

# **Bridge to Boy Scouting**

## **Webelos to Scout Transition**

*“A critical step in the journey of Scouting”*

**PLANNING**

- **PREPARATION**

- **PERFORMANCE**

- **SUCCESS**

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*Prepared by:*  
Ken Thomas  
Bill Reass  
Bill Blumenthal

## Outline

I. What is Webelos to Scout Transition?	1
II. Key Leaders	4
III. The Webelos Program	6
IV. Webelos Outdoors	7
V. The Arrow of Light Award	10
VI. Picking a Boy Scout Troop	11
VII. Summary, Planning for Success	13
VIII. Webelos Graduation Ceremonies	14
IX. Resources, Further Information	16
X. Webelos Tracker	18
XI. Time Schedules	19

*Numerous BSA publications, and both BSA and non-BSA websites were consulted to prepare this document. Most sources are listed in the Resource section.*

## I. What is Webelos to Scouts Transition?

The goal of each Webelos Den Leader is to graduate every Webelos Scout into a troop. This is accomplished with help from other pack and troop leaders, and by following the suggested Webelos-to-Scout Transition plan described in this handout. There is one simple way to measure the success of the Webelos den. Ask yourself: Are the boys going directly from the Webelos dens into Boy Scouting? If the answer is that nearly all graduate into a troop, you know your Webelos dens are thriving. If not, then you'd better take a close look at the Webelos den program and the Boy Scout troops in your area.

You must plan ahead for what you are going to do, to recruit Webelos Scouts into your Troop (from the Scoutmaster's point of view) or what you are going to do to get the Webelos sent on to Boy Scouts (from a Webelos Leader's point of view). You must then prepare for this transition with activities built along this plan. You must complete all of these activities, not just part of them, in order to achieve success.

### Why?

- Seventy to eighty percent of all new Boy Scouts were Webelos first. Therefore, Webelos transition is of critical importance.
- Boy Scouts who attend summer camp are retained in the program much better than Scouts who do not attend camp. Therefore, getting them to camp is critical.
- Many new Boy Scouts drop out during the first year. There is no second chance to get them to camp, and get them committed to the program. Therefore, getting them to summer camp the first summer, immediately after transition, is absolutely critical.
- May is "quitting time." School, school sports, and other youth programs come to an end. People get out of programs to which they are not fully committed. Cub Scouting and Boy Scouts are not one program in most parent's minds. At the end of Cub Scouts, parents and boys are graduating and "scanning the horizon" for something fun for the summer. If they are not yet comfortable with the troop, leaders, and troop program, it is easy to not join this new and unfamiliar program with new, unfamiliar leaders.
- The patrol method (youth leadership) is one of the number one satisfiers that retain Boy Scouts.

*See the BSA publication "Webelos to Scout Transition Plan."*

## **The Plan**

Two basic components of the transition plan are:

- Partnering of Webelos dens and Boy Scout Troops, and
- Joint Webelos-Boy Scout activities.

However, advance preparation of Webelos Leaders and advanced planning by those leaders is critical.

The Webelos-to-Scout plan is a cooperative effort between the pack and troop that results in increased transition of Webelos Scouts to Boy Scouting. It gives Webelos Scouts and their families an awareness of the troop program, troop leadership, advancement, and an appreciation of troop organization and relationships. Studies have shown that when the plan is used, a high percentage of Webelos Scouts move into the troop easily and eagerly.

The transition plan emphasizes making connections between the fifth grade Webelos patrol and Boy Scout troops. The Webelos Program, particularly outdoor activities, and the Arrow of Light award are part of this plan.

- Scoutmasters and Webelos leaders meet in the fall of the fifth-grade year to get acquainted, share the Webelos roster, plan transition, review camp plans and fee schedule, and set a date for Webelos parents' camp promotion meeting.
- During December-February of the fifth-grade year, Webelos and their parents visit local troops to observe meetings, learn about troop activities and summer camp plans, meet the troop, and ask questions.
- Second year Webelos choose a patrol name, make a flag, wear patrol medallions and use a patrol leader (the Denner). This will further ease their transition into the troop and its patrol method.
- The den will take part in one or more Boy Scout activities with a local troop.
- Webelos graduate in February-April, often at the Blue and Gold, as a group, with or without their Arrow of Light award. Boys become active in their selected troop in March-April. The critically important issue here is that the boys become integrated into a troop before the end of the fifth grade.
- The second year Webelos Leader's job description should include acting as an Assistant Scoutmaster (patrol advisor?), with the troop approval, starting in March - June, for the new patrol.

## **How the Webelos-to-Scout Transition Plan Helps Boys**

The Webelos Program introduces the Webelos Scout to Boy Scout skills and future advancement experiences. He sees boy leadership at work in the troop and senses his own potential as a junior leader. He becomes more confident and enthusiastic about the patrol method, district camporees, summer camp, and perhaps even a national jamboree or high adventure trip. In short, the boy's desire for troop membership is the result of this gradual change in appetite for troop-oriented activities.

**How the Webelos-to-Scout Plan Helps Leaders**

For the troop leader, it means more boys - boys already trained in the Boy Scout joining requirements, and boys whose families have been supporting them in pack activities.

For the Webelos Den Leader, it means fulfillment. It means direct help in advancement and on Webelos overnights, as well as a pleasant association with the Boy Scout troop. The time spent with a boy is productive as seen in the boy's desire to continue in Scouting.

