

Massawepie FAQ

Revised June 24, 2008

(Frequently Asked Questions)

What is Massawepie? – A 3,769 acre scout camp owned by BSA Otetiana Council in northern New York's Adirondack Mountains.

Where is It? - On NYS Route 3, 12 miles west of the Village of Tupper Lake. Its about a 5 hour drive from Rochester.

When are we going? - From Sunday July 27th, returning Saturday August 2nd. The 5th week.

What does a Scout do at Massawepie? - Lots of Fun and scout skill development. Many outdoor activities and outdoor related Merit Badges. There are Treks and adventure crews for older scouts. The days activities are announced at morning and evening Flags daily.

What does he need to bring? – Massawepie provides large 2 person green canvas tents, with 2 cots. You scout needs to bring personal gear listed on the "Personal Camp Needs Checklist". Within a single week, the Adirondacks can change from very warm, sunny and nice to cold and rainy. Pack for a wide range of weather.

If your scout is going on a Trek or Outpost, they may need to bring specialized gear as required for the Trek. For example if they are going on a Backpacking Outpost, they will need a Backpack. If they are going on a water outing they need to line their pack or duffle bag with a large garbage bag to keep clothes within from getting wet.

Your scout must pack his own camp gear, not Mom or Dad. Having the right gear means nothing if your scout does not know what he brought with him.

Where will he have his meals? – Our troop practices Patrol Cooking at Massawepie. Each patrol gets a camp supplied propane stove, patrol box (with pots, pans, cooking utensils, NO personal dishes – each scout brings his personal dishes and eating utensils). Massawepie prepares grub buckets for each troop patrol. The scouts goto the Mess hall; pick up their patrols grub buckets and cook according to a duty roster. Every scout gets to: Grub run; cook and clean up.

What is an Outpost? – Outpost is where the scouts leave camp for an over night. Depending on where they are going the Outpost can take a day & night or a night only. The Outposts can be on Massawepie property or in the surrounding 6 million acre Adirondack State Park. If the outpost is in the Adirondack State Park, a DEC permit is needed and maximum group size rules apply. If the outpost is on Massawepie property then the DEC group size rules do not apply.

This summer, the new scouts and 2nd years will be going on overnight canoe treks to Eagle Island (different nights). If there is enough interest we will investigate an alternate outpost to Mt Arab for the older scouts.

What is the BSA Swim test for? - In order to go out on Lake Massawepie in a canoe, row boat, sail boat, etc, you need to be a Blue Tag swimmer. This means that you have passed the BSA Swim test (First Class requirement 9b). Everyone (including Adults and BSA Life Guards) must take the BSA swim test each year. If you are not planning on doing any water activities, then you do not have to take the swim test and you will automatically receive a non-swimmer White tag.

The idea is to not only swim 100 yards but to do it with the right strokes, sharp turns, and demonstrate sufficient vigor and resting strokes / floating to show you have the minimum swimming ability to handle yourself in deep water.

I recommend that swim tests are taken before arriving at camp. The first day is very hectic and if you can complete your swim test before you go, then you do not have to wait in line at the waterfront. BSA Life guards cannot signoff on the swim test. Only someone with waterfront aquatic certifications can sign off on the test.

If your scout or you are taking a water Merit Badge or BSA Lifeguard at camp then you must take the swim test again in Lake Massawepie. The swim test in Massawepie will be in water over your head for the entire 100 yards and can be rougher & colder (instead of a warm, shallow, pool). The Massawepie aquatics staff needs to confirm that you can swim in deep lake water.

What if my scout does not take the swim test or does not pass it? - Since the troop is going on Massawepie canoe outings, all scouts and adults going on the outing have to be BSA swimmers. BSA swim rules apply not only at Massawepie but in regular troop water outings as well.

The BSA Guidelines for Safe Scouting say that a Non-swimmer or Beginner swimmer scout can ride with a BSA Lifeguard in a canoe or sail boat. The issue is that if the Life guard has to do Lifeguard duty, they will probably have to exit the canoe. Where does that leave the non-swimmer in the canoe? If the Lifeguard hesitates (because they have a non-swimmer on board), where does that leave the subject in possible distress? Therefore, I recommend that all scouts learn enough deep water swimming skills to pass the BSA Swim test so they can go on water outings, both at Massawepie and with the troop in general.

What if my scout fails the swim test at Massawepie? - If you scout fails the swim test they will be given another chance to take it (early Monday AM I believe). If your scout has signed up for the swimming MB and they fail the test, they will be put in instructional swim in the same time slot. After a day or two they will be given the chance to retake the test, if they pass they can move back to the Swimming MB and continue. Otherwise, they will stay in instructional swim.

What if my scout gets Home Sick? – The scout and adult leaders work one-on-one with a scout who is showing signs of homesickness. We will encourage the scout to address his feelings and to develop coping skills to work through it. Experience has shown that a scout who recognizes these emotions, handles it on a day-by-day basis and makes it through his first week away from home is rewarded with the satisfaction and confidence of having grown with that experience. We ask that parents support us in the event they receive phone calls at home.

How is First Aid handled? – Parents are always concerned about their son's safety. BSA requires adults to be trained in basic first aid & CPR skills, and beyond if they are taking scouts on an outpost. Camp Massawepie is equipped with an EMT and the Saranac Lake Hospital is nearby for emergencies.

Can my scout work on incomplete Blue cards from last year? – Yes. If your scout attended Massawepie last summer, or the year before, and did not complete a Merit Badge and still has their incomplete Blue Card (all cards were returned to the scouts, not their parents, after last summers camp) they can take the incomplete Blue Card back to Massawepie and finish it this summer. If they lost the incomplete Blue Card, they must start over. Scouts can work on these MB's in one of their free time periods, or during "Open Program".

It's important to read the MB prerequisites handed out with the MB schedule. If a MB has a prerequisite that your scout completed at home, but did not bring proof of completion, then the MB will not be completed at camp. Your scout will come home with an incomplete Blue Card. However, they can finish the MB at home with a Rochester area based MB counselor.

What about Merit Badge Books? – Each Merit Badge has a MB book that describes the requirements and material. It's suggested that your scout have a book or access to one to complete any MB homework they get at camp. Merit Badge books can be bought at the local council store or at Massawepie. Additionally, our troop has a small library of MB books for loan. While MB requirements change from time to time, the material stays mostly the same. Current MB and advancement information can be found on the BSA national scouting.org web site. Look under <http://scouting.org/BoyScouts/>

My scout decided at the last minute he wants to goto Massawepie, can he attend? - Yes, providing there is space, which is almost never a problem for scouts. Incoming Webelos are guaranteed a slot without a penalty late fee. Older scouts registering after May 15th pay a \$25.00 late fee.

The biggest risk is that the most popular Merit Badges fill up early and your scout will not be able to take MB they want. Merit Badges with a fixed number of "stations" fill up the earliest and have the least amount of expansion room. For

example: rifle and archery, filled up a few hours after registration opened in March. Then the aquatic Merit Badges, which have boat limits or NYS mandated youth camp class size limits. The most flexible classes are in Handicraft.

My scout decided at the last minute he does not want to attend Massawepie, can we get his fees back? - Massawepie fees are paid to Otetiana Council. The councils policy is no. But, it all depends. If a scout drops for a non-medical reason then he cannot get his money back. If he has a medical reason (which a Doctor agrees to and will sign off on), then I have seen a scout receive a partial refund. But, by in large Massawepie fees are paid in increments from December to May and are not refundable.

Is his slot transferable? Yes, as long as there is a scout available who has not yet paid his Massawepie fees. If a scout registered early and later decides that he does not want to attend camp we might be able to transfer his slot to someone else, if someone else is available. In this instance we would transfer the new scout into the older scouts slot and return the fees paid thus far by the original scout from the new scouts payments.

How important are Health forms? – VERY IMPORTANT. Massawepie is a NYS / BSA youth camp. There are many rules which apply to either Scouts or BSA rules for adults. You need a Class 1 & 2 form for youth and a class 3 form for adults 40 and over. The youth forms are updated yearly by the parent and signed off by a doctor every three years. Adult class 3 forms are good for one year only and must be resigned by a Doctor each year. Over the counter medicines (such as Aspirin) cannot be disbursed in any NYS youth camp without a Doctors signature. Other rules apply to prescription medicines. Your scouts medical forms & prescriptions need to be correct and up-to-date or you will have to track down your family doctor on Sunday and fax missing forms to camp.

If your scouts medical forms are incomplete or in error, your scout have to remain in camp and will not be allowed to participate in camp activities until the missing or incomplete information is fixed. This will probably be very difficult on a Sunday afternoon. If you cannot update the forms you will be required to drive to camp and pick him up. We will need a phone number were we can reach you on Sunday if there are any problems. Please call me with any questions.

My scout takes prescription medicines, how is this handled? - Prescription medicines are stored at the camp health office. There are 4 or 5 daily pickups when medicines are made available. Troop adults take the scouts to the Health Lodge and watch that the medicine is taken. Your scout must self medicate (they must read the bottle, select the proper amount and take their medicine). The camp staff cannot do this for your scout. You must make sure that your scout knows how to take their medicine.

Are Adult Massawepie fees reimbursed by the troop? - Some adults fees will be reimbursed but not everyones. The troop has a cap on reimbursement of adult fees. In the past, while sometimes controversial, it has been troop policy to reimburse all Massawepie adults. However, given the current budget constraints, the troop does not have enough money to reimburse everyone. In general, adults who are at camp and working in one of the troop adult camp leadership positions will have their fees reimbursed. Adults who are at camp for their scouts sake will not be reimbursed.

What about money? – Massawepie has a camp store with goodies, slushies, scout gear and MB required kits (Wood carving, Leatherworking, Space exploration, Basketry, etc). The troop car pool will stop for Lunch on the way up and back.

How do our scouts get to Massawepie? - You can drive your scout to Massawepie or he can ride in the troop organized car pool. We will leave early Sunday the 27th. Class A uniforms are worn on the trip up and back. Be at the Bushnell's Basin Park and Ride at 7:00 AM.

Gas reimbursement will be handled via the troop Gas reimbursement policy (your scout will be assessed a portion of the gas expense. Adults driving with cars that seat 3 or more scouts will be reimbursed). We will fill up the cars of adults staying at camp first, then ask for parent volunteers for the remaining scouts to ride with.

What if our family is on vacation the week before or after? – You can drop your scout off or pick him up at camp. Your scout can ride with the troop, if you are in Pittsford by 7:00 AM Sunday morning. Otherwise, you must drop him off at camp.

I'll drop my scout off at Camp, what do I do? – Arrive about noon and wait in the shade underneath the trees at the edge of the parking lot. The troop will arrive and we will all check in together, load all of our gear onto 2 cars with trailers and head for the camp site. The remaining cars stay in the parking lot.

Can I send my scout a “care package”? – Yes. But don't make it very large. Because of negative impacts to local wildlife and safety concerns, food cannot be kept in camp overnight. Any care packages have to be eaten that day (other scouts are always willing to help out) or stored in a locked car. Also, send care packages early. It takes several days for a package to arrive at camp. Packages arriving after Friday are not picked up.

Where can I find more information? - The troop website has the personal equipment checklist, MB information, maps, etc. The Otetiana council website has a section on Massawepie (<http://www.otetiana.org/massawepie/index.php>).

When do we leave? – Arrive at the Bushnell's Basin Park-n-Ride at 7:00 AM. We will transfer our gear into cars and trailers. Take your scout's prescription medicine and leave.

We need to leave early because at camp there is a lot to do. We get our campsite, quickly unpack, scouts and adults needing a swim test change into swim gear, we all go thru Medical and turn in our medical forms (everyone turns theirs in individually - Scouts and Adults). Pick up our swim buddy tags. Everyone heads to the waterfront and those who need swim tests take them. Return to camp, change and new scouts can have a tour of camp. By now it's dinner time and the grub runners go for their patrol's food.

Does my scout have to bring his scout uniform? Yes. Class' A's are required at afternoon flag ceremonies. We also will wear them on the drive to Massawepie and the trip back.

What about Lunch on the road? We will stop at a McDonalds about half way for lunch. Both going to camp and returning to Rochester. Make sure your scout has money for lunch in both directions.

I'm an adult attending Massawepie, what classes for Scouters are available? BSA classes are nearly always taught by adult volunteers. So it all depends on which week you attend Massawepie and if there are any trainers available that week to teach the class.

This year however, Massawepie is offering CPR for Professional Rescuer (\$45) and Responding to Emergencies w/CPR (\$65). These classes along with several others are needed for your troop to go on outing and be covered by BSA insurance. Also, BSA Lifeguard is always taught at Massawepie (early year sign-up is required).

As an adult attending Massawepie, where do I sleep? The Massawepie staff tries to supply enough sleeping cots in tents for all the scouts and adults. In the lesser attended weeks they try to supply enough tents so that each adult can have their own.

But, during the busiest weeks the scouts come first and adults 2nd. Our troop attends week five which is the most heavily attended week of the summer (while it's the most crowded the weather has also been very good too). In summer 2007 we only had 3 2-person tents for all of the adults attending. Every tent in camp was filled with scouts and a few adults. Most of our adults slept in personal tents, they brought.

Will there be an adult patrol at Massawepie for meals? While our troop frequently has adult patrols on campouts, we do not do this at Massawepie. Adults are assigned to a scout patrol and will eat with them. The scouts that grub run are supposed to get enough food to feed everyone in the patrol (though they might need some reminders, if the patrol happens to be very large).

While there should be plenty of food it can be bland. If you're an adult who likes Jalapeño peppers and Tabasco sauce, you should bring some “spices” to adjust your plate of food to your taste. The Massawepie supplied staple box normally only has salt and pepper.

Can adults cook our own meals? Adults always eat with patrols and the scouts do the cooking. However, if you want to organize a special adult only meal one evening that can be arranged. Just organize it, see the interest, figure out the cost and split it up amongst other adults attending that evening.

I want to send my scout mail, where do I send it to? Sent it to:

Scout name
Troop 1341
Massawepie Scout Camps
65 Massawepie Road
Tupper Lake, NY 12986

(We are Troop 1341 at Massawepie)

Mail can take 1-4 days to reach camp and should not be sent after Tuesday.

Remember: Care Packages with food are discouraged because the food may attract animals.

Can I call my scout? Its not practical. Call only if it is an emergency because phones are only at the camp office and not available elsewhere in the camp.

If it is a REAL EMERGENCY (ex. family emergency and you need scout to take your scout home), Call 518-359-2281 (Central Camp Office- depending on time of day, it may take many rings). Leave the following:

- 1) Caller's name;
- 2) Where the caller is from and their troop number;
- 3) Brief reason for the call;
- 4) Number to call back (Area code included).

Then wait by the phone. It will take 15 minutes to 2 hours (or more) for the call to be returned. Remember this is a scout camp and the scouts can will be scattered all over Camp Pioneer.

If a leader should make the return call, put that into the message.

Can my scout call home? Yes, from the camp office. There are two pay phones which take a calling card or collect calls only. No coins. The 2 phones shared by everyone at camp. Callers are asked to limit their calls to 3 minutes (if a lot of people are waiting to use the phone)

NO CELL PHONES for scouts. There is no reception anyway.

What if I have more questions? – We will have a Massawepie Scout / Parent information night at the regular meeting place Monday June 23rd, 7:00 PM. You can also call Cory Young (Senior Scout for Massawepie 2008 or Scouter Fred Peckham – 585-383-9164, Fred.Peckham@frontiernet.net).