

**PIONEER DISTRICT  
2026 KLONDIKE CHALLENGE**

***SURVIVING ALASKA***

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2026**

**WATCHUNG RESERVATION - LOOP AREA**



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## Welcome & Event Overview

### Purpose of the Klondike Derby

The Klondike Derby is a cold-weather Scouting tradition designed to test Scouts’ preparedness, teamwork, leadership, and outdoor skills. This year’s theme, Surviving Alaska, incorporates the adventure and strategic gameplay of *Survivor* while focusing on essential Scout skills and winter survival proficiency.

### Event Concept

Patrols form “Tribes of the North,” traveling via sled from station to station across the winter course. At each station, patrols face survival-themed challenges to earn points. These points represent a sled’s ability to out-skill, out-think, and out-last the Alaskan wilderness.

### Event Goals

- Strengthen Scouting cold-weather and emergency readiness skills
- Emphasize teamwork, communication, leadership, and Scout spirit
- Provide a fun, immersive theme-based experience
- Encourage friendly competition grounded in Scout values
- Promote creative problem-solving using limited resources

### Registration

- Register for the Klondike using online registration.
- There will be no registration permitted after midnight Sunday, January 25, 2026.
- The registration fee is \$25 per Scout.
- No Scout or Patrol can register on the day of the event.

### Community Service

Scouts may choose one or more of the following community service opportunities:

- A standard grocery bag of non-perishable food items that will be donated to a local food bank
- Used blankets, sheets and/or towels that will be donated to a local animal shelter

## Silent Auction

A silent auction at a Klondike Derby is a fun event where participants bid on items, often camping gear, using gold nuggets earned during the competition, rather than money. Items are displayed with bid sheets, and participants walk around to view them and silently write their bids. The highest bid wins at the close of the bidding period.

### *How it works*

**Bidding currency:** Instead of money, participants use gold nuggets they've earned during the Klondike Derby to bid on items.

### *Bidding process:*

- Items are displayed on tables with a bid sheet next to each one.
- Bidders write their name or bidder number and their bid amount on the sheet.
- Participants can check the sheets periodically to see if they have been outbid and can place a higher bid.

**Winning:** At the designated closing time, the person or patrol with the highest bid on an item wins it.

### *Auction Items Can Include:*

- Free week of summer camp
- Discounted rates for summer camp
- Discount at Scout shop
- Scouting equipment
- Free Merit Badge Workshop waiver

This event is subject to cancellation due to weather or other safety conditions, as determined by **The Pioneer District 2026 Klondike Derby** event staff or the Union County Parks & Recreation Department. Event organizers will follow the BSA Guide to Safe Scouting and their judgment when considering safety issues.

The Pioneer District 2026 Klondike Derby team will make every reasonable effort to hold the event. However - if the event is canceled, PPC policy states "If the event is canceled, a full refund of the fees paid will be returned with no additional charges".

## Event Format & Flow

### Patrol Structure

- Patrols should be 4–8 Scouts each
- The sleds will be divided into two separate levels which will allow for more awards:
  - Scout Class: the majority of Scouts are age 11-14

o Senior Class: the majority of Scouts are age 15-17

- Each Patrol should have an identified Patrol Leader (**PL**)
- Adults observe but **do not coach** during station challenges unless safety requires it

## Event Timing

### *Staff*

7:00 – 7:30 am	Headquarters set up, ready for Check-in
7:00 – 8:30 am	Stations set up with Mayors briefing their staff
9:00 AM	All Towns open for competition
11:30 AM	All Towns will close down
11:45 AM – 1:00 PM	Lunchtime for all Event Staff
1:00 PM	Mayors prepare their Towns for afternoon schedules
1:15 PM	All Towns reopen for competition
3:00 PM	All Towns will close down
3:30 – 4:00 PM	All Mayors pack up their Towns & police their areas, then return radios, Town signs and any other District or Council supplies to Headquarters.

