

Debrief of SR917

<p>Overall..... 1</p> <p> Executive summary 1</p> <p> Things we tried that worked..... 1</p> <p> Things we tried that did not work (as well) 2</p> <p> Other 2</p> <p> Recruiting..... 3</p> <p> Precourse communication..... 3</p> <p> Staff Preparation 3</p> <p> SDM0 3</p> <p> SDM1 4</p> <p> SDM2 5</p> <p> SDM3 5</p> <p> Overall 5</p> <p>Weekend One 5</p> <p> Day Zero 5</p> <p> Day One..... 6</p> <p> Check in, Orientation:..... 6</p> <p> Opening Gilwell 6</p> <p> Vision/Ticket..... 6</p> <p> PLC 6</p> <p> Troop Meeting..... 6</p> <p> Campfire 6</p> <p> Staff Meeting agenda items: 6</p> <p> Day Two 6</p> <p> Gilwell..... 7</p> <p> Inclusiveness 7</p> <p> Stages 7</p>	<p>Troop Meeting 7</p> <p>Evening Games 7</p> <p>Flag Retirement 7</p> <p>Staff Meeting agenda items: 8</p> <p>Day Three 8</p> <p> PLC..... 8</p> <p>Weekend Two..... 8</p> <p> To Do for weekend two 8</p> <p> Day Four..... 8</p> <p> Day Five..... 9</p> <p> Worship..... 9</p> <p> Patrol Projects 9</p> <p> Conservation Project 9</p> <p> Self Assessments..... 9</p> <p> Rededication 9</p> <p> Staff Meeting—Ticket Counselor 9</p> <p> Day Six 10</p> <p> Opening Gilwell..... 10</p> <p> Legacy 10</p> <p> Summary..... 10</p> <p>WB Handbook and PL Handbook..... 10</p> <p> Notes..... 10</p> <p> Changes 10</p> <p> Inserts (after first printing) 10</p> <p>Post Course Process 11</p>
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Overall

Executive summary

Things we tried that worked

Online registration. (need to add required fields)

The Wood Badge Handbook. Almost all handouts were eliminated. Almost all last-minute printing/copying was eliminated. A real legacy document.

A Budget with actual income/expense tracking.

Assigning someone to be in charge of fun! Songbook, cheers, etc.

Staff ticket training.

Legacy: “It’s in all of us” photos were of *our* Scouts; not unknown faces.

Including a wide array of previous staffers (including CDs) in prepping our staff.

Rehearsals of talks outside of SDMs for non-TGs.

Immediate start (and constant pressure on): recruiting OFS, publicity, recruiting staff.

Catholic mass.

Keeping TGs with their legacy patrol.

Having the SPL in charge of making “course connections” at the beginning and end of every presentations. The SPL job is overseeing the transitions between elements and making sure they stick together.

Every piece of information that the staff needed was available electronically, hopefully in multiple places: CD, on the web, eMail.

Continue: We did NOT have the Scribes produce a picture CD. Photos were to be on the web for individual download.

Things we tried that did not work (as well)

Every staff member must be at every SDM and start preparing now. Every TG needs to be at every TG meeting.

Adding narration to the First PLC.

Extending “the matrix” to include *when/how* stuff would be moved from storage to where it would be used, and back.

Printing is too expensive. We would have gone *way* over budget without Bennie’s printer.

Patches, hats, shirts still involve too much last-minute terror. Revisions, redos, arrival on the day before they are needed—yikes!

Al was going to try to do a Council Strip (redesign?) that was to be given out to recruiters and registered OFS *before* the course. Never happened.

There were multiple (confusing) copies of electronic information floating around: on the Texas DVD, on Al’s CD, on the web, ... from previous courses.

Photos on the web could have been posted in a more timely manner, and an easier download manner.

Gilwell Gazette

Continue: the addition to the *Gilwell Gazette* that each PL be included with a brief biography—great way to build connections between OFS and for staff to consider OFS for future staffing.

