

Pathfinder District 2026 Haunted Woods Leader's Guide

BSA Approximate Schedule		
6:00		Check In
6:00		Set Up Camp
8:30		All elected youth leaders meeting (and all AOL scouts)
8:30		Scoutmaster Meeting
10:30		Quiet in campsites
Morning		Troops on their own setting up scare stations
12:00		First walk through of scare stations (optional if troops need any guidance)
1:30		Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Stations Open
4:30		Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Stations Close
4:00		Final Walk Through
4:00		Trunk Or Treat Registration Begins
4:00		Cooks arrive and start cooking dinners
4:30		Dinner Starts
6:00		Dinner Ends
6:15		Trunk Or Treat
6:15		Staff At Haunted Woods Registration & Exit
6:30		Registration Opens (walk in)
		Haunted Woods Non Scary
8:45		Walk Through To Change To Scary (or when the line is finished)
9:00		Haunted Woods Scary
9:30		Haunted Woods Over
10:30		Quiet in campsites
Morning		
8:30		Morning Flags at the farm stand
8:30		Breakfast at the farm stand
9:30		Begin check out
10:00		All units out

This is the 5th year that we have been able to host the Pathfinder District Haunted Woods at Verhage Farms. Any scout / scouter who brings all previous year's patches with them to the Friday night leaders meeting will receive an amazing prize!

Preparation for Haunted Woods

- On Line Registration:
 - Please register early even if the troop doesn't have exact names yet. You can add more scouts to the registrations up to the point that registration closes
 - Registration will close at 11:59pm on Friday October 9. Late registrations after that cause numerous planning issues. The cost of the event is \$14 per person this year (costs less than some previous years); late registrations will cost \$35 per person
- Scouts plan and make their scare stations
 - Make sure this is scout-led
 - Make sure that the theme and content follow the Scout Oath and Scout Law
- Water for drinking and cleaning
 - Please bring water jugs with you to camp that are filled. We have limited to no access to potable water in camp.

