



# PROJECT COPE

**COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience)** is a program for youth and adults comprised of group initiatives and team building, problem solving, and physical challenge. Although COPE uses some of these skills, techniques and tools of rock-climbing, it is not simply a climbing course. Rather, it uses climbing situations as one of several means to achieve its goals. These goals include the development of trust, communication, self-esteem, leadership, problem-solving, decision making and teamwork.

## WHY DO COPE?

The COPE course challenges participants to become more aware of themselves and of others: strengths and limitations. For groups that already know each other well, COPE builds on this knowledge to improve communication and leadership skills. For newer groups-even complete strangers- COPE is a great mechanism for rapidly developing a strong sense of team membership.

Beyond all these lofty objectives, COPE is also FUN! Groups who have completed our course are uniformly impressed by how much they have enjoyed the experience.

## HOW IS COPE STRUCTURED?

The first half of a COPE program, usually lasting about one day, consists of group initiative activities and events on our “low course”. This is a series of about a dozen structures, each one of which presents a problem for a group or individual solution. The climax of the low course is a group effort to scale a 12-foot wall.

The second half of a complete COPE program is the “high course”. This consists of twelve elements, which require participants to negotiate cables, swings and nets high in the air. An elaborate, redundant safety system protects participants at all times.

Some groups, with limited time and resources, may decide to participate only in the low course. The complete COPE experience, low and high courses, requires about two full days.

## WHO RUNS COPE?

COPE is a program of the Great Rivers Council, Boy Scouts of America. It is staffed by professionals, as well as by a number of trained volunteers. The course directors, one of whom

is present for all courses, are nationally trained and certified to conduct the program. Our instructors and staff members are locally recruited and extensively trained. The entire program, including staff, facilities and policies, is subject to a rigorous annual inspection and certification by the Boy Scouts of America.

Two overriding concerns guide the staff at all times. First, we strive to assure a safe experience for all participants. Just as importantly, we also work to be sure that no one is made to feel awkward or uncomfortable during a COPE experience. At no time will any participant be pushed into doing something he or she wishes not to do.

### **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN COPE?**

COPE is primarily an activity operated for Scouts over the age of 13 years and their leaders. It is a group program requiring a minimum of eight individuals to operate properly. It is difficult to handle a group larger than 14, although this can be accommodated with pre-planning. Although both youth and adults can benefit from COPE, we do not run mixed adult and youth groups through the course at the same time.

As a service to the community, we also make COPE available to non-Scout groups, as long as their mission is not incompatible with that of the Boy Scouts of America. Corporate groups, community groups, fire departments, law enforcement groups and school groups can often benefit from a COPE experience.

### **HOW DO WE SIGN UP?**

An application form and fee schedule is attached. COPE weekends tend to fill up quickly, so we suggest that you reserve a time early.

After your group is scheduled, the leader will receive a packet of information. This includes an Element of Danger Statement, which must be signed by all participants or their parents/guardians. The leader will also be given information about the pre-course conditioning, health forms, clothing to bring, etc.

Non-Scout groups will need to complete some additional forms, including a certificate of insurance and a hold harmless agreement. Such groups should communicate with us directly to arrange all the necessary steps.

### **HOW CAN WE GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Contact:           Great Rivers Council  
                          Boy Scouts of America  
                          1203 Fay Street  
                          Columbia, MO 65201-4719  
                          (573) 449-2561  
                          (800) 726-8852