



Trail Life

WOODLANDS TRAIL

# HAND BOOK



FOR AGES  
5-10 YEARS OLD

Woodlands Trail  
**HANDBOOK**

SAMPLE

SECOND EDITION



**Trail Life**

**Belton, South Carolina**

# CONTENTS

Levels of Troop Support for Families	viii
--------------------------------------	------

## SECTION 1

### **the trail life story of the trail 1**

## SECTION 2

### **what are the basics? 9**

The Basics of the Woodlands Trail Program	9
Requirements for Membership in Trail Life USA	9
Specific Requirements for Youth Membership	11
What about Safety?	12
Wisdom for Using Technology	14
Tread Lightly!® Principles	18
Christian Worldview Principles	20

## SECTION 3

### **how does the program work? 22**

Learning in the Woodlands Trail Program	22
Woodlands Trail Awards Overview	24
Branch Awards and Branch Pins	24
Forest Awards and Sylvan Stars	27
Special Awards	28
Summer Months	31
Trailmen with Special Needs	31

## SECTION 4

### **where does my son start? 32**

How to Earn the Branch Patch Joining Award	32
--	----

## SECTION 5

### what do trailmen wear? 38

The Trail Life USA Uniform	38
Uniform and Insignia Guide	40

## SECTION 6

### how does a trailman advance in his troop? 41

Summary of Steps: Core Steps and Elective Steps	41
'Hit the Trail!' Activities	42
Family Home Activities	42
Requirements per Level	43
Requirements for Heritage Branch 	45
Requirements for Hobbies Branch 	54
Requirements for Life Skills Branch 	61
Requirements for Outdoor Skills Branch 	72
Requirements for Science and Technology Branch 	83
Requirements for Sports and Fitness Branch 	92
Requirements for Values Branch 	101

## SECTION 7

### how do we track advancements? 112



Fox Patrol Charts	113
-------------------	-----



Hawk Patrol Charts	119
--------------------	-----



Mountain Lion Patrol Charts	125
-----------------------------	-----





## what are the basics?



### THE BASICS OF THE WOODLANDS TRAIL PROGRAM

**The Woodlands Trail is the first part of an exciting journey for a boy in Trail Life USA.**

It leads through the Woodlands with Steps, activities, and new skills that will prepare him for when he advances as a Navigator and, later on, an Adventurer. Eventually, the same trail he is on as a Woodlands Trail Trailman can take him to the peaks of a Freedom Rangeman—the highest achievement on the Trail Life trail.

It is helpful to understand where the Woodlands Trail program fits in the overall Trail Life USA program. The chart on the following page helps illustrate the structure and vision of the program.

### WHAT ARE THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN TRAIL LIFE USA?

Membership in the program has both youth and adult elements. Youth membership in the program is open to all who meet the membership requirements, and is currently designed for biologically male children under the age of 18. The adult applicant must be at least 18 years of age and subscribe to and abide by the Trail Life USA Statements of Christian Faith and Values as well as the Oath and Motto of the program. While the program is undergirded by Biblical values and unapologetically reflects a Christian worldview, there is also a clearly defined inclusion policy for youth. Accordingly, all boys are welcome irrespective of religion, race, national origin or socio-economic status. **HUMAN DIGNITY 3b** Our goal is for parents and families of every faith to be able to place their boys in a youth program that endeavors to provide moral consistency and ethical





# Trail Life

## TROOP



Overseen by  
TROOPMASTER



### Woodlands Trail

**5-10 YEARS**  
[Participation-based]



[Levels]  
**Fox**  
5-6 year-olds

**Hawk**  
7-8 year-olds

**Mountain Lion**  
9-10 year-olds

Overseen by  
**RANGER**

Program Philosophy  
**KNOWLEDGE**

Available Awards  
**WORTHY LIFE AWARD (3)**  
**TIMBERLINE AWARD**



### Navigators

**11-13 YEARS**  
[Patrol Method]



[Core Skills Ranks]  
**Recruit Trailman**

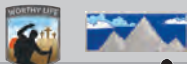
**Able Trailman**

**Ready Trailman**

Overseen by  
**TRAILMASTER**

Program Philosophy  
**UNDERSTANDING**

Available Awards  
**WORTHY LIFE AWARD**  
**RIDGELINE AWARD**



### Adventurers

**14-17 YEARS**  
[Patrol Method]



[True Freedom Ranks]

