

Sam Houston Area Council Doctorial Project Report
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Assistant District Commissioner – Texas Skies
May 2024

Executive Summary

The purpose of this project is to produce a guidebook for the Volunteer Camp Commissioner at Camp Strake. The guidebook is to be used for both Summer and Winter Camps. Sections of this guidebook can also be used for weekend adventures such as Full Throttle.

Project Description

In the Summer of 2023, the Sam Houston Area Council made the decision to have a volunteer Commissioner attend Summer Camp at Camp Strake. The intent was to have someone charged with being a Commissioner to the Units at camp and to assist as needed. The first four counselors were:

- Week 1 – Mike McGinty
- Week 2 – Joe Dante
- Week 3 – Chris Kubiak
- Week 4 – Sergio Fernandez

There was no clear definition of what the role of the Volunteer Camp Commissioner was. Each of us did the job as we thought with a little guidance from the Camp Director and Camp Commissioner. Notes and hints were passed on from week to week. In November of 2023, Debbie Rollinson, our Council Commissioner, suggested that I create a Camp Volunteer Commissioner guidebook as a project for my doctoral thesis.

The first version of the guidebook was what I did in week 2. The first version was passed on to the other three Commissioner for comments. Those comments were incorporated into the guidebook as Version 2. This version was sent to the Camp Director, Camp Commissioner, Camp Program Chair, and Council Camping Chair for feedback. Version 3 was created with their feedback. A more verbose version of the guidebook was created at the suggestion of my Doctoral Advisor, Randy LeForce. The version we have now is a result of this collaboration.

Project Timeline

- November 2023 – Project was suggested by Debbie Rollinson, our Council Commissioner.
- December 2023 – Data gathering began. Input was received from the Camp Director, the Paid Camp Commissioner, the Council Director of Camping, and each of the Volunteer Camp Commissioners from 2023.
- January 2024 – The first revision of the guidebook was reviewed by Randy LeForce, my project advisor.
- February/May 2024 – The second revision of the guidebook was reviewed by Debbie Rollinson, our Council Commissioner.
- May/June 2024 – Guidebook will be submitted to Mark Randall and Ryan McMillion for final approvals.
- June 2024 – The final revision of the guidebook will be submitted to Pam White for final approval.
- June 2024 – The final version will be used to help with the orientation of the Volunteer Camp Commissioners for 2024 Summer Camp at Camp Strake.

Project Results

A guidebook was created that contains all the necessary information to make the Volunteer Camp Commissioner successful in performing their duties.

Camp Strake



Volunteer Camp Commissioner Guidebook



Dedication

This manual is dedicated to all those volunteers that donate their time and resources to Unit Service.

Thank you for all that you do.

This manual could not have been possible without the help and support from the Camp Strake Staff, Sam Houston Area Council staff, and Volunteer Commissioners. Thank you.

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Introduction

This guidebook is to help the Volunteer Camp Commissioner (VCC) at Camp Strake. The guidebook is written for Scouts BSA Summer/Winter Camp but also can be used for any extended, multi-unit camp a VCC is working. The focus of this position is to concentrate on relationships with the unit leaders and youth. Be a Unit Commissioner at Camp.

Job Requirements

As defined by the Council Camping Chair and the Camp Strake Summer Camp Director, the VCC should meet the following requirements:

- Strongly preferred that this person be a seasoned and experienced Scouts BSA leader and/or Commissioner who has attended several Summer and/or Winter camps. Preferred experience running the camp for their unit.
- Demonstrates excellent customer service skills, including handles challenging situations well.
- Be a mature and responsible adult, at least 21 years old.
- Strongly preferred that this person be registered in their district/council as a Commissioner (Unit, ADC, DC, or RT). Any exceptions on meeting this requirement must be approved by the Council Commissioner.
- Fully Trained for their registered Scouting position.
- Current YPT status.
- Camp Compliance Completed.
- Current Medical Form Part A, B and C on file with the camp.
- Attended Camp Commissioner orientation session.

Job Description

The Volunteer Camp Commissioner (VCC) reports to the Camp Commissioner and the Camp Director (See Camp Staff Org Chart). The VCC must possess the ability to work with Scouts, Unit Leaders, Camp Staff, and Adult Volunteers. The VCC must live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Outdoor Code. He or she is a Friend of the Unit while they are in Camp.