To the Cubmaster it means assurance of stable Webelos dens, more graduations, better ceremonies, easy access to Den Chiefs, and pack meetings that feature lively and participating Webelos dens and Boy Scout troop guests.

**What this achieves**

This plan assists increased transition and increased camp attendance, both of which should increase long-term Boy Scout membership and impact more boys' lives.

The emphasis at graduation is: This is the same program with the same, familiar leaders but now with a new program emphasis ... Boy Scouting outdoor fun and adventure, and preparing for camp.

Hopefully, Webelos leaders will enjoy the troop and become active adult leaders, helping to retain "their" boys.

February-April graduation gives new Scouts and parents more time to "plug in" to Boy Scout camp promotion programs and fee schedules.

February-April graduation gives Scoutmasters time to get to know boys and parents, and train boys for camp. (Some are reluctant to take new, April-May graduated Scouts to camp.)

February-April graduation gives parents time to get to know troop leaders before they send their son, who perhaps has never been away from home before, to camp. Obviously, parents are more willing to encourage their son to go with a familiar leader whom they know, as opposed to a stranger they have just met.

February-April graduation gives the new Scout more time to get to know and be comfortable with older Scouts, so the boy is more willing and excited to go to camp, and better prepared to have a good first experience.

February-April graduation of the whole den keeps boys together with friends. This is probably the single most important point for the new Scouts. It also focuses units and districts on Webelos transition as a major event, like School Night.

The **overall emphasis** is that second year Webelos begin their second year in May of their 4th grade year. The next February or so, they become Scouts, and by May, they are oriented Boy Scouts, familiar with troop and leaders and signed up for camp. This should happen as a smooth flowing, continuous plan.

## II. KEY LEADERS

### Leaders in the Webelos-to-Scout Transition Plan

Each of the leaders in the plan has an important role to play in getting Webelos Scouts into a troop. Key leaders in the plan are the

**Webelos Den Leader and Assistant Webelos Den Leader**  
**Cubmaster**  
**Scoutmaster**  
**Assistant Scoutmaster**  
**Webelos Den Chief**  
**Unit Commissioners/District Committees**

### Webelos Leaders

These leaders are the most influential in the boys' preparation for Boy Scouts. Webelos leaders should be trained (Webelos Leader-specific Training and Webelos Outdoors) by the end of the boys' Bear year in Cubs. They should continue with Scoutmaster Leader-specific Training and Outdoor Leader Skills Instruction during their tenure.

The Webelos leaders:

- Should have the den function as a patrol, particularly in the fifth-grade year
- Ensure the boys attend camp, ideally between fourth and fifth grade
- Verify the presence of the necessary Boy Scout skills
- Attend Roundtables and get to know Scoutmasters
- Recruit a Den Chief
- Plan a year-round, two-year program to complete requirements
- Plan the graduation ceremony and promote troop summer activities
- Accept the need for a good outdoor program, including camping
- Have knowledge of outdoor skills, fire building, cooking, wood tools and knots, camping, sanitation, tents and equipment.

### Cubmaster

- Encourages prospective Webelos leaders to obtain training early
- Searches for Boy Scout troops and develops point(s)-of-contact
- Encourages visitation to troop meetings
- Confirms the graduation, and invites the Scoutmaster(s), SPL(s), and ASPL(s) to the graduation ceremony
- Conducts a memorable graduation ceremony.

### Scoutmaster

- Include the Webelos in summer camp reservations
- Discuss camp and troop activity costs with the Webelos' parents
- Have Webelos and their parents attend troop meetings
- Become part of the Pack graduation ceremony
- Assist in finding Den Chiefs for Webelos Dens
- Ensure all forms are completed
- Invite the Webelos Den Leader to become part of the troop
- Hold a pre-summer camp orientation for Scout skills

**The Assistant Scoutmaster**

- Helps to form the new scout patrol
- Makes sure the Webelos feel welcome and they belong to the troop
- Works with the Troop Guide in planning instruction of scout skills and patrol learning
- Assist with advancement through the First Class rank
- Verify and reinforce the basic scout skills

**Den Chief**

- A resource for scout skills
- Sets a good Boy Scout example
- Helps form the patrol and patrol spirit
- Helps the Webelos Den Leader to operate the patrol
- Assists in the Arrow of Light and graduation ceremonies
- Counts as leadership time for his Boy Scout advancement

**Unit Commissioners/District Committee**

- Determine which Troops can accommodate more Scouts
- Contact District Executive to start more Troops, if necessary
- Ensure graduations are planned
- Track graduating Scouts and ensure they get registered as Boy Scouts
- Attend graduations
- For those Webelos who do not join a Troop, determine why

### III. THE WEBELOS PROGRAM

The Webelos Program is scheduled for year-round, two full years (actually, more like 22 months). It is important for a new Webelos Leader to realize this and plan accordingly. Ideally, the Webelos den will begin to function in June after the third-grade year when boys may attend the Webelos resident camp (see Chapter IV). The Webelos den will likely cease to function in April-May of the fifth-grade year, with the graduation and Arrow of Light ceremonies taking place in Feb.-April of the fifth-grade year.

The Webelos Program is a transition between Cub Scouts and Boys Scouts. As a Cub, the boy had to convince his parents that he did his best. In Webelos, he now has to convince the Webelos Leader that he has done his best. While you should start emphasizing outdoors and camping, you will still follow the Cub Scout rules. The idea is to acquaint the boys to the outdoors in a friendly and hospitable way, starting the development of skills they will need to fine-tune in Boy Scouts.

