4 (10 mile hike).



Mosquito Alert
This trail is known to have mosquitoes. Use insect repellent.



Medano Lake

Total Distance: 8 (10) miles

WARNING! HIGH ALTITUDE

Difficulty: Mod-Stren

Time: 8-12 hours

Elev Gain: 2290 feet ↑

1007 feet ↑ Additional to Summit



Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

A lightly trafficked, high elevation trail beginning at 10,000' elevation. The trail climbs 2000' through lush meadows and forests, ending at an alpine lake at timberline. For advanced hikers, continue on to the summit of 13,297' Mount Herard for a spectacular aerial view of the dunes.



Hiking Merit Badge

This event/activity will fulfill Requirement 4 (10 mile hike).



4 Wheel Drive Vehicle Needed to access trailhead