Change?: stop trying to get everything crammed into the *Gilwell Gazette* at once. I felt bad that our scribes had to literally pull all nighters to get things done.

Publish one separate weekend schedule in a “Weekend *Gilwell Gazette*” for the purpose of getting schedules by day and general information out to OFS. In conjunction with this change, the deadline for patrols to submit info could remain the same in getting info to scribes, but Publish / Print/ Distribution at lunch time. This would allow 6 hours in the am to incorporate patrol specific info, which is what we are always waiting on.

Start: Post times that trading post will be open each morning in *Gazette*.

Other

Continue: have a poster-size copy of the daily schedule on display in the staff room. And in *Gilwell Hall*.

Start: ASM-P needs to prepare an agenda to be covered for each evening staff meeting. Involve the ASMs, FQM, Scribe in this planning.

Start: have a list of what will be in the TG box for each morning.

Consider: generator backup for kitchen. (Talk to Hankins) Because there may be a health dept requirement that if we'd lost power for more than ___ hours, the food would have been required to be discarded and we may have to send folks home.

Stop?: Long socks are not available at Scoutstuff.org; so what will staff wear with shorts?

Start: the Kudu blower should be a small person with experience with small-mouthpiece musical instruments.

Start: Call OFS attention back to own 20 questions more often

Start: Review and standardize TG notebooks-by now, are very different in content. Starting from common point, taking best of current elements will help future TGs and ASM-TGs

Start: As new cool elements are considered, decide if needed, how impact QMs, and ask whether moving away from core message. I personally loved all the elements added, but it caused confusion, extra work and stress for the QMs and lead to miscommunication between staff. (Make sure all know of changes)

Continue: Having PLCs just outside door of dining halls rather than spending time on walking. Also helps when meals at same time. Will need extra tables.

Recruiting

Continue: Online registration with required fields

Start: Bennie recommends requiring photo permission forms in order to put OFS photos online. More info needed.

Stop?: recruiting a first-year cub leader with no other Scouting experience. Is there a point where Wood Badge is "too early"? in a Scouter's career?

Precourse communication

Start: medical forms remain a problem. Expired dates, people who did not think they were required—the message to OFS need to be clarified. Some claimed that they had turned in medical forms and were miffed when they had to produce another at check in.

Continue: all precourse communication (documents) was on the web.

Continue: use eMail (but not everyone uses it—so be careful). How to get around junk-mail and spam filters?

??timing: Some felt that precourse communication was way too early (months and months and so it was forgotten) and others that it was (literally) the day before leaving for camp (?!).

Start: Consider a monthly eMail?

Staff Preparation

Scheduling

Continue: Early and frequent emails and reminders

Continue: Early and frequent practice talks and walkthroughs

Continue: High expectations of staff

Continue: Making sure TGs know to make material their own rather than working from script.

Continue: High spirits and team effort

Continue: Excellent planning and implementation

Continue: Frequent songs and cheers. Was not sure about this at first, but worked great and could have used a couple more weekend 2. Have patrols lead more on weekend 2.

Continue: Mini-song book. Only include songs etc actually plan to sing/use. Use 2 staples.

Start: Add specific time between presentations for introductions, announcements and for travel, especially weekend 2.

Start: Invite professional staffer to contribute to course by staffing trading post to free up FAQMs for other duties

Start: A ticket creation workshop with all staffers to go over tough calls and how to guide OFS.

Stop: Continual, time wasting cross talk at staff meetings.

Stop: Multiple campfires from which ashes are gathered in distributed. Distribute only one time.

Stop: Using spirit of scouting lantern. Added little to program and was a pain to maintain.

SDM0

Continue: Identify staffers that will need more prep time than others. Plan on multiple rehearsals for these (but not for all).

Continue: *Every* talk will be seen in rehearsal (even the CD and other—supposedly “expert” speakers).

Continue: Handout of staff pictures. Go thru details of how to contact. Insist on frequent communication within the staff.

Continue: The Scribe (or designate) takes minutes. They are posted and eMailed.

Continue: Review calendars. Insist on planning for attending everything.