Daily Duties of the VCC are as follows:

- Have Fun!
- Campsite Inspections - Perform daily visits to all campsites using the Campsite Daily Visitation Scorecard to evaluate the condition of the campsite. Identify which units are in the campsite and grade each unit on their site. The attached scorecard is only a suggestion. If the VCC and Camp Commissioner want to change to meet camp needs, please feel free to do so. Pass the inspection form along to the Camp Commissioner with any overall comments from the daily visits. Try to perform the visits at various times of the day to meet and talk with as many of the leaders and Scouts as possible. A suggested rotation is provided below:
 - Monday – AM visit after breakfast from sites 1 to 20
 - Tuesday – PM visit after lunch from sites 1 to 20
 - Wednesday – AM visit after breakfast from sites 20 to 1
 - Thursday – PM visit after lunch from sites 20 to 1
 - Friday – AM visit after breakfast from sites 1 to 20
- Meet the Leaders - Meet as many of the leaders/Scouts as possible. The best opportunity is when you are performing the camp site visits. Other times are in the staff area and trading post. Make notes of any concerns or observations and pass those along to the Camp Commissioner and Camp Director.
- Eat with Units - You will have the option of eating in either A or B shift. Try to make it to both shifts on different days. Have conversations with the leaders and Scouts to find out how their day is going. Make notes of any concerns and bring them to the Camp Commissioner or Camp Director.
- Attend Leader meetings - Every night during the dinner shifts, half of the units meet in the conference room for leader meetings. These meetings are a chance for the leaders to express any concerns they have with the camp facilities or programs. The staff has an opportunity to share with the leaders any changes or announcements. Make notes and follow up during visits/meals. Provide any observations made during your camp inspections to the Senior Staff in advance so the items can be addressed.
- Attend Staff meetings – Staff meetings are typically held in the evening. Provide feedback based on inspections and leader conversations that you have observed with the Camp Director and/or Camp Commissioner.
- Follow up with concerns – Make notes of any concerns that have been brought up to you during your visits, meal conversations, or leader meetings. Bring these items to the Camp Commissioner or Camp Director. Follow up with the Camp Staff. Take any Camp Staff resolutions to the unit and discuss them during your next campsite visit or meal.
- Check the Leaders Lounge - The leader lounge is a small, air-conditioned, and heated room located at the right rear of the Grand Pavilion. Chairs, tables, and Wi-Fi is available to unit leaders. Make sure that the leaders lounge has water and coffee supplies. Also make sure the lounge is neat and clean and ready for any adults wishing to use the lounge.

- Other duties as assigned by Staff - From time to time the Senior Staff will ask you to perform other duties. Make sure that these duties do not interfere with your commissioner duties. First and foremost, you are a Unit Commissioner interacting with the unit leaders and Scouts.

Weekly Duties of the VCC are as follows:

- Assist with Sunday Check-In - On Sunday before camp, all the units must perform a "Check-In." This involves the unit leader checking in, handing over medical forms, signing up for troop activities, and more. Volunteer to help man one of the check-in stations. Use this opportunity to meet the leaders and introduce yourself.
- Manage the Sunday, Sunday, Sundae table - On Sunday evening after dinner, there is a Sunday, Sunday, Sundae event under the Grand Pavilion. This is a time when the unit leaders and Scouts can meet with the program senior staff and resolve any issues that might have already come up. Program changes for Scouts can be done during this time. As the VCC, you will manage the sign-up table and solicit unit signups for flags, meal serving, troop swim, Troop shoot, etc.
- Assist/Create Shower House cleaning assignments - Shower House cleaning assignments are made based on unit size and should be posted on Sunday evening. Collaborate with the Camp Commissioner to create the assignments. Use Shower House Stall Cleanup Assignment form to assign Shower House cleaning assignments. When doing the camp inspections, refer to this form to score each unit on their stall assignments.
- Help with leader appreciation dinner - One evening during the week, the order of the Arrow (OA) hosts a leader appreciation dinner. All the staff help with the dinner. The duties are serving snow cones, serving meals, setting up the room with tables and chairs, cleanup, and dish washing. The OA team does the cooking. After the leaders are served, sit and meet/talk with them.
- Contact next week attendees to verify tent requirements - Starting Wednesday evening, make phone calls to the units coming to camp next week. Verify the number of Scouts and adults attending. Make sure to note the male and female youth and adults. Collaborate with paid staff to assign units to sites. Make calls from Camp phone to avoid calls to personal cell phone.
- Unit packet distribution at end of camp - Get all the packets from the Admin Staff for the unit on Friday night. On Saturday morning, you will meet all the units as they leave at the front gate. As they leave, hand them their packet. The packet contains the final MB reports as well as patches for camp. You will also return the medical forms that were collected on Sunday at Check-In.
- