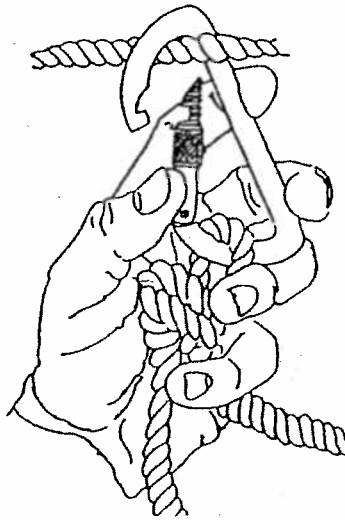


# PROJECT COPE



COPE stands for "Challenging Outdoor Physical Encounter." Project COPE is composed of group initiative games and low-course and high-course activities. Some of the activities involve a group challenge, while others test individual skills and agility. Participants climb, swing, balance, jump, rappel, and think of solutions to a variety of activities. Most do much more than they thought they could.

Project COPE is exciting outdoor activity that can be used to attract and hold older boys in Scouting. It offers a set of stimulating activities designed to meet the needs of today's young people who are seeking greater challenges to their physical and mental abilities. The underlying goals of a Project COPE course are consistent with the methods of Scouting. Group activities are ideal for emphasizing the patrol method and in developing teamwork and leadership skills. Individual activities promote personal growth.

Sufficient time and money must be allocated to establish a Project COPE course. It may be unwise for a council to undertake too much too soon. Most councils may wish to start with some initiative games, 6 to 12 low-course events, and one high-course event that may be a combination of several activities.

Safety of participants, leaders, and staff is imperative. It is not sufficient to simply be "concerned" about safety. That concern must be augmented by a director and staff members who are knowledgeable, personally skilled in the activities, effective teachers, and who are consistently vigilant to safety procedures and participant needs. Qualifications and characteristics of prospective staff need to be carefully screened. Some prospects will not qualify. A cadre of staff is important so that continuance of the program is not dependent on one or two people.

The standards that have been developed for Project COPE activities are stringent to ensure that the experience is both safe and successful.

## Goals of the Course

Before a Project COPE course is developed, the council should carefully analyze what it desires to accomplish. Seven major goals are commonly associated with these types of activities. The goals are to develop (1) leadership, (2) problem solving, (3) communication, (4) self-esteem, (5) trust, (6) decision-making, and (7) teamwork. Using the Activity/Goal Assessment Chart, council leadership should decide which activities to incorporate in its program based upon its desired objectives. The council may decide to incorporate all seven objectives with special emphasis given to one or two in particular. The experience should be finely tuned to accomplish the desired goals.

A Project COPE course provides an opportunity for every participant to achieve success as an individual and a member of a patrol or team. The activities are not designed to be competitive or to be a race against time. More important objectives (including building individual confidence and developing leadership and a sense of common cooperation among team members) are emphasized. The course is designed to build more self-confidence in a shorter length of time than anything most people have experienced.

No matter whether you're 14 or 40—the high course is a great age-leveler. A Project COPE course can create gut-level fear, something you not only feel, but swear you can taste and smell!

By facing such intense fear, by admitting honestly to yourself that you are really and truly afraid, you now have the opportunity to look deep inside yourself for another quality most people never realize they have in such glorious abundance—courage. We don't hear much about courage anymore, and yet this is one of man's most sterling characteristics—one that helps us to face directly the things that we are so terribly afraid of, to weigh the odds, to take the necessary precautions—and then, through a conscious act of will—to overcome that fear!