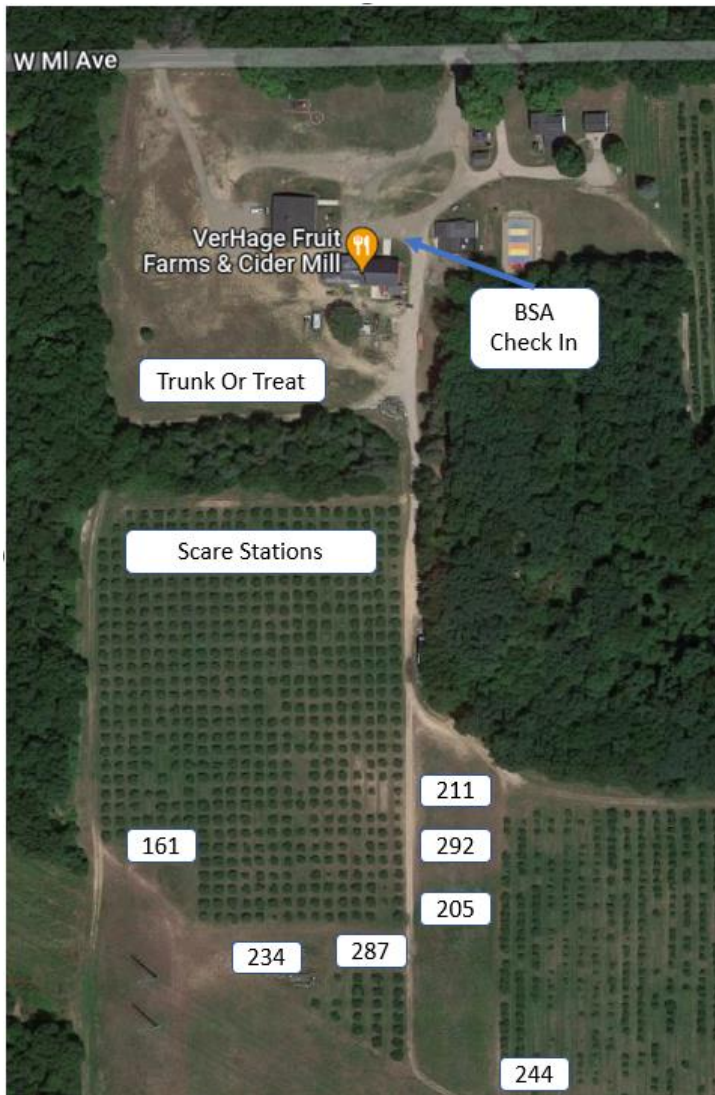
Arrival On Friday

- Health Forms (A&B): please have these in a binder/folder/envelope/etc that will be turned in to the health officer (Matt Carr) upon arrival and will be returned to the scoutmaster on Sunday morning at Breakfast.
- Candy for the Verhage Farms Trunk Or Treat: Please have these ready to turn in at registration.
- When the troop arrives (please try to arrive as one group), please have the following people come to sign in: Scoutmaster, a second adult, the SPL, and the ASPL
- Roster Check: please have your roster ready. The registration team will take a picture of the roster; they will also compare it to the registration data.
- Lanyards: will be supplied at registration for each participant (youth and adult). This is how we know someone is part of the Haunted Woods event; they also serve as your meal ticket for Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast.
 - If we see people in camp areas who do not have a lanyard on they shouldn't be there (as a matter of safety).
 - Note that Verhage Farms is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday so we will encounter people picking apples and enjoying the property who are not part of the event; there is plenty of orchard area open for them to enjoy.

Setting Up Camp

- Please make sure to set up campsites in your troop's area in the orchards in an orderly manner and in accordance with Youth Protection guidelines.
- Campsites will be finalized based on registration numbers. Campsites will be clearly marked with beginning and ending locations (driveway marker with the unit's number on it). The preliminary

campsite layout is shown below (don't feel badly about asking for a different location if it works better for your troop)



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- Campfires are awesome and tons of fun over the haunted woods weekend but we have a few tasks we need to follow:
 - No fires on the ground; we will have to bring and use a fire pit to enjoy a campfire at Haunted Woods
 - Please have a minimum of 2 water sources near the fire at all times (why a minimum of 2: let's suppose that a scout drops a rubber spider on Mr. Smith's lap who is terrified of spiders so he jumps up kicking over both a water jug and the fire pit..... Key reason we need to have 2 or more water sources around the fire)
 - Campfires must be attended at all times
 - We must have an adult in the vicinity of the campfire at all times for supervision

Friday Night Leader's (Youth and Adult) Meeting. Also, all AOL scouts staying the night with the troop need to attend the leaders meeting

- 8:30 at the picnic tables across from the cider barn.
- This is the 5th year that we have been able to host the Pathfinder District Haunted Woods at Verhage Farms. Any scout / scouter who brings all previous year's patches with them to the Friday night leaders meeting will receive an amazing prize!
- The leaders meeting notes are at the conclusion of this leaders guide
- Required attendance:
 - SPL & ASPL per unit
 - 2 Adult Leaders per unit
 - All Patrol Leaders, Assistant Patrol Leaders, and other elected youth leaders
 - All AOL scouts spending the night
- There will be prizes for all youth leaders in attendance!
- Please bring the names of the adults who will be responsible for:
 - Helping with the Haunted Woods dinner (2 adults per unit)
 - Lining up the troop trailers at 4:00 on Saturday

Emergencies In Camp:

- Please have a talk with all scouts about **"Preventable Accidents"**
- Matt Carr is this year's health officer and is a paramedic with Mattawan Fire. Matt is camping with Troop 161 and can assist as needed; he really doesn't want to use his paramedic skills on his days off.
- Please make sure all adult leaders carry a copy of the emergency information on their person (aka I put min in my wallet)

Pathfinder District
2024 Haunted Woods
For Emergencies



Call & Text to 911 with the following
location and description of the incident:

Verhage Farms
8619 W ML Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

The scout activities are located at the front
of the orchard
The campsites are located at the rear of the
orchard

After contacting 911 please contact event
leadership:

Joe Knapp: 269-370-9354
Matt Carr: 269-873-9030

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Saturday Morning & Daytime

- Focus on building scare stations
- Scare stations will be designated by troop with the driveway marker flags
- If you troop would like a specific set of rows in the orchard, please feel free to ask either before the event or at the Friday night leaders meeting.