### *PARTICIPANTS*

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Registration occurs. Patrol Leaders must check in at Headquarters to present their legibly completed Patrol Roster, receive their competition packet, and present their Community Service donation. They will then join their Patrol to stage their lunch supplies at the Cooking Town and position their sled at the start line for Inspection. Inspections occur as sleds arrive. Please confirm how many sleds your troop will have and their Patrol names at check in.
8:30 AM	REGISTRATION CLOSES
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Inspections conclude
8:50 AM	Opening Ceremony and morning announcements.
9:00 AM	Klondike Derby Kick-Off
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM	Towns for morning schedules are open.
11:05 AM	Patrols must check in at their last morning Town no later than 11:05 AM.

11:40 AM	ALL PATROLS MUST BE AT THEIR ASSIGNED LOCATION AT THE COOKING TOWN
11:45 AM	All Patrols will begin their hot, nutritious lunch plans!
1:10 PM	All Patrols should have lunch supplies cleaned & packed up and be back on the start line with their sled.
1:15 PM	Afternoon Kick-Off
1:15 – 3:45 PM	Towns for afternoon schedules are open.
3:20 PM	Patrols must be checked in at their last afternoon Town no later than 3:20 PM.
3:45 PM	All Towns will close down
4:00 – 4:15 PM	All Patrols muster in front of Headquarters to learn results.

## Scoring System

Sled and Scout preparedness inspection review (Check In) will have 8 points to award

- 3 Points for having required equipment
- 2 points if all equipment is stowed securely on sled
- 3 Points for prepared patrol (all patrol members have appropriate clothing, a water bottle nearly full, totin' chit and fireman's chit cards)

Patrols earn **points** for station performance.

### Basic scoring per station:

- 3 points = Exceptional (top performance)
- 2 points = Skilled (completes effectively)
- 1 points = Attempted (partial or poor performance)
- 0 points = Incomplete/safety issues

### Bonus Opportunities

- Bonus points for strong teamwork or Scout spirit
- Bonus points for completing a challenge within a time target

## Klondike Rules

1. Judge's decision is final. All standard Scouting rules will always apply. Any Scout or Scouts caught breaking the rules will cause the entire patrol to be sent home. Each Scout and Leader will be expected to live up to the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan.
2. Sleds should be well-decorated with a patrol flag.
3. Sleds may have skis and/or wheels. Note: Weather conditions on the day of the event may prevent the use of either the skis or the wheels so be prepared with either option.
4. Each troop is encouraged to enter as many patrols as they wish. A patrol must consist of between (4) and (8) Scouts from a single troop.
5. Use of sleds is mandatory. The sled must be able to hold all patrol equipment and weigh at least 50 lbs. Spot checks may be made at various checkpoints to ensure that all items are with the patrol at any given time.
6. Cooking Town: Before the start of the Klondike, each Patrol will drop off their stove(s), fuel, cooking equipment, food and any other gear specifically for lunch at the Cooking Town. The Troop number and Patrol's name should be on all their equipment and put in the designated spot. Backpacking stoves can also be used for heating water and/or cooking. NO open fires or Charcoal can be used! A signal will be given for all to begin at the same time (11:45 am). Patrols must finish lunch activities by 1:10 pm and line up with their sleds for the afternoon start at 1:15 pm.
7. All sleds, equipment and the entire patrol must go to every Station to receive points, even if the sled or equipment become broken along the way. Bag it, tag it and bring it along.
8. Unless otherwise indicated at a Station, a maximum of twenty (20) minutes will be allowed for a Patrol to complete a Station's skill challenge once they start.
9. Patrols will be provided with an order of towns to find and complete. They must follow the order provided to them, and no patrol is allowed to move onto afternoon towns until after lunch and the afternoon kickoff.
10. No equipment, trash, or food should be left along the trail, in basic camp, or at the Stations.
11. No cell phones. All electronic communications are prohibited. This will cause the entire Patrol to be disqualified and sent home.
12. Penalties and point reductions may be assessed for failure to adhere to rules, including attempting to give/take advantage to and from other Patrols, horseplay, and any behavior observed to be un-Scout-link. Disqualification may occur for actions such as damaging Trail markers, live trees, property, or other Patrol's equipment.
13. To prevent any air of impropriety, Scout Leaders and Parents should be cautioned not to follow their Scout's sled throughout the course. No adults (over 18 years old) are allowed to assist any Patrol in any way. Adults not volunteering as part of staff are not allowed to travel with a Patrol on the Trail.
14. Patrols arriving at the Klondike late will start on the Klondike trail late and have less time to complete the Challenge. No points will be given for Stations that are not completed.
15. Scout uniforms are not required for the event. Each Scout must be suitably dressed for the cold weather. Sneakers are not allowed. Any Mayor or Official may remove a Scout at any time if the Scout is deemed to be inadequately clothed. All Scoutmasters are to help in this process.
16. In the event of inclement weather, the contact person identified by each troop that has registered will be notified as soon as possible if the event is cancelled or modified. Notifications may be made by