Handout: Syllabus, Admin Guide (for selected folks), WB Handbook.

Start: video/audio presentation hardware is needed for every SDM.

Start: It remained unclear which of the Powerpoint slides we’d be using. We have to hand out the Texas DVD for the course connection videos but it also has on it some slides to use in presentations.

Make CLEAR: to staff that the Texas powerpoints will NOT be used.

Start: It would be great to have ONLY one DVD handed out. It should have only one version of everything needed.

Continue: TGs and all staff must commit to a common rehearsal calendar at this meeting.

Start: Provide each staffer with written list of duties and responsibilities at SDM0.

SDM1

Continue: ask about whether the homework was done.

Continue: hand out schedules for rehearsals.

Start: In addition to identifying who will be doing the presentation, it is often unclear who is responsible for other pieces: Paper and other stuff.

SDM2

New staff member added. How to bring him up to date?

Stop: Do not show October Sky.

Continue: we ended up compressing the time schedule to be done by 5. BUT, this really did push off a LOT of the preparations to SDM3.

SDM3

Stop: Pushing staffers first presentation to this “last minute” meeting is awfully risky.

Overall

Start: When a session needs form is turned in (to FQM), it would be helpful to have specific acknowledgement. Something along the lines of “Got it. Understood.

Person: ___ will see that the items are there”

Continue: Invite previous staff members to help in training current staffers.

Continue: Invite previous staff members (especially CDs) to SDM3.

Continue: Invite staffers (especially CDs) to help prep the TGs.

Question: Who will get copies of the PL Handbook? Proposed answer: SPL, CD, ASM-P, ASM-S, ASM-TG, each PL. ?QM ?Scribe?

Weekend One

Stop: The printers and copier in Cub admin do not work well at all.

Unresolved: The computers available in Cub admin are so old that they can not accept USB drives. So there is no way for OFS to input news other than typing.

?Start: Consider asking OFS to bring laptops

Continue: Ask the service patrol Chaplain Aid to be responsible for the invocation on Gilwell Field. BUT: Chaplain Aid should still have one in his pocket as backup

?Start: Is there way to move Leveraging Diversity to the first weekend?

At least pair the speakers who are doing “Inclusiveness” with the “Leveraging” ... so they play off each other.

Start: Manning the “for sale” table is an issue. Establish open-for-business hours and assign staff member to man the station. Training will be needed.

Clarification: When moving the patrol tables around, keep them in patrol order. That is, do not shuffle them—rotate (this will help them learn the patrol order and Back to Gilwell).

Day Zero

Start?: Consider set up times in evenings of the same week leading up to the course weekend. This could help offset taking full days of vacation time all day previous to first or second weekend (e.g. all inside work such as set up of Gilwell Hall, crafts building etc.)

Start: Staff meeting agenda items needed for this evening.

Start: staff arrival and “to do” lists are (too?) loose. Too much standing around and “what do I do?”

Day One

Check in, Orientation:

Start: provide the checkin crew an alphabetized list (not by Dens)

Continue: handing out hats at orientation

Observation: Orientation ended 10 minutes early. Consider adding things to do.

Start: Instruct the TGs to NOT begin filling out the contact information for the patrol at the Orientation session. Wait until ___ because we may need to switch OFS around to a different den.

Opening Gilwell

Continue: embedding the ax into the log to officially begin the course.

Vision/Ticket

Start: OFS do not “get” that they (really) need to think about their vision. They still think of the ticket as just a list of 5-items to do.

PLC

?Stop: PLC in the round. It’s very hard to hear; nearly impossible for OFS to pay attention. Consider moving all chairs close in around the table. Consider drastically shortening the agenda (move simple announcements to the Troop Meeting). Consider having OFS stand.

Start: put a note in the PLC handouts that the staff (not the service patrol) will be responsible for putting out the fire for flag retirement ceremony (so we can keep the ashes and grommets).

Announce: no hats in pictures.