The Webelos den is still a Cub Scout den, but may use a patrol patch for identification. Either the blue or the khaki uniform is permissible (decided the individual boy's parents). Rotate the Denner position (similar to the Boy Scout Patrol Leader). Give the Denner/Patrol Leader some responsibilities and assignments to make this position meaningful to the boys.

Activity Badges are designed to be similar to Boy Scout merit badges. Use expertise from your parents and from outside the den; the Webelos Den Leader should not try to lead all Activity Badge instruction. The Webelos Den Leader must now decide if the boy has *done his best* to meet the requirements.

If you want to complete all the activity badges, it is necessary to get started in June, after third grade. Many badges can be completed in one month, but several will take two months and perhaps require some take-home work. In the Webelos Program Helps, two activity badges are listed for each month. The first is intended for Fourth-Grade Webelos and the second is intended for Fifth-Grade Webelos. Some leaders try to do two badges in a month, but you can't do justice of the requirements with this arrangement (and what does that teach the boys!). If you don't get started early, or if you have boys joining late, you will need to modify the schedule and, perhaps, drop some activity badges. Pay particular attention to the required badges for the Webelos Badge and Arrow of Light Award. (LDS Webelos leaders, there are modified schedules available on the internet to meet your special needs.)

The Arrow of Light Award can aid you in the Webelos to Scout Transition. Key requirements for the Arrow of Light involve Boy Scout activity and Troop meetings. Begin planning to meet these requirements as the boys start the fifth grade year. It may be difficult to set up an activity with the Boy Scouts in mid-winter; this is typically the most difficult requirement to schedule (see Chapter V).

The Webelos Den Chief is a Boy Scout that serves as an assistant to the Webelos Den Leader. He is the Webelos Leader's tie into a Scout troop. Use him as an example Boy Scout. Have him talk often with the Webelos about what he likes in Boy Scouts. Make sure that the Den Chief understands he is your backup leader and not "one of the boys." Give him specific assignments to handle during den meetings.

Prepare the boys for the outdoors (see Chapter IV). Build as much outdoors into the activity badges as possible. Begin their camping experience with Webelos den camping and then take advantage of Council-offered resident camping programs for Cub Scout-aged boys.

## IV. WEBELOS OUTDOORS

This Chapter is intended to give you a few pointers about the Webelos Program with an emphasis on outdoors activities. All prospective Webelos leaders should plan to take Webelos Leader-specific Training and the separately offered Webelos Leader Outdoor Training, ideally while the boys are still in third grade. Cub Leader Training is usually offered several times throughout the year in each District - watch the Tri-District calendar for dates. WELOT is usually offered by the Tri-District training committees in conjunction with Boy Scout Leader Outdoor Skills Instruction, in the spring and the fall. Remember that a goal of Cub Scouts is to prepare boys to become Boy Scouts. The Webelos Den is designed to fulfill this goal; it is the transition from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts.

### Camping in Cub Scouts

Family camping is recommended in Cub Scouts. This means that the boys should be encouraged to camp with their own families to develop some initial camping skills and to become use to being in the outdoors. The Pack and the Webelos Dens are permitted to hold campouts, but with the provision that each Cub is accompanied by a responsible adult. The Webelos Den Leader and other Pack Leaders *cannot* be responsible for youth on overnight Cub Scout activities.

Webelos are encouraged to extend this to patrol camping but still with parent involvement. Do not attempt backpacking; go car camping in easily accessible locations.

Fourth Grade - emphasis is usually on parent-son work toward campsite preparation, cooking and cleaning. Emphasize camping skills and nature/outdoors activities.

Fifth Grade - while a parent is still required to accompany each boy, you can start to emphasize patrol-style camping. Boys should start to work as a group to prepare campsites and do the cooking/cleaning with guidance from adults. Rotate job assignments (fire starting, preparation, cooking, cleaning)

Boy Scout Troop - often, a Webelos Den (fifth grade) will participate with a Boy Scout Troop in an overnight camping experience. This still requires parent-son camping if it is done as a Webelos activity. Work with the Scoutmaster to make it simple and easy to do.

Take advantage of Council-sponsored resident camps. Note that this is the only approved Cub Scout camping activity in which the parent-son rule may be waived (NOTE: Council may be changing the requirements for Webelos camping at Camp Rand to require one adult per Webelos). Camp Frank Rand (Chimayo Scout Reservation) is our locally-operated Council camp. Cub Scout camping promotions should be available from the Council and your district Executive.

Camping programs that are offered during the summer:

Day Camp - sometimes a special Webelos Day Camp with an overnighter is available. Each district organizes their own Day Camps.

You and Me Weekend - usually for younger Cubs; parent-son camping. (Camp Frank Rand, June or July)

Adventure Camp - for all Cubs, including Webelos; focused on Wolf and Bear activities. (Camp Frank Rand, June or July)

Webelos Week in the Woods - for Webelos Dens; with early planning, boys could attend after both the third grade and the fourth grade. It is highly recommended that all Webelos plan to attend camp after their fourth grade year. (Camp Frank Rand, June or July)

## **Webelos Outdoor Activities**

Webelos dens should do as much outdoors as possible. Try to hold your regular meetings outside. An outdoor activity each month is ideal. Obviously, the amount you do outdoors will be dependant on weather, regular meeting times and days, etc. Plan many hikes, particularly for the outdoors-related activity badges. Avoid backpacking, and adhere to the parent-son camping rule. This is to make the outdoor and camping experience the most pleasurable for the boys. Doing it on their own, and meeting the challenge of hauling heavy packs should wait until Boy Scouts, when they are stronger and more capable.