telephone or text. If such a decision must be made on February 7<sup>th</sup>, the leader listed on the registration form will be contacted no later than 6:00 am.

17. Troops must check in before setting up their base camp, so as not to set up in an area that is designed as a Station. Most of the picnic areas in the Loop Area will be designed as Stations and other claims will be available for Troop. Troops should bring their water and any wood they need for their elevated fires. No ground fires will be permitted. All fires must be above ground.
18. Patrols with the top 3 number of points will be recognized with awards in each class. In case of a tie, multiple awards will be provided for the tied position. For example, if two sleds tie for first, two first place awards will be provided with no second-place award, and one third place award. If two sleds tie for second place, both will receive a second-place award and there will be no third place. If two sleds are tied for third place, both will receive an award in addition to first and second place.
19. No vehicles will be allowed to park on the main road in front of the Headquarters. All vehicles should park in the designated parking lot behind the Headquarters.
20. As on any outing, the Scoutmaster or responsible person in charge should have in their possession Medical Records and Permission Slips. The Roster must list each Scout and a phone number for their Parent/Guardian. The Klondike Committee considered this event to be a strenuous outing with many fun and rewarding activities. Please help us be committed to your part by following our rules in making the 2026 Pioneer District Klondike Derby a success.
21. If two Patrols have the same name, a letter or number designation may be added to avoid confusion.
22. All Patrols must turn in their score sheets directly after they are done with the course. This not only allows us to promptly score the event, but it also allows us to confirm that we have no temporarily, geographically, confused patrols.
23. Traditional dog sled construction is encouraged! Wheels on sleds are OK if conditions are inappropriate to use traditional runners. If you build your sled(s) with removable wheels, you'll be ready for anything! Start early and encourage your Scouts to participate in building, improving, or refurbishing their sled(s)!
24. Per Scouting America rules, we must ascertain that all adults (including 18+ Venturers) attending the Klondike are Registered and have completed Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT) via their my.Scouting account. Accordingly, each unit will be required to submit a roster approximately 1 week before the event including BSA Membership Numbers for each adult so that we can confirm their status.

## INSPECTION

Appropriately equipped Scouts with a properly outfitted sled are the keys to every Patrol successfully competing in the Pioneer District Klondike Derby!

Each Patrol will receive a separate score for BEING PREPARED. You will receive points for having all minimum required equipment and for going beyond in your preparation for the weather and events. This is a scored vent, but it is also a matter of comfort and safety. Judges have the authority and moral duty to disqualify a scout or whole sled for not being properly equipped for the event and the weather.



Judges will award points for having all the gear on the sled checklist. Points will be taken away for missing some items but if a judge feels that too many are missing the judge will disqualify the sled.