Modify: Change the Menus and Food description to make it clear that the following meals will be patrol members only (no staff): Day Five Dinner, Day Five cracker barrel, Day Six breakfast.

Modify the equipment lists for the second weekend to have a title about “Days Four-Six” (not day three)

Troop Meeting

Continue: Modify the schedule to allow each participant to stand and introduce themselves.

Campfire

Continue: Inviting the OA dance team to the Opening Campfire.

Staff Meeting agenda items:

- TGs turn in their L2L flip books; and remind that they need to turn in Comm tomorrow.
-

Day Two

Continue: We offered Catholic Mass at 5:30. This worked very well. But:

Start: Modify Patrol Leader rotation sheet so it’s clear that the PL for Day Two should be someone who will not attend this Mass.

Gilwell

Continue: Scoutmasters in “smokey” hats

Inclusiveness

Continue: GRPI addition (from Cousino).

Start?: We really need to better look at the Inclusiveness presentation...it has elements of diversity in it but can't go too far as it collides with Diversity...what's really the msg intended is very unclear... it's not clear by the national WB staff either...at least by the video.

Start?: Pair up the presenters for Inclusiveness and Leveraging Diversity. They need to fit together better.

Stages

Continue: the NYLT stages of team development/EDGE card

Continue: Pairing up the two presenters for “stages” and “EDGE” they need to fit together perfectly.

Troop Meeting

Start: add a simple calculator to the needs list for Front End Alignment

The TGs need answers to What Are You Afraid of.

Evening Games

?Question: In Win All You Can, does the person in charge have to be the PL, or could it be decided at the table?

Start: need bigger Win All You Can score sheets. The ones we used were not readable from the back of the room.

Start: in Win All You Can, still left undone in the debrief is to what to do when trust is violated. We need to teach forgiveness and a way back to wholeness—not express mistakes as terminal, hopeless end states.

?Question: in Win All You can, would it be useful to allow/encourage a change in patrol leadership

Unresolved problem: Wood Badge Game Show questions are *_way_* too picky. We need more clever questions—actually to be like Jeopardy the prompts should be answers and OFS should come up with question. Don't quibble about small wording issues when awarding credit.

Stop: using the buzzer for the Wood Badge Game Show. Use paddles that they put up in the air.

Start: what is the meaningful connection that we are trying to establish with the WB Game Show? If it's meant to be instructional, then OFS need to feel educated/enlightened at the end—not beat up. Almost all of the final scores were in the negative numbers.

Flag Retirement

Continue: Flag Retirement Ceremony

Continue: Keeping it short and uncomplicated. Focus on the flag and not on lots of showmanship.

Staff Meeting agenda items:

- The TGs will need to discuss and be clear on the ticket process—how to resolve questions and give guidance.
 - Remind TGs to begin backing off
 - TGs turn in flip books
-

Day Three

Start: Do an overview of what themes we've covered before they leave—an extension of the Course Overview talk.

Start: This is the first time they sing on Gilwell Field; do they know to step forward on their critter's verse?

Start: Consider creating a "Tear Down" Schedule/sequence on when and what could be torn down/taken during the third day. Dan Cousino would volunteer helping with some of our FQMs to create this (e.g. Day 3 afternoon, the crafts building tables, chairs, equipment could be taken and some things even taken to back of Gilwell hall, like chairs and tables) If there is an ASPL, by Day 3, can be absorbed into FQM assistance

PLC

Start: add Scribe announcement on how and when the mid-course news is to be submitted

Modify: personal gear list to include "folding camp chair"

Weekend Two

Stop making major changes the week prior to course (i.e. what gets rehearsed is what gets ran with...let's work it out at rehearsal). The week leading up to the course is already full of cramming work, scouting and other things we are responsible for to make room for the weekend...no time for absorbing big changes. Examples are when the roles were rehearsed during SDM3 and then we made major role changes after we rehearsed. We had role and script changes in the last week.

Start: Clarify: when staff arrive for a meal at a patrol site: the staff will provide none of their own individual eating gear.