Plan some activity badge requirements into your hikes. Visit parks, old mining areas, even just local trails. Ask the boys:

“How many different trees can we find?”

“Are there any orange birds in these woods?”

“How can we show people at home this elk print?”

“If these three minerals (quartz, feldspar, mica) are mixed together, what rock would we find (granite)?”

Camping should be “car camping;” that is, camp in an area easily accessible by car. In this way, more time can be spent on activities rather than packing in. In addition, most boys will have gear that is not appropriate for packing in to a campsite - bulky sleeping bags or bedrolls, family tents, kitchen pots and pans. Cooking should be on open fires, where possible. Get in the habit of practicing “leave no trace” camping.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with “fair weather” camping with Webelos; we want them to have a pleasant and enjoyable experience. Winter outings should be limited to daytime (unless you have an indoor heated space for sleeping); be sure, as the leader, to bring lots of extra warm clothing, hats, gloves, even boots! Organize extra adults to prepare hot drinks for the boys. Be sure to have the boys bring a set of dry clothes to change into for the ride home.

## **Outdoor Skills**

Many of the following skills are covered in detail in the WELOT course. I'll highlight some issues during this part of the session.

Cooking/Fuels/Fire building - see BSA Fuels policy. Webelos should never handle liquid fuels themselves. Adults should supervise for other fuel use. Minimal supervision is needed for cooking on an open fire, so plan to use wood or charcoal fires for cooking, as much as possible. Fires are FUN! Take your own wood or charcoal to save the forest! Teach the boys how to build fires - for cooking, for light, for heat, etc. Make fire starters at a Den meeting.

Cooking/Food - simple is better. Foil-pack dinners are the norm. Cook away from sleeping areas and latrines. Use this as an opportunity to demonstrate utensilless cooking (egg in an orange cup, pigs in a blanket on a stick). Have the boys plan the menu at den meetings, and have them help buy the food; these are some of the Boy Scout advancement requirements they will do when they are older. Try Dutch oven cooking.

Site selection - away from water, relatively flat with drainage, and free from rocks. Try to avoid damaging the soils and grasses.

Tents - you will probably be using family tents - large and heavy. Teach the use of a tarp for shelter (a tent is not needed).

Sleeping - the boys will probably have cotton rectangular bags, if anything. Teach the use of

- bedrolls or “envelope” beds. Don’t make families buy expensive, down, mummy bags!
- First Aid - you should have Basic First Aid and CPR training. Have a Den kit for your use - bandages, antibiotic cream, anti-itch creams, antiseptic, soap, moleskin or Second Skin. Get the boys in the habit of packing a personal First Aid kit (Readyman).
- Cleaning and sanitation - teach proper woods toilet practice. Go away from water, cooking areas, camping areas. Carry a plastic trowel to dig shallow holes for individual use. Teach patrol cleanup methods; use bleach solution (kept by the leader and used only under his/her direction) for the final rinse. Leave the area cleaner than you found it!
- Woods tools - set up a “lumber yard.” Adult supervision is mandatory! I recommend that you only demonstrate an ax; let them use a hatchet! There is rarely a need for an ax in Cub Scout or Boy Scout camping. Better yet, use a camping bow saw (Sven saw, for example).
- Knots and rope - learn the basics and practice them often - square, clove hitch, two half-hitches, bowline, taughtline hitch. Make rope during a Den meeting or on an outing (one when they will use the rope). Believe it or not, there really isn’t much use for knots, anymore. However, Boy Scouts still requires it, and you never know when that tent line with the factory-made loop is going to break! Make games out of knot tying. Practical examples help with remembering how to tie the knots - have the boys pitch a tarp as a tent by using several of the knots they have been taught.
- Map and Compass - get the boys use to taking a compass on hikes and finding North. Show them ways to use the sun and stars, rather than a compass. Introduce them to reading maps, particularly topographical maps. BSA has a kit for simple orienteering games that can be run with a Den. Have the boys plan a hike based on a map, then use the map and compass to find the route.

### **Activity Badges**

- Geologist - Harding Mine, out of Dixon (get UNM Earth and Planetary Sciences Dept. permission; [http://epswww.unm.edu/harding/harding\\_.htm](http://epswww.unm.edu/harding/harding_.htm)). Similar minerals and rocks can be found along the road to, and within, Camp Rand. Battleship Rock in Jemez and road cuts north of Storrie Lake for marine fossils.
- Naturalist - Basque del Apache in Nov - Feb. to see the birds. Seven Springs fish hatchery. Collect insects on a hike or in a local park during a Den meeting.
- Outdoorsman - demonstrate, and have the boys practice, packing for a trip. Get a Boy Scout to demonstrate packing a backpack.
- Forester - visit a local lumber yard to get samples of different woods. Don’t cut live trees in the forest for this! Collect leaf and bark specimens on a hike (dead, not pulled or cut off trees).
- Readyman - get basic First Aid before going into the woods.