**Journey**

**Ascent**

**Horizon**

Overseen by  
**ADVISOR**

Program Philosophy  
**WISDOM**

Available Awards  
**WORTHY LIFE AWARD**  
**FREEDOM AWARD**



### Guidon

**18-25 YEARS OLD**  
[Can be Co-Ed]

**YOUNG ADULTS**

Overseen by  
**COACH**

Program Philosophy  
**LIFE**

integrity in its adult leaders. Charter partners (usually churches) own and operate local Troops, selecting leaders and admitting members as they deem beneficial to their Troop and within the parameters of the organizational policy. The basis for the program's ethical and moral standards is found in the Bible.

*Further information on Membership Standards can be found online.*

# membership

## **WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTH MEMBERSHIP IN WOODLANDS TRAIL?**

The program is designed that:



- ▶ Foxes start at **5 or 6**. A Trailman must be at least 5 years old to join a Fox patrol.



- ▶ Hawks start at **7 or 8**.



- ▶ Mountain Lions start at **9 or 10**.

Trailmen are expected to advance with other boys their age. Exceptions to the policy are allowed with a one-year variance, beginning with the Hawk patrol, in either direction (advancing or holding back) at the discretion of the Troop Committee. The Trail Life program is not based on academic benchmarks or maturity but on building relationships, spiritual growth, practical skill development, empathy and service, teamwork, and leadership. Boys develop in each of these areas at different rates. Some are natural leaders but need to develop teamwork. Some have mastered outdoor skills but need guidance on interpersonal skills. Regardless, advancing with boys their own age works best in Trail Life USA.

## how does the program work?

### LEARNING IN THE WOODLANDS TRAIL PROGRAM

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



**Foxes**

(5-6 years old)



**Hawks**

(7-8 years old)



**Mountain Lions**

(9-10 years old)

Within the patrols, larger Troops may have several smaller patrols that are frequently named by the Trailmen.

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




# meetings

## **Meeting plans incorporate, directly or indirectly, the “Six F’s”:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **‘HIT THE TRAIL!’ MEETING**

While most of the meetings are indoors with a strongly-encouraged outdoors play option, Troops also conduct a monthly ‘Hit the Trail!’ meeting that includes an off-site activity, event, field trip, or community project.

.....

## WOODLANDS TRAIL AWARDS OVERVIEW

Awards can be earned at all patrol levels along the Woodlands Trail. Award criteria are designed to be age-appropriate for the boy's cognitive and physical levels of development.

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

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

## the patch



### THE AWARDS

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



## the pins

The Branch Pins correspond to the seven primary instructional areas of the Trail Life USA program for all ages. Branches in the Navigators and Adventurer programs are called "Frontiers."

Branch Pins are earned by completing Steps. **A Branch Pin will be given for each Branch completed the first program year.**

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



*Fox/bronze*



*Hawk/silver*



*Mountain Lion/gold*



*Fox Branch Patch  
with bronze pins*



*Hawk Branch Patch  
with silver pins*



*Mountain Lion Branch  
Patch with gold pins*

## the branches

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



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

***Life Skills Branch (burgundy):*** Teaching life lessons ranging from practical to higher-level interpersonal skill sets.



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

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



***Values Branch (red):*** Instilling Bible-based values within the boys regarding any number of pertinent topics. The central focus of this Branch is teachings of the Christian faith.

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



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



## where does my son start?

### THE WOODLANDS TRAIL BRANCH PATCH (JOINING AWARD)

A boy begins on the Trail by completing a set of **Joining Award requirements**. On completion, he earns the Branch Patch of his particular patrol (Fox, Hawk, or Mountain Lion), which must be earned before other awards are presented.