Stop: no red shirtjacks until the rededication ceremony and later! (Staff forget this rule)

To Do for weekend two

Print list of OFS for assignment to ticket counselor

Who eats where?

US Flags on poles

Location for Rededication

Day Four

Start: Really communicate clearly to the PLs, TGs and the whole patrol what the role of the Venturer is. For example, at Gilwell assembly, some stood in with the

group, others were behind. Make sure patrols know this is their adviser and they stand together.

Stop: Is it really necessary to change clothes three times in one day?

Continue: We moved Gilwell Assembly to 9:30 (from 10:00) to allow 15 min more (for flags & etc.) and to have 15 min of “Course Director’s Overview” to remind OFS what we had done and what we were going to do.

Day Five

Worship

Stop: the Lord’s Prayer should not be in the worship service. The natural tendency is to make this way too Christian.

Patrol Projects

Start: Make clear that the total time for a project presentation must include interaction from the audience (example: questions and answers) and possible Scoutmaster comment/questions.

Conservation Project

Continue: the service project was definitely not “make work”!

Continue: the Service Patrol being responsible for organizing the Conservation Project

Self Assessments

Start: It is still not clear, exactly what a 360 assessment is. An example would be nice. Then never actually *do* this; active learning would be better.

Rededication

Continue: this worked very well. Include BP

Start: Red shirtsjacs (for the first time) would work well here.

Stop: use of all electricity. No music (too much trouble, cues easily missed). Flag illumination by fire is fine.

Start: Add time for OFS to interact with each other (evening of D5). In talking with several of them, the rededication was great, but they would have preferred time to meet and chat with each other—perhaps as a potluck. Personally, I loved the rededication, but from the OFS perspective, time together may have been more about the WB spirit for them.

Staff Meeting—Ticket Counselor

Continue: We printed up a big sheet of all OFS and asked staff to “pencil in” their preference for ticket counselor. This worked well—made the assignment go faster.

BUT: the normal tendency (and exhaustion) will tend to cut short the staff discussion of each of OFS. What works best if for teach TG to spend time introducing all the staff to their patrol members—The idea is to (really) get introduced to 48 of our “newest bestest friends”.

Day Six

Opening Gilwell

Start: Before day six, move the patrol (tin can) markers closer to the flags. Now that the staff always line up behind the flag, OFS need to be moved closer to the flag.

Continue: The World Scouting flag worked well.

Legacy

Continue: For the “It’s in every one of us” video, use our HOV Scouts (not unknown faces)

Continue: use the high-quality video clips (NOT the .mp3’s) from Mr Holland

Modify: This is not a 70 minute talk. 60 max.

Start: Use the audio that has words (not just music) for “It’s in every one of us— Youth”

Summary

Start: Use the audio that has just music (not words) for “It’s in every one of us— OFS”

Continue: the video we used was a full 10 minutes long (and was great)!

WB Handbook and PL Handbook

Notes

The potential downside of *The Handbook*:

- Most assume that *The Handbook* is perfect and so each individual presenter does not “own” their section.
- Since “everything is in *The Handbook*” the presenter for a topic needs a darn good answer to the question, “Why should I listen to you?”
- No one has to take notes. So, no one has to pay attention. Where’s the active-learning involvement of OFS?

There remains confusion about which flags are done when. The WB Handbook, PL Handbook, and Matrix must be consistent. Clear communication with FQM, and SPL is necessary. Note on flags: keep the chronological order.

Changes

Add: Chuck’s BP quotes to the Overview

Move “Guidelines for writing a Wood Badge ticket” to after “...Vision” –it’s in the wrong place

Start?: Do we need to add a “place” column for the Wood Badge Course Schedule in the WBH?

Inserts (after first printing)

More goal-setting questions

Leader recognition form

Stoves and fuel

LNT

Rocket assignment

TDC

Invite a friend to wood badge

Powderhorn

Post Course Process

Continue requesting from all staff members that they write up their thoughts about the course.

Continue having a meeting of the senior staff that is finishing the course and the steering committee for the upcoming course.