Saturday Afternoon Cub Scout Activities

- Starting at 1:30
- Each troop will have cub scouts randomly assigned as their “guests”. This is simply a paperwork matter.
- Please make sure to make all of the cub scouts feel welcome and see what cool opportunities await them when they get a little older
- Each troop will need to provide some help (adults and scouts) starting at 1:30 for the stations that the Cub Scouts will be working through
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Saturday Dinner: starts at 4:30 and finished by 6:00

- Lanyards: no lanyard = no dinner
- Please don't have everyone line up at 4:30.....stagger the groups so the scouts get to have fun, not just stand in line
- This year to help stagger the line, we are going to have a contest at the Friday night leaders meeting to assign lineup times for dinner.

Verhage Farms Trunk Or Treat

- In exchange for getting to use the Verhage Farms property at no cost, they ask that each patrol provides on big bag of candy to support the trunk or treat activity. Please make sure that we make sure that Verhage Farms knows how much we appreciate having our haunted woods there by overwhelming them with candy and treats for their trunk or treat.
- At 4:00 we will line up all of the troop trailers along the ditch to start preparing hand out treats. This is a great way for all troops to advertise and helps Verhage set a location that ensures that trunk-or-treaters don't accidentally wind up in the ditch.
- Each troop will need to send 2 or more representatives (adults + scouts) to hand out treats by their troop trailers. These individuals will need to be at the trailers and ready no later than 5:45.
- The treats for the trunk or treat will be delivered by Megan from Verhage to each trailer (and other vehicles participating) just a few minutes before things will start.

- Please note that Verhage pools all of the treats together and then evenly distributes them to avoid any possible “issues” with the treats. This is why we need to turn in the treats that each troop brings at check in on Friday night.

The Actual Haunted Woods

- This is open to the public; use it as a recruitment event!
- Invite mom/dad/significant other/friends/cousins/etc..... These people will get to see the cool stuff scouts get to do in that weekend every month that they disappear.

Sunday Morning Donuts And Cider at 8:30 at the farm stand

- Once all troops are present and in line:
- We will have a quick flag ceremony to raise the flags for the day. This will be conducted by the Mackinac Island Contingent 623.
- The winners for the favorite scare stations will be announced and prizes awarded!
- Lanyards:
 - Lanyards: no lanyard = no breakfast
- Please remove the name tag from the lanyard as you enter the building
- Lanyards are collected at the exit door to be used again next year and also to provide an exact count to Verhage Farms for billing for donuts and cider
- Recognition: once all of the troops have arrived the awards for the best scare stations will be announced
- Return of health forms: the medical officer (Matt Carr) will have the forms in the same binder/folder/envelope/etc that they were turned in with. Please make sure each troop’s scoutmaster remembers to pick up their medical forms.
- Lining up for breakfast: please line up in an orderly fashion while staying off of the patio. Scouts who are on the patio and crowd the door will be sent to the back of the line.
- Getting donuts inside: please proceed in an orderly and polite manner getting 2 donuts (making quick decisions about what donuts you would like)
- Cider: some help from adults will be needed to pour cider for each scout. This will be done outside on the patio

Break Camp

- Leave the campsite better than you found it; remember we are guests at Verhage Farms
- Each troop’s campsite will need to be inspected by event staff before the troop is fully dismissed
- Be fully packed up and out of camp by 10:00

Notes For Check In:

Scoutmaster, a second adult, SPL, ASPL

Review Roster for subtractions and add on's (get copy of roster)

Collect \$ for add on's

Collect Health Forms

Collect Candy For Trunk Or Treat

Buddy Tags- (these will be handed to the SPL/ASPL) they are to be used as they see fit but the buddy system is required at all times.

Lanyards: this shows that you are a part of the event; they will be needed for dinner and Sunday Breakfast

Emergency Information: please have all adults have these with them during the event. In the event of a real emergency please call 911 right away then contact event leadership. If we can all BE PREPARED we won't need this information

Give Patches To Scoutmaster. If we need extra have the scoutmaster see me individually.

