



Outdoor Leadership for All

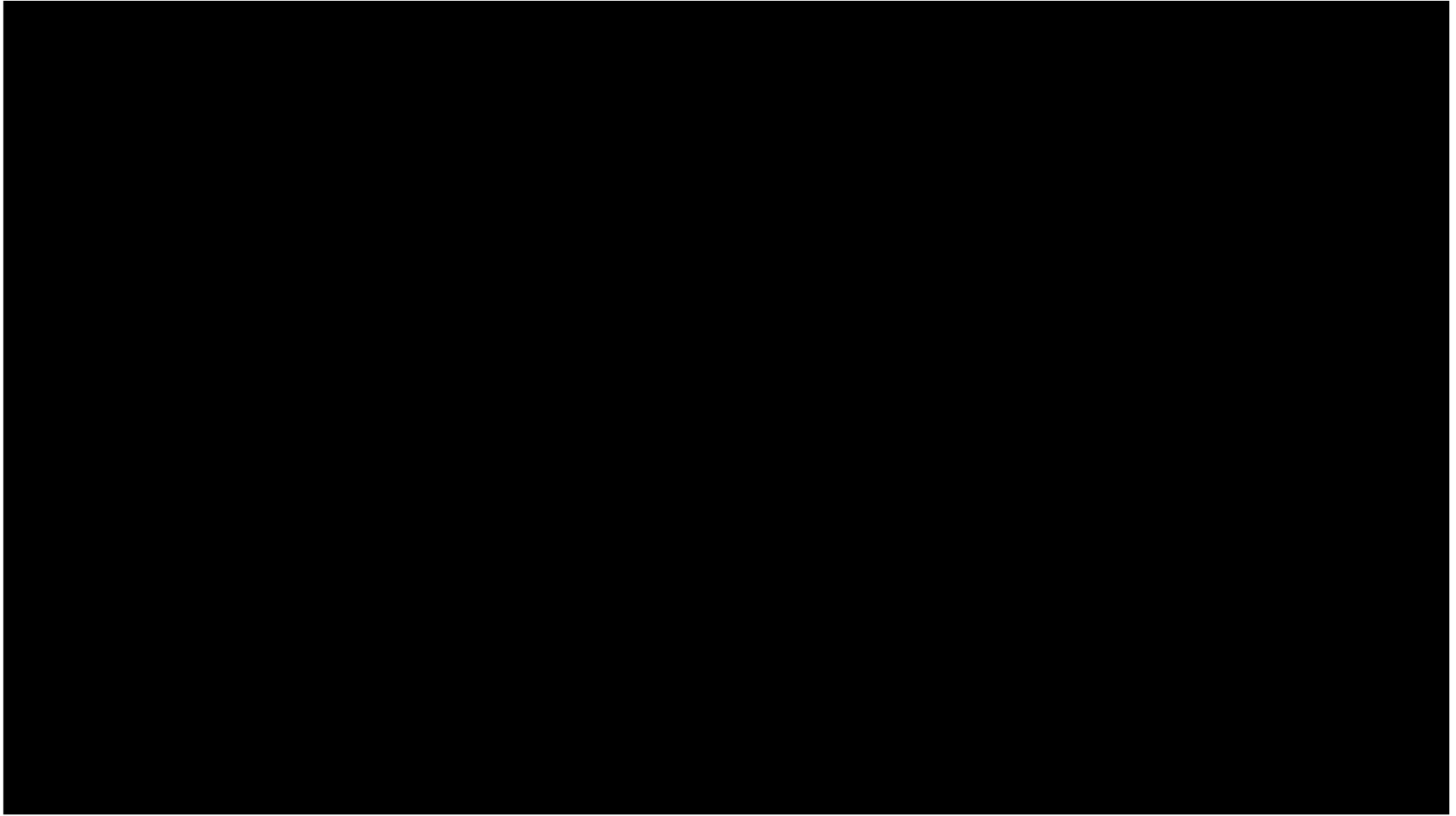
*Mobilizing Scouting America's 116-Year-Old Network
for Adaptive Recreation and Youth Development*

Alyssa Hightower & Chris Werhane



When you hear 'Scouting,' what's the first thing that comes to mind?