Judges will also inspect the individual scouts to ensure that they are wearing clothing that is appropriate for the temperature. Points for wearing layers and having wind-blocking clothing will be awarded. Again, if a judge feels that a scout is not dressed adequately the judge will disqualify the scout.

If a judge disqualifies a scout and now the sled has fewer than the minimum number of scouts, then the sled is also disqualified.

A sled that does not have food for lunch is immediately disqualified.

Each Patrol/sled will be inspected before the Start.

## Sled Requirements

Each Klondike sled should be equipped with standard gear. Your Patrol Name or Troop number must be on everything. Minimum recommended equipment:

- Patrol Insignia – Flag or Decoration on Sled
- Individual, signed cards OR a print-out from their Troop, showing that all Scouts have earned Firem'n Chit and Tot'n Chip
- Ropes for pioneering, knot tying, and shelter construction challenges, minimum 6'
- 4 Wood poles for pioneering challenge, 5'-6' long
- Food to cook a hot meal for the whole sled team
- A snack for the whole sled team
- Scout handbook
- 1 Tarp
- 2 blankets
- Patrol First aid kit including triangle bandages and splints
- Compass and know your paces
- Poles & lashings
- Drinking Water
- Pencil and paper
- 1 bow saw with cover
- 1 small axe or hatchet
- 1 pocketknife

- 1 flashlight
- 1 American flag
- Method of securing patrol gear onto the sled and to hold the items in. Scouts should be able to turn the sled on its side without anything falling off.
- At least one plastic trash bag that could be used to collect garbage found on the trail
- Fire starting kit - Any method to light the fire such as flint/steel, hot spark, matches, etc. Firewood, tinder and kindling, water, and all materials must be natural. No man-made materials (untreated and natural) such as dryer lint or Vaseline. Blanket or other windbreaks are optional. Bucket for dousing fire.
- Propane stove, single burner backpacking stove and patrol cooking gear.
- A team cheer – many events give gold for scout spirit based on whether you gave your cheer when you arrived.
- Sled weight requirement and check in

### Scout Required Items

- Rain gear (can be stowed in the sled).
- Hats, gloves/mittens, winter coat, wool socks and boots.
- Additional dry clothing in a waterproof bag that can be stored on the sled.
- Cups (non-disposable) or water bottles for each Scout, for drinking hot & cold drinks.
- One daypack/Scout. The Adequate layering of clothing e.g., base layer, mid-layer, outer layer, and shell layer if required.
- **Firem’M Chit** and **Tot’n Chip cards** signed by the Scoutmaster are mandatory.
- Health Form A & B
- Water bottle
- Mess Kit

### Scout Suggested Items

- Slip-on Shoe Spikes, Crampons or Ice Cleats for walking in Snow or Ice.
- Toe warmers and or Hand Warmers.
- Waterproof Snow Pants.

## KLONDIKE STATIONS

## 1. Arctic Fire Challenge – “Flame Against the Ice”

**Skills:** Cold-weather fire building, fuel selection, teamwork

**Scenario:** Your tribe has been stranded in the Alaskan tundra and needs warmth fast.

**Challenge:** Patrols must build and maintain a sustainable fire using provided materials and natural tinder they can gather. The twist: the fire must melt through a suspended ice block or burn a string to release a “Survival Golden Nugget.”

**Materials:** Fire pans, ice block/string setup, wood, tinder, water buckets

## 2. Frozen Shelter Station – “Build to Survive”

**Skills:** Emergency shelter building, insulation awareness

**Scenario:** A sudden storm is rolling in from the mountains.

**Challenge:** Using tarps, poles, lashings, and natural materials, patrols build a quick-deploy emergency shelter. Judges score based on stability, insulation, wind resistance, and teamwork.

