

# 55<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY POLAR BEAR

Sponsored by:



December 2023

To: All Bucktail Council Scoutmasters

From: 55th Annual Polar Bear Committee

Planning is nearly finished for the 55th Annual Polar Bear event. The event will be held at Camp Mountain Run on **January 19-21, 2024**, regardless of weather conditions.

## **PRE-REGISTRATION:**

To pre-register for the Polar Bear event, complete the online registration at <https://scoutingevent.com/509-PolarBear2024> and return your payment to the Bucktail Council Service Center. The Polar Bear fee is **\$15.00 per scout and leader** if pre-registered by close of business on January 14, 2024 (registration fees must be turned in to the Council Service Center by this date to be eligible for the discount). Registration after January 14, 2024 up to the day of the event will be **\$20.00 per Scout or leader**.

## **CAMPING OUT:**

All troops are encouraged to camp out during Polar Bear. Units that tent camp outdoors on Friday night will earn 10 bonus points toward their overall team score only if the entire unit tent camps Friday evening. Weather depending.

Tent camping is using your unit's camping tents, personal tents, hammocks, or improvised shelter. No electricity or generators. Setup in one of the existing campsites where fire rings are present is recommended.

Every unit must check in at Hallstrom Lodge prior to occupying any campsite or camping spot. The Camp Ranger has final say as to whether your unit can occupy the site you've chosen. Contact the Camp Ranger with any questions (814) 637-5530. No camping will be permitted near any of the buildings or under the pavilions (Exceptions may apply for units opting to hammock camp). Please do not move platforms in the campsites. They have been leveled or stacked and are not to be moved.

## **BE PREPARED:**

We encourage you to start planning now! If you feel your troop is not ready to camp in winter weather, we strongly encourage you to at least attend the Polar Bear event on Saturday so that your troop can compete in the events. A limited number of cabins are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact the Council Service Center to reserve. You can also go to <https://campreservation.com/509/Camps/604> to reserve cabins.

The Health Office in Gilmore Lodge, Stackpole Dining Hall, and Walker Center will be open as warming stations during the event for anyone that is not able to handle the cold and conditions. Fires will not be tended throughout the night, rather the buildings are available to get out of the elements if necessary.

## **SITE SET-UP BY TROOPS:**

Some units set up camp the day of the event and some like to set up or reserve their site the week before. Polar Bear volunteers will be available to help you pick your site on Saturday, January 13 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. No units can occupy a campsite any earlier than 1:00 pm on Friday, January 19, 2024.

## **CAMPSITE DEPOSIT**

The committee has decided to waive the campsite deposit requirement for this event. We feel Scouts know how to clean their campsites before departing and will do it. Before departing, a Polar Bear staff member needs to inspect the campsite. Please remove any hay to the adjacent woods prior to your campsite inspection. If everything is in order, your unit will be eligible for event patches.

## **CAMPFIRES:**

In an effort to comply with the Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace principles of Scouting, campfires are restricted to existing fire rings in designated campsites. Those units setting up camp in non-designated sites are required to use a burn-barrel or other device that will not leave a permanent burn scar on the ground. Firewood is available for a donation. Bucktail Council and Camp Mountain Run will follow best practices in not introducing invasive species. **NO CHAINSAWS are permitted.**

## **VEHICLES IN CAMP:**

No vehicles are permitted off road (i.e. into campsites) without permission from the Camp Ranger or Polar Bear Governor. This will be strictly enforced for all. No vehicles or trailers are to be backed up to buildings or blocking access. Vehicles will be permitted into camp long enough to unload, but then must be parked in

one of the parking lots for the weekend. Nolan Road is a public road that must be kept open. Plan accordingly. Violation of these or any other rules will forfeit your entire troop's Polar Bear patches and awards. Parking will be permitted in designated lots, the area by the lake, and if needed the activity field. Please do not block any gates when parking.

### **CHECK-IN:**

This year's event will be kicking off at 8:00 am on Saturday. Check-in will be on Friday night from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm and Saturday morning from 7:00 am to 8:00 am in Hallstrom Lodge. Please have your Patrol Names ready at check-in. Pre-registration is required, but last-minute additions can be made at \$20 per person (see the Pre-Registration section for more details). Friday arrival is encouraged. Do not show up at 8:00 am on Saturday and expect to register on time. Troops which register late will miss stations that have already occurred and will not be able to make up those stations. **Even if you are pre-registered, you must report to Hallstrom Lodge to verify your Unit's presence at Polar Bear.**

At registration, you must provide the following information:

1. Pay any unpaid fees
2. Total number of Scouts and adults
3. Patrol names and roster for Polar Bear patrols
4. Vehicle license plate numbers.

**Only Scoutmasters and Senior Patrol Leaders are needed at registration. Please do not bring all Scouts into Hallstrom Lodge during registration.**

### **THE POLAR BEAR EVENT:**

There will be two classifications of competition. Novice (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class) and Experienced (First Class, Star, Life, Eagle). Please indicate rank while completing the online registration. Indicate the rank of each Scout as of January 2, 2024. Any mixed rank patrol (Scout to Eagle) will register and compete in the Experienced classification.