Breaking Barriers, Building Communities



**Deconstruct a National
Inclusion Framework**




**Apply Adaptive Strategies
to Outdoor Recreation**



**Identify Opportunities for
Partnership**



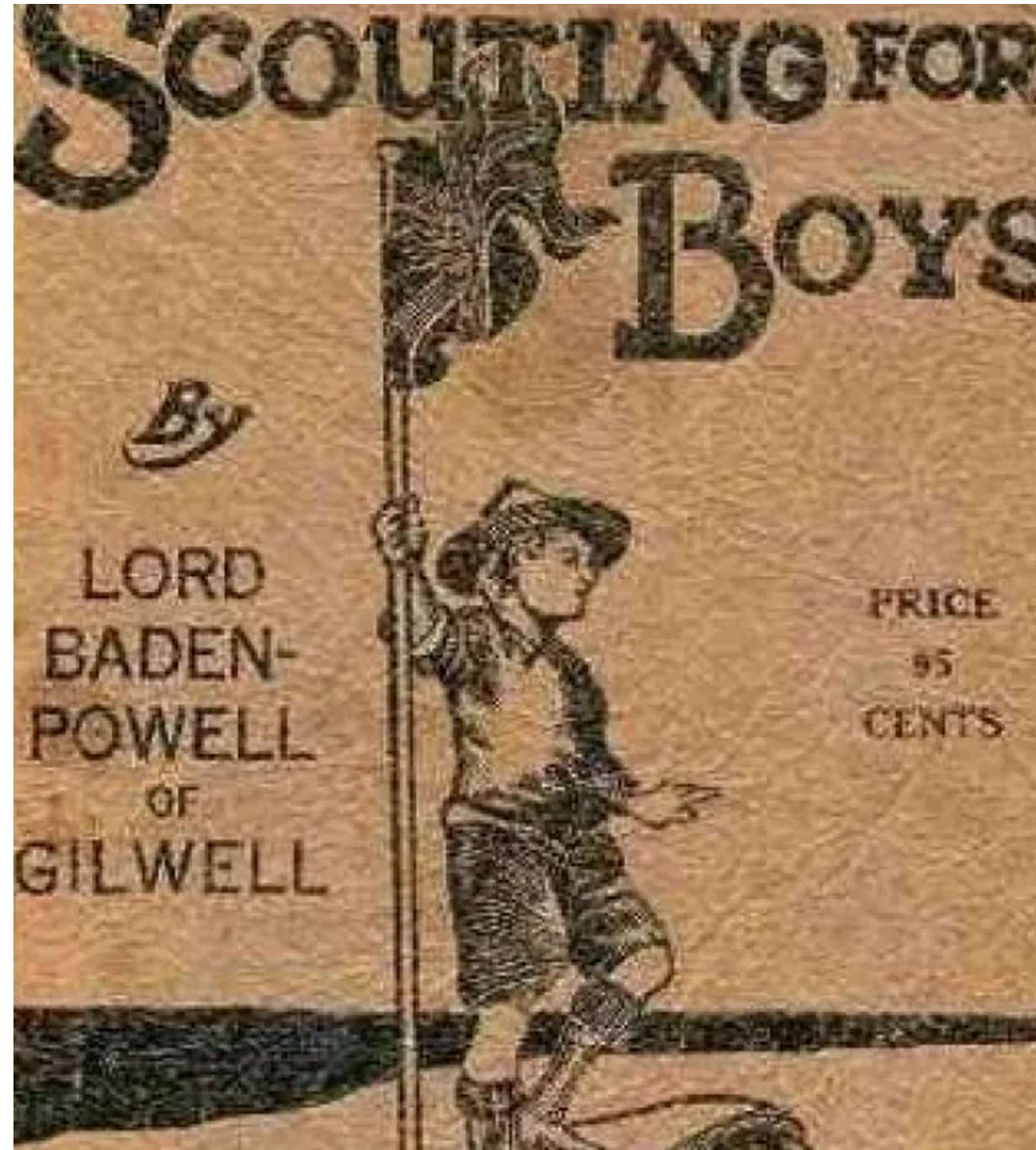
The background of the slide is a blurred photograph. On the left, a Scoutmaster in a tan uniform is visible. On the right, three Scouts in blue and tan uniforms are standing together. The text "SCOUTING WORKS!" is overlaid in the center.