Restrooms: please keep the one in the orchard for late night or true emergencies. There are plenty of porta potties by the main barn/bakery/store. We don't want any of them getting disgusting.

There is a meeting at 8:30 for the SPL, ASPL, all elected youth leaders, all AOL scouts, (practicing the buddy system) and the Scoutmaster plus another adult. If a female troop is with the male troop please make sure leadership from both troops attends. Please meet at the picnic tables in the bowl area.

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Names of adults for cooking

Name of the adult responsible for moving the troop trailer on Saturday afternoon

Notes For SPL ASPL and Scoutmaster Meeting At 8:30

(Any youth leaders who bring these pages of the notes with them to the 8:30 leaders meeting will receive an extra prize)

Welcome to Haunted Woods 2026: quick show of hands who was at the last haunted woods?
Any previous Haunted Woods?

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Hand out candy to SPL and ASPL

The event leadership will be myself, Joe Knapp and Matt Carr our medical officer (I don't care what scouts call me Joe, Mr. Joe, Mr. Knapp, Johnny's dad, Elizabeth's dad, hey you, etc.....just make sure someone calls me on time for dinner)

- Mr. Carr, can you tell these scouts how much you get paid for helping lead this event?
- Scout events like this are run by volunteers please make sure to say and have the scouts say thank you if they see adults giving up their weekend working on the Haunted Woods
- Our medical officer is Mr. Carr, is backup for Saturday is Mrs. Fawcett; both are also volunteers giving up their weekend to help all of you; if there is an illness/injury please make sure to find one of them for help. Like most medics, Mr. Carr doesn't like to be a medic on his days off (Mrs. Fawcett really doesn't want to be a nurse on her day off) so make sure the scouts are careful to avoid accidents; especially preventable accidents. Let's Have A Quick discussion on what a preventable accident is.....
- We will both be highly visible so you can find us in the event you need to; Mr. Carr is with troop 161, Mrs. Fawcett is with 292, and I am with troop 287.
- If there is a medical issue that goes beyond "scout rendered first aid" we will need to send that person out for professional medical assistance. Please let Mr. Carr AND myself know
- Our tents have a marker with a reflective tag and our names in the event there is an emergency in the middle of the night
- Please make sure you let one or both of us know if there is some kind of an emergency especially anything involving 911 services.
- Our phone numbers are on the emergency cards that the adults have and need to carry with them through the weekend

Equally as important I want to hear from Scouts!

- Not just the SPL, but from the scouts who are out enjoying the event what are the things that they like about this event what are the things they dislike about this event
- and more importantly what are the things that Scouts would like to see at a future scout activities
- If I don't hear from you the Scouts, you're leaving it up to my imagination for what to do for future events; let me know what you want to see

- This is now the 5th year in a row that I have talked about wanting to get meaningful feedback and requests from scouts. So far over the past 5 years I have had exactly zero scouts come to have a serious conversation about what they really want to see in Pathfinder district events.....

We have a lot of people here for the weekend the final count was _____ and _____ troops so we need to make sure we work together as Scouts to make the weekend enjoyable for everyone.

- Remember that friendly competition is good but rivalries can become bad very quickly remember: a Scout is friendly.

Rules: follow the scout oath, follow the scout law

If there is a real emergency there will be a whistle blast that goes on for about a minute and or air horn blasts.

- if you hear that all scouts need to report to their campsites and wait for instructions once scouts are at their campsites please work with the scoutmaster and senior patrol leader to account for all people not just Scouts all people that are on your roster

We are guests at Verhage Farms let's make sure that we leave the place better than we found it so they know that we appreciate getting to use this location

- Pieces of farm equipment are not for playing on; make sure the scout stay off of them
- Pallets and apple crates are not for playing on; make sure scouts stay away from them
- If scouts decide to go to the Verhage candy store / farm stand / food trucks / etc.. make sure that we remember our manners (best behavior). If scouts decide to go into the Verhage candy store/farm stand / food trucks / etc..., the expectation is that they are wearing their class A uniforms. The staff at Verhage has been advised to send any scouts back to their campsite if they are not in class A uniforms at the shops.