**Materials:** Tarps, poles, stakes, lashings

## 3. Navigation Gauntlet – “Find Your Way or Freeze”

**Skills:** Map and compass, pace counting, route planning

**Scenario:** The tribe must navigate a series of waypoints to locate a cache of resources.

**Challenge:** Patrols receive coordinates and must navigate a short course. At each correct waypoint, they retrieve a colored tag. Collect all tags to earn points.

**Materials:** Course map, coordinate cards, waypoint tags

## 4. Ice Rescue & First Aid – “Hypothermia Havoc”

**Skills:** First aid, rescue procedures, communication under pressure

**Scenario:** A patrol member “fell through the ice.”

**Challenge:** Scouts demonstrate cold-water rescue procedures using ropes and reach-throw techniques. Then they treat a mock victim for hypothermia and shock.

**Scoring:** Safety technique, correct treatment, and teamwork.

**Materials:** Rope, throw bags, rescue dummy, first aid kit

## 5. Alaskan Sled Mechanics – “Fix It or Fail”

**Skills:** Knots, lashings, field repairs, problem-solving

**Scenario:** Your sled has broken while crossing unforgiving terrain.

**Challenge:** Using a toolbox of limited supplies, patrols must repair a damaged piece of sled equipment (broken runner, lashing, rope failure, etc.).

**Materials:** Sled parts, rope, repair materials, random “damage cards”

## 6. Mystery Station – “Crack the Frozen Code”

**Skills:** Logic, observation, teamwork

**Scenario:** It’s a mystery

**Challenge:** It’s a mystery

**Materials:** It’s a mystery

## 7. Hatchet Throwing – “Precision in the North”

**Skills:** Proper hatchet handling and safety, correct throwing stance and motion, target accuracy, focus and self-control, following safety rules under supervision

**Scenario:** Your tribe must demonstrate tool mastery to prepare for life in the Alaskan wilderness.

Accuracy means efficiency – and safety means survival.

**Challenge:** Each patrol selects one primary thrower (others may rotate if time allows). Each Scout gets 3 throws. Patrols may choose to rotate throwers for teamwork points.

**Materials:** 2-3 Scout-approved hatchets (sharpened and inspected), wooden targets, safety cones/rope barriers, eye protection, whistle

## 8. Wilderness Cooking Challenge – “Bushcraft Bites”

**Skills:** Outdoor cooking, fire management, resourcefulness

**Scenario:** Your tribe must prepare a survival meal using limited ingredients.

**Challenge:** Prepare a simple cold-weather recipe (e.g., Bannock, trail soup, or foil-pack meal). You’ll receive points for having a meal that is hot, balanced, appetizing, and filling and for working together to prepare it.

Sleds from the same Unit may borrow cooking equipment from each other but should not work together on their meals.

Scouts must keep their food on their sled for the whole event, but may leave other cooking items such as pots, pans, stoves, propane, patrol box at the Cooking Station.

Scouts do not need to prepare a whole meal for the judges, but the judges may take a small taste to see if it is edible.

Judges will keep an eye on the process and look for signs that everyone in the sled is participating in the preparation of the meal. When it’s time to eat the judges will rate the meal for being hot and healthy, for being appetizing, and for having sufficient food to fill up everyone in the sled. Points will be awarded for everyone in the sled work on preparing the meal.

**Materials:** Ingredients, fire area, cooking gear

## 9. American Sign Language – “Silent Signals of Survival”

**Skills:** Non-verbal communication, Basic ASL recognition and use, observation and memory, teamwork and leadership, inclusion and awareness of diverse communication methods

**Scenario:** A blizzard is approaching, and your patrol must communicate silently across the tundra. Voices are useless in the wind – only clear signals will keep your team together.

**Challenge:** The station consists of three short rounds, each building on the previous one. Patrols must complete all rounds to earn full credit.