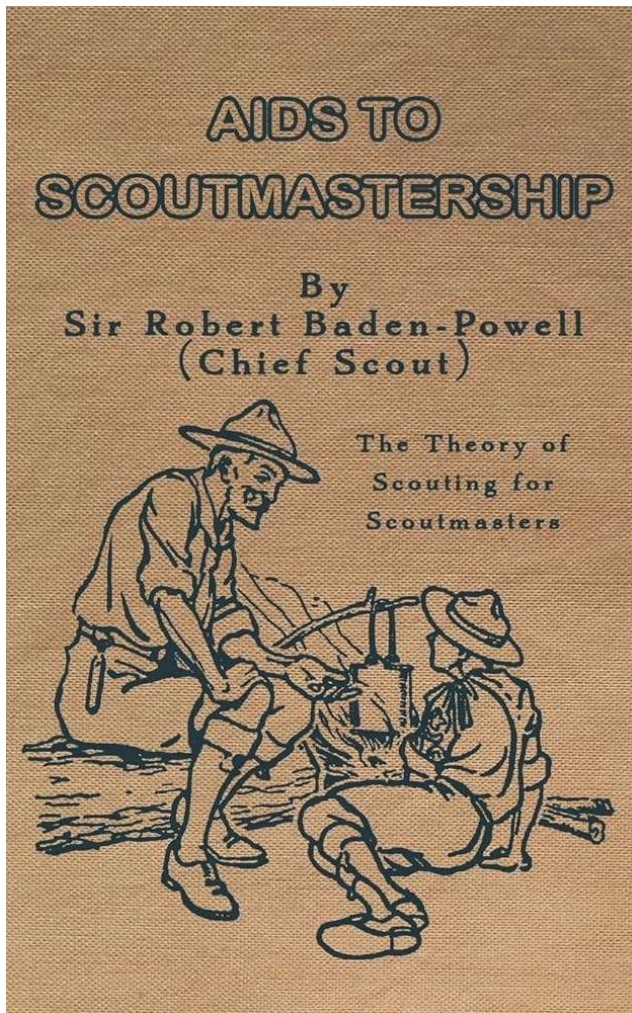
SCOUTING WORKS!

The Philosophy and Scale of Inclusion

Scouting, a brief history:

- Founded by Lord Baden-Powell
- 1907 Brownsea Island Camp
- 1908 Scouting for Boys
- 1910 BSA established in the US
- James E West First Scout Executive





“Scouting helps them by associating them in a world-wide brotherhood, by giving them something to do and to look forward to, by giving them an opportunity to prove to themselves and to others that they can do things and difficult things too-for themselves.”

-1920

The Global Scale



Aims and Methods

The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.





Scouting America

Significant Membership:

Nationally, an estimated 10-15% of all youth in Scouting have a documented physical, cognitive, or emotional disability.