All Scouts will be running the same Polar Bear Course regardless of their rank. **Patrols will be comprised of 4-8 Scouts;** if your unit can't form patrols within those limits, please contact another unit beforehand to complete the patrol numbers. This means if your unit is attending with 9 Scouts, they should be divided into two patrols. *Patrols consisting of more than 8 Scouts will be asked to divide. It is recommended that at least a quarter of your patrol has Scouts that are Scout through First Class. (Remember that this is a learning experience, in addition to being a competition.)*

The course will consist of several stations with patrols being scored at each station. There will be a maximum of 25 points per station. The top three patrols will be awarded prizes.

**Special note for the fire building event:** All fuel must be obtained in the area of this event. The sleds are NOT permitted to bring any materials with them besides a standard match. HINT: Give your Scouts pointers in looking beyond the immediate area to obtain fine, dry materials.

## **LUNCH**

The lunch break will last 1 hour beginning at 11:35 am.

Scouts will again cook at one of the stations. Each patrol will cook lunch at the station they were prior to lunch. The basic food and ingredients will be supplied by Bucktail Council. Each patrol will receive a box with the same ingredients. You can bring other ingredients to enhance your basic ingredients and get creative. There will be enough to feed two judges and two Scouts. Scouts will cook the lunch in front of the judges. The judges will monitor the Scouts as they prepare lunch. There will be no points awarded for lunch.

From the box, at a minimum, each patrol must cook two hot sandwiches and a bowl of soup. These will be served to the judge. Each patrol will need to use a backpacking stove or two burner camp stove so remember to pack cooking supplies on the sled. Due to damage in the grassy areas in previous years during this station, open fires will not be permitted for the Cooking on the Trail station this year.

## **DUTCH OVEN COOKOFF**

Show us your Dutch Oven skills. All are encouraged to enter a dish. This will not count towards your troop/patrol scores. Please have your entry to Hallstrom Lodge before 1:30 pm. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded at the awards ceremony.

## **EQUIPMENT LIST CAN BE FOUND ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS PACKET.**

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Patches have been purchased for all Scouts and Scouters who attend the event (including overnigher strips for those who camp out). Only those troops who pre-register will receive their patches at the event if they arrive in time.
- Emergencies should be reported to the Health Office in Gilmore Lodge. A Health Officer will be on duty at the First Aid Station at Gilmore Lodge or contact the

registration office in Hallstrom Lodge in case of any injuries. **REPORT ALL INJURIES!**

- The Awards ceremony will start at 5:00 pm in the Stackpole Dining Hall. Units must be present at the awards ceremony to receive any prizes. If your unit is not present at the award presentation, your point standings will remain unchanged, but the next unit in the standings may receive the award.
- No meals will be furnished as part of the fee (with the exception of the judged lunch)! All units are expected to plan and cook hot nourishing meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).

### **MAYOR'S MEETING**

**There will be a short Mayors' meeting on Saturday morning at 7:30 am in Hallstrom Lodge.**

The event will start with assembly at 8:00 am at the Stackpole Dining Hall parade field. The patrols will be on the trail for the first event shortly thereafter; so those troops staying in camp will have to prepare an early or quick breakfast.

A Scout's Own vesper service will be held on Saturday evening at 4:15 pm (prior to awards) at the Dining Hall. Please encourage all Scouts and Scouters to attend a service based on their beliefs. We will need Scouts to help deliver the service. Time and locations for local services off Camp property will be provided at the time of check-in. A SCOUT IS REVERENT!!!

The Polar Bear Committee can't wait for this 55th Annual Polar Bear to begin. We are hopeful that all of our troops will participate. However, your safety and health is of primary concern. This is the only information packet that units will receive.

Thank you again for your dedication to Scouting and the Bucktail Council. We look forward to seeing you at Camp Mountain Run for Polar Bear. If you have any questions, please contact Sheri Price, Polar Bear Advisor, by email [sheri.price@scouting.org](mailto:sheri.price@scouting.org).

Yours In Scouting,

55th Annual Polar Bear Committee  
Equipment List on the next page.

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## EQUIPMENT

Patrols should use a Polar Bear Sled to transport the following items which will be used on the trail.

- Five, 15 foot pieces of rope to be used for lashing
- Pencil and paper
- Scouts BSA Handbook
- Hand ax with sheath
- Six, 5-6 foot Scout staves or similar
- First aid kit
- Sweatshirts or blanket for stretcher
- Patrol flag
- Bow saw with sheath
- Backpacking stove or other portable cooking device with necessary fuel
- Pot for cooking soup
- Pan or other device for making hot sandwiches
- Eating utensils for serving the judge their sandwich and soup
- Lunch for your patrol. This can be prepared separately from the judges' lunch at your campsite
- One gallon of water

Each patrol should bring the following items to be used at the Wilderness Survival Station. All of these items should be able to fit into a small parcel like a drawstring bag. One point will be awarded for each item.

- Flashlight in working condition
- Space/emergency blanket
- Poncho
- 9v Battery
- Steel Wool
- Birch Bark
- Matches
- Candle
- Pocket Knife
- One sheet of aluminum foil
- Lightweight rope
- Tape
- Small first aid kit
- Drinking container
- Compass
- Tarp