

TRACKING SIGNS

Tracking is one of the traditional Scouting activities and involves Cub Scouts leaving signs or symbols made from natural material on a trail for others to follow.

Tracking signs, which are usually made from sticks, leaves or stones, are used to lay the trail. Sometimes chalk may be used to draw the signs as well. Only those who know the tracking signs will be able to follow the trail.

There are various different tracking signs that one can use in order to lay a trail.



Water ahead



This Way



This Way



Right Turn



Obstacle ahead



Obstacle ahead



No Entry



Message
Hidden 4 paces
ahead



4 went left
2 went right



No Entry/
Danger



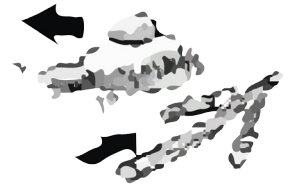
Gone Home



Left Turn

This Way:

Make sure the arrow is clearly marked. You can use stones instead by placing a large stone with a small one on top, and then another small stone pointing in the direction of travel. You could use long grass by tying it in a knot and bending it into the direction of the trail. You could use a twig placed through a leaf on a tree pointing in the correct direction or even a simple stick to mark an arrow in the mud or ground.



No Entry or Danger:

A simple cross tells people to not follow that direction or to warn them of a dangerous area. Make sure the cross is clearly marked and can be easily seen.



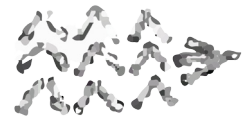
Turn Left or Turn Right:

Very similar to the simple 'This Way' arrow. Make sure you have a clear bend in your arrow.



Water Ahead:

The wavy lines represent waves on water. You must have a nice clear arrow showing which way the water is. Include at least three lines of waves so it is clear what the sign is supposed to be.



Obstacle Ahead:

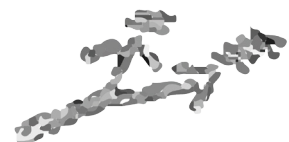
All you need is two lines with a line lying across them. You could even have a separate arrow (in the picture the arrow itself lays across the 'obstacle'). Again, make sure the arrow is clearly marked and the direction of the trail is obvious.



'Split Group'

'2 went left, 4 went right'

This sign will tell people following the trail that the group has split up. Begin an arrow and have it split into two directions, each with their own arrowhead. At the top of each arrowhead mark how many people went in that direction (it is probably better to use sticks as a 'tally' mark rather than trying to draw a number)



'Message 4 paces this way':

This sign will point the way to a hidden message. Mark out a box and place an arrow pointing in the direction of the message. Inside the box you mark how many paces (normal walking steps) you must walk in that direction to find the message.



Gone Home:

This is a very important sign. This should always be the last sign you place as it signals that the trial has finished and you have to return home. It is a simple circle with a single marker in the centre. Once you see this sign you have finished.

It is important that if you are the last to follow a trail, you should remove or rub out the signs and leave the area clean.



Tacking signs can be learned in various ways:

- o Prepare the signs either on charts or on the floor using sticks, leaves or stones, and then explain the meaning of the signs.
- o Divide the pack in pairs while they practice the signs among themselves.
- o Have the older cubs prepare the trail for newer cubs.

Suggestion:

- o You can use the below activity to see that the cubs understand exactly the difference between the tracking signs, and how the tracking signs can be made by watching them act. This will also make it fun. In addition it can be a way of testing their knowledge of the signs.

ACTIVITY FACT SHEET



Activity: Hike



Objective: Tracking Signs



Time: 2 hours



Outline: Divide the Pack in two groups, one to do the trail and one to follow the trail. Give both groups a starting point and an end point (one group's end point will be the other group starting point and vice versa). Let the groups map a different route of their choice for their hike.

Let the two groups leave for their hike but leaving tracking signs behind for the other group to follow them. When both groups arrive at their respective end point, let them follow the tracking signs prepared for them by the other group.

This way, both groups have done and followed tracking signs using the same activity.

Variation: Tracking can also be combined with other activities such as map reading. Start your Cubs off on a trail following a simple map. When they arrive at the end of the mapped trail they can continue on a Tracking Trail. This is better planned by the leaders while the cubs will follow their planned trail.

The trail can also be themed to make it more fun. Like for example they will find a pirate treasure or rescue an injured worker at the end.



Equipment: Chalk, water, snack, first aid box



Place: Route of choice



Group Size: Pack



3rd Parties: N/A







BRONZE ARROW



ACTIVITY FACT SHEET



During the Activity:

-  – The cubs will need to work as a team, come up with a route and find their way thanks to the tracking signs.
-  – Through a hike they can practice what they learned in previous sessions.
-  – The cubs have to know how to plan the route and to come up with ideas to make the signs apart from knowing the tracking signs.
-  – Let the cubs create the tracking signs along the way with what they find.
-  – Process the different emotions that come out while the cubs learn and practice tracking signs e.g. feelings of success, confidence, anger, tiredness, etc.
-  – Bring to the attention of the cubs the fact that: By leaving the tracking signs behind, you were the guide for the other group. You showed them the right direction. In the same way, thanks to the tracking signs they left, you were guided to your end point. How important is it to help and guide each other. Have them mention how they are of help to one another and other people who are of guidance to them e.g. parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, leaders.

BRONZE ARROW