The Power of the Troop and the Pipeline

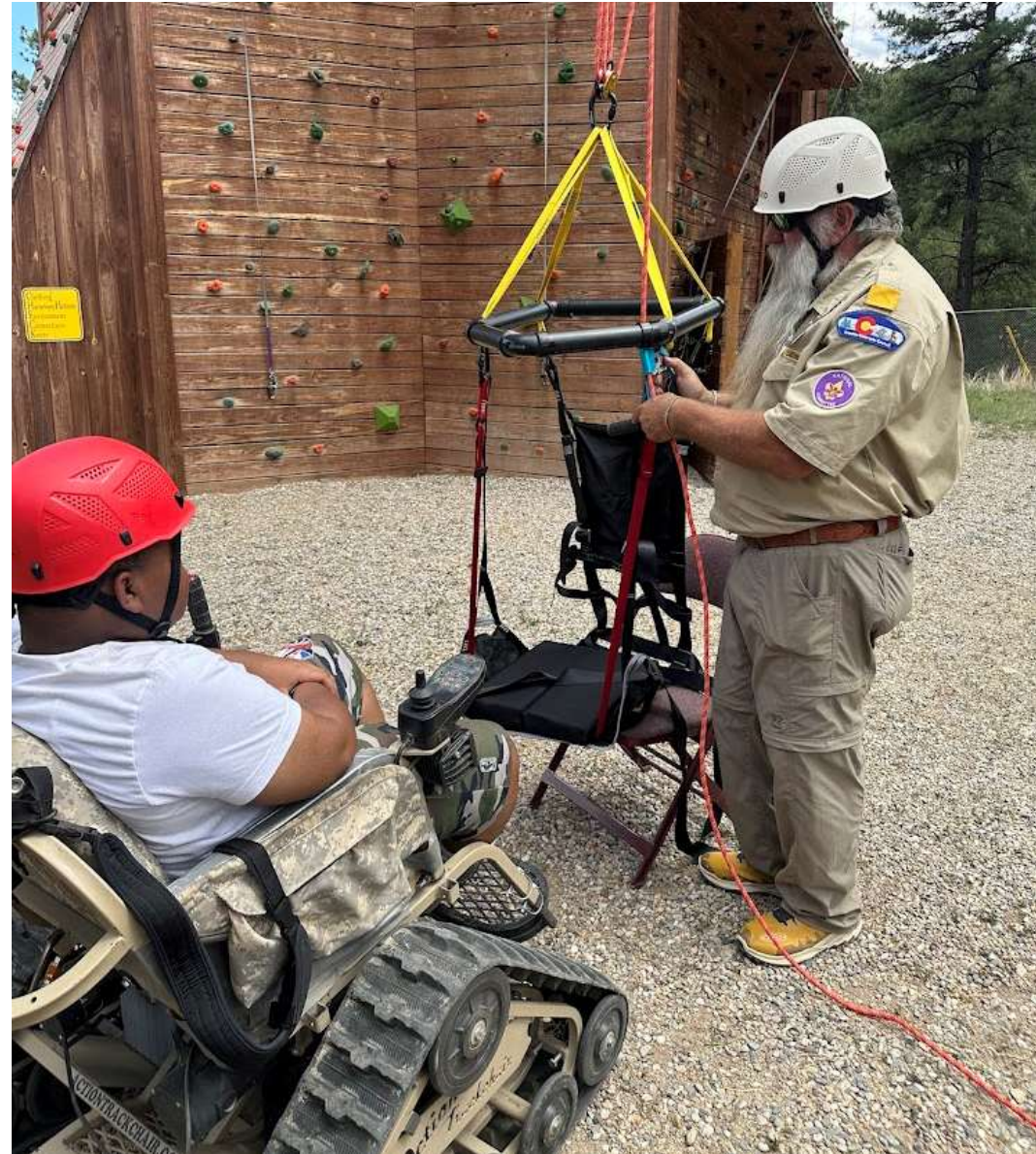


The Scout-led Patrol Method is an inherently flexible, youth-led adaptive social and leadership model that fosters peer support

("a Scout is Helpful, Kind, and Friendly")

Balancing Mainstream Integration with Specialized Needs

- **The Core Philosophy:** Keeping Scouts "as much in the mainstream as possible."
- **Mainstream Units:** Standard troops where adaptive strategies allow youth with disabilities to participate alongside peers.
- **Specialized Units:** Alternative settings utilized when a dedicated, specialized environment provides the most beneficial experience.



Scouting Skill Advancement

- **Self-Paced Process**
- **Life Skills**
 - Leadership
 - Character Development
 - Outdoor Skills
 - Physical Fitness



A Pipeline for Elite Athletes



Utah Paralympic athlete presented with prestigious Distinguished Eagle Scout Award



Far Side



Fortunately, even the Boy Scouts who fail knot-tying get to go camping.