Families are encouraged to immediately assist their Trailman in achieving this award by focusing on the following requirements, then allowing the Trailman to demonstrate to the assigned Troop leader that he has mastered them. This is the beginning of a Trailman accepting and carrying out responsibility in Trail Life USA, a process that will be repeated over and over as he progresses, and the responsibilities increase in the challenge they provide.



Fletcher Hawk

*Parents, as your Trailman completes his joining requirements, you can track his progress where indicated in this section; use the charts for his level in the Advancement Section beginning on 112—or for visual tracking at home, consider purchasing a Woodlands Trailmap for his level.*

## **I Memorize the Trailman Oath.**

The Trailman Oath is recited at the beginning of each meeting and at most gatherings. It is the shared commitment to traditional biblical values that binds all Trailmen.

*On my honor, I will do my best  
To serve God and my country;  
To respect authority;  
To be a good steward of creation;  
And to treat others as I want to be treated.*

TRUTH 1c STEWARDSHIP 5a,b



Parents might want to review with their son the meaning behind the Trailman Oath. This will increase the impact of his commitment to live the Trail Life.

- ▶ ***Oath*** – An oath is a way of telling everyone how you want to live and what you are going to do.
- ▶ ***“On my honor ...”*** – On my honor means that you really mean what you are about to say and that you promise to do it.
- ▶ ***“... I will do my best ...”*** – When you do your best, it means that you will try as hard as you can until you can’t try anymore.
- ▶ ***“... to serve God ...”*** – Serving God means that you obey what God tells you to do. The Bible is where we find what God wants us to do and not to do.
- ▶ ***“... and (to serve) my country; ...”*** – Serving your country means that you obey the laws (rules) like the speed limits and stop signs. It also means that you help others in your community.
- ▶ ***“... to respect authority; ...”*** – Respecting authority means that you listen, obey, and are kind to the people that are in charge, like parents, teachers, policemen, leaders, etc.

- **“... to be a good steward of creation; ...”** – Being a good steward of creation means that you will take care of the world that God made for you like it is a treasure. You do this by not littering, always trying to make things better, and using the things that God gives you wisely (not wasting anything).
- **“... and to treat others as I want to be treated.”** – This means that you should think about how you want other people to talk to you and act towards you. Then you should talk to other people the same way and act the same way toward them.

**REQUIREMENT 1 COMPLETED** (initial here):

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Learn the Trailman Sign and when to use it.



The Trailman sign is made with the right hand held open, palm forward, raising your right arm with your elbow at a right angle.

The sign is used during reciting of the Trailman Oath and is also used by Troop leaders as a signal to be silent.

If you see a Troop leader with his sign up standing quietly you should imitate him and see how fast the room goes silent!

**REQUIREMENT 2 COMPLETED** (initial here):

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Learn the Trailman Salute and when to use it.



The Trailman Salute is made by raising your right hand. The tip of your fingers should almost touch your right temple or eyebrow. If you wear glasses, the tip of your fingers should almost touch the frames of your glasses. If you are wearing a Trail Life hat, the tip of your fingers should touch the brim.

A proper, crisp salute reflects well on your patrol and Troop. A sloppy salute does not properly honor the great traditions and hard work that went before. Practice bringing your hand up in one, smart motion and holding the salute until you are asked to drop it, then bring your hand directly down to its natural position at your side.

The Trailman Salute is used by Trailmen in uniform (defined by your Troop leaders) when:

- They recite the Pledge of Allegiance
- The flag passes in a parade or ceremony
- You are in a parade and pass the flag
- The flag is raised or lowered on a flagpole
- The national anthem is played or sung
- The flag is retired at flag retirement ceremonies

**REQUIREMENT 3 COMPLETED** *(initial here):*

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4 Learn the Trailman Handshake.



The Trailman Handshake is a forearm to forearm or wrist to wrist handshake.

This handshake was chosen because it is a strong way to assist another person in need.