For the scare stations

- I will do a walk-through at noon and a final walk-through at 4 o'clock with the SPL
- Please make sure everything is appropriate (follow the scout oath and scout law)
- Several troops will be giving out treats to the cub scout aged people who come through the haunted woods. This is a great opportunity for your troop to interact/recruit future scouts into your troops. If your troop is handing out give aways to the cub scout aged kids, please make sure to be friendly and make sure all the kids receive their item.
- There are a lot of apples on the ground. Please make sure they get moved farther into the orchard before you set up your scare stations; please run a police line for apples just like you would for cleanup for campsite trash. This includes the path between the orchard and the tree line. (we don't want anyone tripping on apples during the event).....leave it better than you found it. (think of the lion scout mom wearing crocks, pushing a double baby stroller, and is 8 months pregnant)
- Let's make sure to have some lighting in the walk areas between the scare stations, please

- When the Cub Scouts, their families, and members of the public come through the scare stations remember and communicate clearly to all scouts that if you see a light up glowing wand (show the wand) it means not to scare that person or if they start waving it at you it means you're being too scary.

Cub Scout Afternoon:

- We will have Cub Scouts coming through starting at 1:30
- Each troop will have cub scouts randomly assigned as their "guests"
- Please make sure to make all of the cub scouts feel welcome and see what cool opportunities await them when they get a little older
- Each troop will need to provide some help (adults and scouts) starting at 1:30 for the stations that the Cub Scouts will be working through (talk through assignments and areas)

Trunk Or Treat

- In exchange for getting to use the Verhage Farms property at no cost, they ask that each patrol provides on big bag of candy to support the trunk or treat activity. If your unit has not yet turned in their treats or would like to turn in more treats, please come find me; Please make sure that we make sure that Verhage Farms knows how much we appreciate having our haunted woods there by overwhelming them with candy and treats for their trunk or treat.
- At 4:00 we will line up all of the troop trailers along the ditch to start preparing hand out treats
- Each troop will need to send 2 or more representatives (adults + scouts) to hand out treats by their troop trailers. These individuals will need to be at the trailers and ready no later than 5:45.
- The treats for the trunk or treat will be delivered by Megan from Verhage to each trailer (and other vehicles participating) just a few minutes before things will start.
- Please note that Verhage pools all of the treats together and then evenly distributes them to avoid any possible "issues" with the treats. This is why we need to turn in the treats that each troop brings at check in on Friday night.

Porta potties: I know we had some issues with this in past years; if any items come up let me know and we can get with Kelly from Verhage.

- if they become not ok SPL and ASPL will be cleaning them (not someone designated). Let's have a quick discussion on respect with porta potties. Gentlemen; show of hands how many of you have rifle shooting merit badge? (hold up the target and the toilet seat). Show of hands, who went to their homecoming dance or prom? Gentlemen, imagine that you are coming out of the facility and there is a lady in line next; as it turns out a few years from now, that's the person you want to ask to homecoming or prom:

how is the conversation going to go when you ask her out and she reminds you that you peed on the seat at haunted woods!!!

- Let's try to save the ones that is in the apple orchard for when your scoutmaster has to make a quick pitstop at 3 o'clock in the morning please.

Dinner time: don't have everyone wind up at exactly the 4:30 start time or you will be very disappointed because it takes time to cook everything. Make sure the scouts bring their meal tickets aka their lanyards (no lanyard = no dinner); so far at past events, no one has listened to this instruction yet, if you want your food warm and you don't want to wait in line, work with the other scouts to find the best time for your troop/patrol to line up. We will need a couple of adults from each unit to help with cooking starting at 4:00 sharp.

Sunday breakfast will be donuts and a glass of cider at 8:30 at the farm stand (don't be late)

- each scout will need to go into the bakery to pick out their 2 donuts
- then cider will be poured outside of the bakery
- we will need one/two adults from each unit to be pouring the cider for their scouts (cider will be poured outside of the building)
- Make sure the scouts bring their meal tickets aka their lanyards (no lanyard = no breakfast) to turn back in so we can use them again next year

Check Out: I will go through your campsite to make sure it is better than you found it and that LNT has been practiced.

- We need to have everyone on the road no later than 10:00

Make sure to have fun!!