### **Planning Campouts**

Always plan the outings ahead of time. If you don’t have something planned, the boys will plan something on their own - like stick fighting over a gully! Use den meetings to involve the boys in planning. Be prepared to use every opportunity on an outing as a learning experience. Use various aids such as:

- Local Tour Permit (required!)
- Campout Planning guides
- Campfire Planning Worksheet

## V. ARROW OF LIGHT AWARD

Key parts of the Arrow of Light award are there to help plan the transition to Boy Scouts.

*However, you, the leader, have to plan ahead!!!*

Key AOL Requirements:

- Visit Troop(s)
- Outing with a Troop
- Join a troop

Establish contact with troops early to schedule attending troop meetings.

- Ask your Cubmaster
- Contact Commissioners, Scout Executives, and the District Committee
- Ask other Scouters
- Ask at Scoutmaster Leader-specific Training
- Ask at Webelos Outdoor Training

Parents and boys should attend the troop meetings.

Plan joint activities with the troop(s). This can often be the most difficult to arrange. If you wait until mid-winter, you may not find an appropriate activity for Webelos participation. If you take part in a joint campout, remember the requirement for adult-son participation.

Other AOL requirements include some of the Boy Scout “joining” requirements: oath, law, motto, square knot, etc.

Joining a troop should occur by March or April of fifth grade. The Troop needs to make plans for you to attend summer camp. It is highly recommended that new Scouts participate in the first year camping program at summer camp. The new Scout needs to meet and become familiar with the other boys going to camp.

The goal is to complete these requirements before graduation, and to get the boys firmly established in a troop before the troop goes to summer camp.

The Arrow of Light Award Ceremony equates to the Eagle ceremony for Boy Scouts. Ensure that the AOL ceremony is just as nice. Typically, the Arrow of Light ceremony would be at a different time from graduation. This minimizes any embarrassment or hard feelings in those that did not complete the Arrow of Light requirements. If all the boys completed the AOL requirements, then the two ceremonies could be combined. An impressive ceremony will instill in the boys the desire to continue in Boy Scouting (see Chapter VIII).

## **VI. PICKING A BOY SCOUT TROOP**

### **The Aims of Scouting**

There are three aims of Boy Scouts. These are to build character, to foster citizenship, and to develop fitness. The ideals of Scouting are stated in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. These aims and ideals are accomplished through a program that involves patrols, outdoor activities, advancement, personal growth, and leadership development. Each troop has its own "flavor" or mix of these methods. Your job is to find the correct mix for you!

### **Questions to ask yourself:**

1. What do I want to get out of Boy Scouts?
2. What is important to me about any group that I belong to?
3. Do I want to be an Eagle Scout?
4. Do I like to camp, hike, backpack?
5. Do I like to try different activities; would I like to work on merit badges?

### **What to look for in visits to troops:**

1. Are the meetings lead by the boys?  
 Boy Scout troops are supposed to be lead by older boys in the troop. The leaders have advanced in rank, have shown interest in being a leader, and have been trained in their duties. Is the troop organized into patrols (groups of about 8 boys)? How are patrol leaders selected? Watch how the older boys behave toward the younger boys; are they mentors and leaders?
2. What is the role of the Scoutmaster?  
 The Scoutmaster should provide guidance to the senior patrol leader, who is the troop meeting leader. The Scoutmaster is not supposed to run everything himself. If the meeting is run only by the Scoutmaster, then the boys may not have much of a chance to develop leadership skills.
3. Are there any Assistant Scoutmasters?  
 There should be several of these adult leaders. They will work with the boys, as well as help the Scoutmaster. Several leaders together provide some variety in the Troop. One Assistant Scoutmaster should be dedicated to helping new boys join the troop and begin their advancements. Other adults will work with senior patrol leaders, older boys, or help the scouts with planning activities.
4. Are parents supportive or is everything left to the adult leaders?  
 A strong troop will have lots of parent involvement. Find out about the Troop Committee. Do these adults attend the troop meetings? What "jobs" do these people do? Parents, ask how you can help on the committee.
5. Is there a "New Scout" patrol?  
 If so, this probably means the troop puts an emphasis on the transition of younger boys into the scouting program. If there isn't such a patrol, ask how new boys fit in and if there is anyone that helps them become part of the Troop.
6. What are the troop's interests?  
 Boy Scouting should be a mix of outdoor activities (hiking, camping, other activities), advancement (merit badges, advancement in rank), and community involvement (community service, participation in District and Council Scout activities, participation in community activities). Try to learn the amount of each of these in the mix for each troop and find one that matches your interests. Try to see how these are used to develop character, self confidence, and

leadership. Some troops may "specialize" in some activity; if so, don't join a troop that has a primary activity you don't like.

Some troops may put total emphasis on attaining the Eagle rank and ignore the outdoor activities. Others put total emphasis on backpacking or camping while ignoring service, community involvement, and advancement. Whatever the troop's interests, it should be FUN for the boys and match your interests.

7. How easy are the merit badges and ranks to achieve?

Remember, these are used to develop character, leadership, and self confidence in the boys. If these are too easily earned, they mean very little. If they are extremely difficult to earn, then the boys can become discouraged. Merit badges also provide an opportunity for the Scout to interact with a variety of adults. Ideally, the Scoutmaster would not lead most of the merit badges, but will bring in other adults.