**Materials:** ASL reference cards or posters (alphabet + key words), scenario cards, timer, whiteboard or flip chart

### Safety Guidelines

All leaders should ensure:

- Scouts always wear appropriate winter clothing
- Hydration is monitored despite cold temperatures
- Buddy system enforced
- Fires are supervised and extinguished properly
- Pulling sleds done with caution to prevent strain injuries
- First aid / warming station is staffed and clearly marked

Winter emergencies can escalate quickly—leaders must prioritize safety over competition.

### Youth Leadership Roles

#### Patrol Leader

- Speaks for the patrol at stations
- Coordinates teamwork and assigns roles

#### Navigator

- Handles map and compass work

#### Fire Chief

- Leads fire-related tasks

#### Medic

- Leads first aid portions

#### Quartermaster

- Manage gear and sled repairs

These roles help emphasize Scouting's youth-led model.

## Awards & Recognition

- All registered Scouts and Adults volunteers will receive a Klondike Derby Patch.
- Each Patrol will receive an Award Ribbon for their flag poles.
- The first 3 highest scores in each class are presented with specific plaques.
- **Ultimate Alaska Survivors** – Most Points (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place)
- **Best Scout Spirit Tribe** – Positivity, courtesy, teamwork
- **Master Survivalists** – High scores on shelter, fire, and rescue stations
- **Puzzle Masters** – Highest logic station score

## Staff & Volunteer Roles

### Station Chiefs

- Run their assigned station
- Score patrols consistently
- Ensure safety and fairness

### Trail Guides

- Help patrols navigate route
- Provide time checks and monitor behavior

### First Aid/Warming Station Team

- Handle injuries, cold exposure, hydration, fatigue

### Event HQ

- Oversees scoring and logistics
- Handles communication and emergency decisions

## DISCLOSURES:

## PHOTO RELEASE

- I understand that by attending this program, sponsored by the Patriots' Path Council, Boy Scouts of America, I consent to the use of photographs, film, videotapes, electronic representations, and/or sound recordings made of me during that time by the Boy Scouts of America, at their discretion, and I hereby release the Boy Scouts of America from any liability from such use and publication.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

- In all programs offered by the Patriots' Path Council, BSA, a great deal of planning and purchasing takes place well in advance. These plans include but are not limited to, staff, food, program materials, patches and awards, rental, and purchase of equipment.
- When an individual or group makes a reservation for an activity or program, these items are included in the ordering of materials and staffing for that event.

## REFUNDS

- Individuals or groups that cancel a program reservation 30 days before the date of the event will receive a refund of fees paid, less than a 15% administrative charge. No refunds will be made after the 30-day cancellation deadline unless there is a medical or another emergency.
- **ALL CANCELLATIONS MUST BE MADE IN WRITING AND SENT TO THE PATRIOTS' PATH COUNCIL, Attention: High Adventure Programs, 1 Saddle Road, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927 or emailed to [358refunds@scouting.org](mailto:358refunds@scouting.org).**

# "SURVIVING ALASKA"

## Patrol Roster

Submit at check-in

Patrol Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Troop #: \_\_\_\_\_

Sled Patrol Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Age	Rank	Leadership	
1.			Patrol Leader	
2.			Asst. Patrol Leader	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

All information above is correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sled Patrol Leader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Unit Leader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Watchung Reservation** is the largest nature reserve in Union County, located in Mountainside, New Jersey. There are many routes to it, with approach roads off NJ Route 22 to the south, and nearby exits off US Route 78 to the north. Regardless of where you access the park, you want to find W R Tracy Drive. Look for the many road Park signs, and follow those that say, "Loop Playground". Pioneer District will have signs and personnel directing you once you arrive. Please be respectful of Staff, follow their instructions, and be mindful of Scouts.

Sled drop-off and primary parking will be behind the building acting as HQ (where the bathrooms are). If your Troop intends to set up a "base camp" for the day, please do so at the other parking areas around the Loop; and please do not encroach on any of the designated Town areas.

**And ALWAYS remember this is a public Park that is also enjoyed by non-Scouters, even during our events.**