Accommodations & Modifications to Rank Requirements

- Individual Scout Advancement Plan
- *Guide to Advancement, Topic 10.2.2.0*
- Official process to enable Scouts to overcome possible barriers to success to achieve rank(s).

Tools for Accommodation

- **National Advancement Policy**
 - The Guide to Advancement
 - Inclusion Toolbox
- **Equity in the Highest Ranks**
 - ISAP/IEP
- **Age and Time Flexibility**
 - Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility



How to Use the Toolbox

Modules A-G

BSA Unit Leaders and Parents/Guardians

Modules H-S

Classes of disabilities

Modules U-W

Volunteers and professionals above the unit level

Modules BB

Scout Camp Program Areas

The Toolbox

- [A: Introduction](#)
- [B: Basics of Scouting From a Special Needs Perspective](#)
- [C: Unit Leader's Role Supporting Scouts with a Disability](#)
- [D: Parent's Role Supporting a Scout with a Disability](#)
- [E: Navigating Advancement Requirements](#)
- [F: Methods That Apply to Many Types of Disabilities](#)
- [G: Organizations That Support Those with Disabilities](#)
- [H: Understanding Allergies and Food Issues](#)
- [J: Understanding Anxiety, Depression, and Other Mental Health Concerns](#)
- [K: Understanding Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity](#)
- [L: Understanding Autism](#)
- [M: Understanding Blindness and Low Vision](#)
- [N: Understanding Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)
- [P: Understanding Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Q: Understanding Learning Disorders](#)
- [R: Understanding Physical Disabilities \(Mobility/ Gross & Fine Motor\)](#)
- [S: Understanding Speech and Language Disorders](#)
- [U: Special Needs and Disabilities \(SND\) Committees](#)
- [V: Evaluating Advancement Alternatives](#)
- [W: Commissioner Service for Units](#)

Special Needs Prepared Camps

NCAP Standard PD-110

STANDARD: The council has a plan for making the camp's programs accessible to Scouts, leaders, and visitors with special needs to the extent feasible.

- **Special Needs and Disabilities including invisible/hidden**
- **Trail Systems**
- **Campsite/Housing**
- **Showers and Bathrooms**
- **Program Areas**
- **Buildings Entryways**
- **Main Campfires**
- **Health Lodge**
- **Food Service and Diet**
- **Staff Training**
- **Pre-Camp Staff and Parent Meeting**



Opportunities for High Adventure

	Location	Primary Activity	The Experience
Philmont Scout Ranch	Cimarron, NM	Backpacking/Hiking	140,000+ acres of rugged mountains, rock climbing, and historical programs.
Florida Sea Base	Islamorada, FL	Sailing/SCUBA	Exploring coral reefs, tall ship sailing, and marine conservation.
Northern Tier	Ely, MN	Canoeing	Navigating the vast waterways of the Boundary Waters and Canada.
Summit Bechtel Reserve	Glen Jean, WV	Action Sports	10,000 acres in the Appalachians for whitewater, BMX, skating, climbing and zip-lining.

Scout Experiences - High Adventure

The Special Needs and Disabilities committee has diligently worked to open up the world of High Adventures to our differently abled scouts. In partnership with The Philmont Training Center, Florida Sea Base, and Summit Bechtel Reserve programs have been established to afford these opportunities to Scouts with disabilities.



C.O.A.S.T.S. @ Florida Sea Base

Coastal Opportunities for **A**utistic and **S**pecial Needs Teens and **S**couts

- Accessible Adventures
- Integrated Support
- Inclusive Exploration
- Challenge by Choice
- Leadership in Accessibility
- Updated Safety Standards





Zia @ Philmont



Zia Trek







Summit Bechtel Reserve July 2026



POLAND 2027

World Scout
26th Jamboree
Scout Mondial



Gdansk Poland August 2027

National and World Scout Jamborees

Partnerships

- 235 Councils
- 420+ local Council Camp properties
- 4 High Adventure Bases
- 40,000+ Scout units





**Scouting
America™**

Q & A ?