8. What does the Troop do during the summer?

Summer camp is a BIG part of the scouting experience. This is a time to further develop camaraderie with the other boys, work on merit badges, test some of your newly developed skills, and have a great time. There are many different summer activities available to Boys Scouts. Most troops attend a traditional resident camp each summer. This activity is most appropriate for new Boy Scouts, and most camps have a "First Year Camper" program. It is best to join a troop early enough to be able to attend summer camp with the troop. You should consider it a priority to attend camp during your first summer in Boy Scouts.

Activities for more experienced Scouts include high adventure activities such as canoe trips in the lakes area of Minnesota, sailing off the California coast, diving in the Florida Keys, and hiking at Philmont. The lure of these experiences can keep boys active longer. High adventure camps usually have a minimum age requirement, so you probably will not be able to participate in your first summer or two. But, you should ask if the Troop participates in such activities.

What does the troop like to do, and is this what you would like to do? What does the troop have planned for the summer after you join, and can you participate?

9. How do the boys behave?

Do the boys show respect to the adult leaders, the patrol leaders, and each other? Do they come to order when it is time to start the meeting? Do they participate in the activities, both at the troop meeting and at other events?

## **VII. SUMMARY, PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

### **Putting the Webelos-to-Scout Transition Plan to Work**

You should take away from this session these key points:

- Seek training earlier rather than later
- Begin planning in May of the boys' third-grade year
- Take advantage of available camping experiences
- Contact local troops and leaders by fall of fifth grade
- Make plans during the summer after fourth grade for completion of Arrow of Light requirements during the fifth-grade year
- Get the boys into a troop no later than April of fifth grade
- Make sure the boys sign up for Boy Scout summer camp for the summer after fifth grade

### **PLAN AHEAD**

## VIII. WEBELOS GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Goodbye from the Pack! ... Welcome to the Troop!

Every Webelos Scout should be recognized with a graduation ceremony before leaving the pack and entering a troop. This is not likely to happen, however, unless you have a plan of cooperation developed by your pack and the troop or troops that work with you. This plan should be the result of a joint meeting of the pack and the troop committees or of your Webelos den leader and the Scoutmaster. The ceremony should include, in addition to the Webelos den leader and Den Chief, the graduate's prospective Scoutmaster, his new patrol leader, and his parents. The emphasis in this ceremony should not be merely to graduate the boy out of the pack, but to *graduate the whole family into the troop*.

Note that we are really dealing with two ceremonies. One is the Arrow of Light Award Ceremony. This does not need to involve Boy Scout troop members. It is the highest award in Cub Scouts and deserves a fitting ceremony like the Eagle Award has in Boy Scouts. Upon completion of the Arrow of Light Award, a fifth-grade boy may join Boy Scouts. The other ceremony is the graduation out of Cub Scouts and into a troop. This should *require* troop participation.

If all of the boys will receive the Arrow of Light and graduate into a troop, then the ceremonies could be performed at the same meeting. For many packs, doing an AOL ceremony in conjunction with all the other graduation ceremonies makes for a very long pack meeting; so, often the two ceremonies are separated. The AOL ceremony could be performed in April, followed by graduation in May. It is not necessary that the Webelos den continue to function until graduation.

Also note, many Packs like to do the graduation and/or AOL ceremony at the February Blue and Gold Banquet. If your Pack does this, you will need to plan carefully to complete all the requirements for Webelos and for AOL in time!

### Some ceremony suggestions:

**Jungle Book Ceremony for Crossing into Boy Scouts** (internet site; I was not able to connect to it recently)- From the Suffolk County Council POW WOW, and presented in the Ceremonies Galore compilation from Pack 339.

**Webelos Graduation Ceremony** - From the Cub Scout Ceremonies Book by Ellen DeVilbiss, as rendered by the MacScouter ([www.macscouter.com/ceremony/CubScoutCeremonies.html](http://www.macscouter.com/ceremony/CubScoutCeremonies.html)).

**Crossover Ceremony - Jay Bemis** (internet site; I was not able to connect to it recently)- From the Suffolk County Council Pow Wow, and presented in the Ceremonies Galore compilation from Pack 339.

**9 Webelos Graduation and Crossover Ceremonies** - From the NetWoods Virtual Campsite super-site (internet).

- Eagle Crossover Ceremony -
- Graduation Campfires by Peter Van Houten
- Our Campfire by Peter Van Houten
- Webelos Graduation Ceremony by "R.P.Stawicki"
- Webelos Graduation Ceremony by Edward J Rogers
- Webelos Graduation Ceremony by Don IZard
- Webelos Graduation Ceremony by Peter Farnham

- Native American Graduation Ceremony by Peter Van Houten
- White Eagle Crossover Ceremony

**Crossover Ceremony - Four Canoes** (internet site; I was not able to connect to it recently) - From the United States Scouting Service Project.

**Rope Crossover Ceremony** - From the United States Scouting Service Project ([www.usscouts.org/usscouts/ceremony.asp](http://www.usscouts.org/usscouts/ceremony.asp)).