**REQUIREMENT 4 COMPLETED** (initial here):

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5 Memorize the Pledge of Allegiance. (Fox can recite)

*I pledge allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America,  
and to the republic for which it stands,  
one nation under God, indivisible,  
with liberty and justice for all.*

**REQUIREMENT 5 COMPLETED** (initial here):

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

*There is one more requirement if your son is joining as a Mountain Lion.*

- 6** Understand how to properly fold the American flag (**Mountain Lions only**). *Your Troop leaders can assist in teaching this.*



**REQUIREMENT 6 COMPLETED** (*initial here*):

Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Leader \_\_\_\_\_

*Mom and Dad, you can  
begin transferring these  
completed requirements to the  
charts in Chapter 6.*





## joining requirements

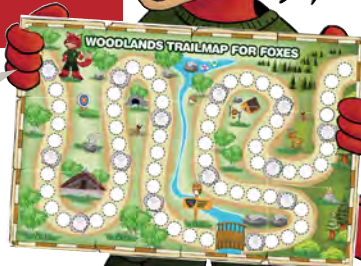
		DATE	TRAIL GUIDE INITIALS
I memorized the Oath	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Sign	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Salute	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Handshake	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I can recite the Pledge	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		



*You've earned your Fox Branch Patch!*

**Turn the page to start tracking your Bronze Branches for your Branch Patch!**

**Parents:** Find the Woodlands Trailmap wall poster in our online store for your son to celebrate his achievements at home!







## joining requirements

	DATE	TRAIL GUIDE INITIALS
I memorized the Oath <span>COMPLETED</span> <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Sign <span>COMPLETED</span> <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Salute <span>COMPLETED</span> <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Handshake <span>COMPLETED</span> <input type="checkbox"/>		
I memorized the Pledge <span>COMPLETED</span> <input type="checkbox"/>		



*You've earned your Hawk Branch Patch!*

**Turn the page to start tracking your Silver Branches for your Branch Patch!**

**Parents:** Find the Woodlands Trailmap wall poster in our online store for your son to celebrate his achievements at home!



HOW DO WE TRACK ADVANCEMENTS?





## joining requirements

		DATE	TRAIL GUIDE INITIALS
I memorized the Oath	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Sign	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Salute	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I learned the Handshake	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I memorized the Pledge	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		
I properly folded the American Flag	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>		

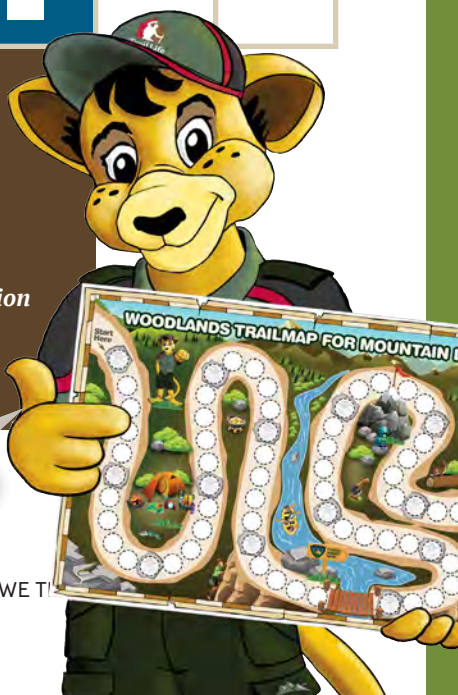


*You've earned your Mountain Lion Branch Patch!*

Turn the page to start tracking your Gold Branches for your Branch Patch!

**Parents:**  
Find the Woodlands Trailmap wall poster in our online store.

HOW DO WE T





## timberline award

	DATE	TRAIL GUIDE INITIALS
MOUNTAIN LION FOREST AWARD		
7 MOUNTAIN LION SYLVAN STARS		
INVITE A FRIEND		
ATTEND OVERNIGHT CAMPOUT		
RESPONSIBILITY		
SERVICE PROJECT		
MOUNTAIN LION WORTHY LIFE AWARD		

COMPLETED



*You've earned your Timberline Patch!*

**Congratulations! You've earned the highest award in the Woodlands Trail program!**

**Well done, Trailman!**  
**This is a HUGE accomplishment!**