**14 Webelos Bridging Ceremonies** - From the MacScouter mega-site (internet)!

- A Bridging Ceremony from Troop 6, Colonial Virginia Council
- Broken Arrow AOL
- A Crossover Ceremony
- A Bridging Ceremony by Dave Colangelo
- Crossover to Boy Scouts, by Don Tolin
- A Space Theme Crossover, by Peter Farnham
- Jungle Book Ceremony for Advancing to Scouts
- Crossover Ceremony
- Magic Neckerchief Graduation Ceremony Script
- Webelos Graduation -- The Changing of the Shirt
- Crossing over to Scouting
- Crossing the Bridge Ceremony
- Crossover, The Final Steps

[www.isd.net/srtobin/ceremonies/cub-grad.html](http://www.isd.net/srtobin/ceremonies/cub-grad.html)

Also, check out local POW WOW books and the BSA book *Staging Den and Pack Ceremonies*.

## IX. RESOURCES, FURTHER INFORMATION

### World-Wide-Web Resources

#### SCOUTS-L Wisdom on the Webelos-To-Scout

UseNet Webelos Bridging Discussions - Search the UseNet *rec.scouting* discussion groups

#### SCOUTS-L on Webelos

Search the Web for Webelos info - Search the *AltaVista* index for web-sites you can visit, that contain information on 'Webelos Bridging Ceremonies' ideas.

[www.geocities.com/~pack215/webelos-to-scout.html](http://www.geocities.com/~pack215/webelos-to-scout.html)

[www.geocities.com/~pack215/graduation-cere.html](http://www.geocities.com/~pack215/graduation-cere.html)

[home.forbin.com/Webelos/Webelos.html](http://home.forbin.com/Webelos/Webelos.html)

[//arkie.net/~pow-wow/webelos1.htm](http://arkie.net/~pow-wow/webelos1.htm)

[www.scouters.com/compass/default.asp](http://www.scouters.com/compass/default.asp)

[www.losalamos.com/bsa/](http://www.losalamos.com/bsa/)

[www.gswcbsa.org/](http://www.gswcbsa.org/)

[www.bsa.scouting.org/](http://www.bsa.scouting.org/)

[www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)

### Training

Cub Leader Fast Start ([www.scouting.org/cubscouts/faststart/](http://www.scouting.org/cubscouts/faststart/))

New Leader Essential

Cub Scout Leader-specific Training (section on Webelos)

Webelos Leader Outdoor Training

Basic Outdoor Leader Outdoors Orientation (for Pack camping)

Boy Scout Leader-specific Training (session on Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster)

Boy Scout Leader Outdoor Skills Instruction

Wood Badge

Basic First Aid and CPR (from Red Cross, National Safety Council, etc.)

Wilderness First Aid

Contact your District Training Chairman or your District Executive (Steve Solberg or Daniel Bruce) for further information on dates and locations.

### Printed Materials

Guide to Safe Scouting ([www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc/html](http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc/html))

Webelos Handbook

Cub Scout Leader Book

Cub Scout Leader How-To Book

Webelos Activity Book

Cub Scout and Webelos Scout Program Helps

Webelos to Scout Transition pamphlet

Boy Scout Handbook

Scoutmaster's Handbook

Boy Scout Field Guide (under revision, may not be available at this time)

Troop Program Resources and Troop Program Features books

Boy Scout Merit Badge Books

- |             |                     |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Camping     | Hiking              |
| Backpacking | Cooking             |
| First Aid   | Canoeing            |
| Geology     | Wilderness Survival |
| Pioneering  | Orienteering        |

numerous nature merit badges

Boy Scout Outdoors Skill Instruction books

- Backpacking
- Team Building
- Cooking
- Camping
- Survival

Varsity/Venture Scouting Activity books

Philmont Field Guide

**WEBELOS-TO-SCOUT TRANSITION TRACKING DOCUMENT**  
(Provide copies to Unit Commissioner, NNM Membership Committee, and Troop Leaders)  
Date Prepared:

Pack# \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Grade? \_\_\_\_\_ Webelos Den# \_\_\_\_\_ Total # Webelos \_\_\_\_\_  
Webelos Leader Assistant Webelos Leader

Name:

Address:

Phone (H):

Phone (W):

E-mail:

	<u>Webelos Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>
1)					
2)					
3)					
4)					
5)					
6)					
7)					
8)					
9)					
10)					
11)					
12)					
13)					
14)					
15)					

## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

**WEBELOS ➔ TO ➔ SCOUT TRANSITION**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE (SECOND YEAR) WEBELOS LEADER'S ROLE**

Your ultimate succession helping boys get into Scouting is getting your Webelos to join a Boy Scout Troop in February. Your efforts through the Webelos program have made a major contribution towards the Scouting trail for all boys in your den/patrol. You are the key to a smooth transition for your Webelos.

**TARGET DATE    TASK**

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- SEPT./OCT.**  Have your den select a Scout patrol name, get patrol patches to wear, make a patrol Flag, and elect a patrol leader. (Check the Scout Handbook for ideas)
- OCTOBER**  Complete and return your Webelos roster (tracking sheet) to your Unit Commissioner Or pack committee chairman by October 30<sup>th</sup>. This is very important so that troops can send you Webelos information and invite them to orientation and camp promotion meetings.
- Meet with the local Scoutmaster(s) for transition planning
- OCT./NOV.**  Take your Webelos and their parents to visit a troop meeting. A new Scout-Parent informational meeting at the troop should include summer camp plans.
- Ask the Troop to appoint a Webelos Den Chief. This will aid the new Scouts with their transition into the Troop.
- DECEMBER**  Encourage your Webelos to make the final decision on joining a Troop
- Assist the Cubmaster in planning a top-notch, personalized graduation for the February pack meeting.
- FEBRUARY**  Graduate your Webelos into Boy Scouts. Have them complete a Scout application and register with the Troop. New Scouts should have the Scout Handbook at this time.
- Webelos should attend Winter Camporee/Klondike Derby with their new troop.
- FEB./MAR.**  Be sure the new Scouts have a schedule and begin attending Troop activities. Encourage parents to get involved with the Troop Committee.
- Talk to the Scoutmaster about continuing to work with the new Scouts as a patrol advisor. This will help boys become comfortable in the new troop.
- Help as needed with any final details for summer camp preparedness.
- Follow up with any of your Webelos as to why they did not yet join a Troop.

Note: Get the name of the nearest Scoutmaster(s) from your Unit Commissioner or District Executive.

**WEBELOS ➡ TO ➡ SCOUT TRANSITION**

**Scoutmaster's Role**

Knowing that 70% of all boys who join boy Scouts were Webelos first, it makes good sense to "go after" those Webelos. New members have *vitality, new ideas, and add new parents* to the troop! You can play a critical role in recruiting new Scouts to your Troop through the Webelos Transition Plan.

TARGET DATE	TASK
October	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose and make reservations for your Troop's long-term, summer camp.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your Unit Commissioner and let him/her know your desires for increasing the troop size.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Appoint good scouts to be Webelos Den Chiefs to help get Webelos in nearby Packs interested in joining your troop.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify a Webelos Resource Chairman for the troop to help with nearby packs.
November	<input type="checkbox"/> Invite Webelos to visit a troop meeting.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a Webelos parents' night to promote the troop's summer camp plans and get Webelos ready to participate. Give them an information sheet with schedule, fees, and general camp information.
December	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan to be a part of the pack's February meeting and Webelos' graduation.
February	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend the pack meeting in February and help conduct the graduation ceremony.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Webelos should register as scouts with your troop
Mar./Apr May	<input type="checkbox"/> Invite the Webelos Leader(s) to be the new Scout's patrol advisor. This will help the new boys get adjusted and provides an excellent prospect for a new Assistant or committee person for the troop.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Be sure all new Scouts have the troop schedule so that they can begin participating in troop activities

- Hold a spring campout for the troop emphasizing basic Scout skills for new boys (e.g. cooking, camping, and patrol methods). This will build confidence in new Scouts and help prepare them for summer camp.
- Have a troop "new parent's" meeting for details on summer camp immediately.
- Encourage new parents to volunteer by join the troop committee.

A list of Webelos leaders and/or Cubmasters, and/or Pack Committee Chairman can be provided to you and you should receive a list of eligible Webelos in November/December to invite to your troop. Contact your Unit Commissioner or District Executive.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

WEBELOS → TO → SCOUT TRANSITION

Transition Plan

The Pack's Role

Your pack has given your Webelos a good beginning on the Scouting trail. The Webelos program is to prepare and help boys become Boy Scouts. You are a key to the process of Webelos transition for your pack.

TARGET DATE	TASK
Oct./Nov.	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage your second year Webelos leaders to complete and return their Den/patrol roster (tracking list) to the District Executive or the Unit Commissioner, via you.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage your Webelos leader(s) to meet with Scoutmasters in the area.
December	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan for a top-notch Webelos graduation and the February pack meeting. (See <i>Den and Pack Ceremonies</i> , page 144) Note: February is the preferred month of graduation so that new Scouts can attend March to May troop meetings to get acquainted and prepare for summer camp.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Invite Scoutmaster(s) to your <i>Blue and Gold Banquet</i> as an honored guest. Have him/her sit with the Webelos den/patrol, and assist with the graduation ceremony.
February	<input type="checkbox"/> Webelos graduation at your pack meeting. Assist with the ceremony.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Webelos complete a Boy Scout application and register with a troop.
March	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist the Webelos leader(s) in follow-up with any of your Webelos as to why they did not join a troop.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

WEBELOS → TO → SCOUT TRANSITION

Graduation plan

Unit Commissioner's role

**Our best resource of interested boys is our Webelos. In fact, 70% of all Boy Scouts were Webelos. So, it makes good sense to be sure every interested Webelos and his parents are invited, oriented and welcomed into a Boy Scout Troop. You are the key to this whole process!**

**TARGET DATE    TASK**

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- Oct./Nov.        Ensure that Webelos leaders complete and return their 5th grade Webelos To Scout Transition Tracking List to you, or the District Executive, no later than the November Roundtable. Please forward the list if given to you.
- Determine if your troop(s) can accommodate more Scouts. Some troops feel they are big enough. If not, contact your Dist. Exec. Immediately and help Webelos parents form a new troop to start activities in February.
- Arrange a phone contact or meeting between Webelos leaders and Scoutmasters to work the plan.
- Assist in planning a Webelos visit to a quality troop meeting, including camp promotion information for new parents. You should attend this troop meeting, and ensure that invitations are telephoned to the parents beforehand.
- Dec./Jan.        Help plan a top-notch graduation for Webelos at their February pack meeting.
- February        Attend graduation. Be sure new Scouts complete a Boy Scout application and know the troop's program and meeting schedule.
- Assist the troop to turn in applications and ant Webelos graduation report to the scout service center.
- March            Begin to follow up with boys who have not joined. Get them invited to visit another troop.



**We can only instill the values of Boy Scouting into the lives of Boys who become Boy Scouts.**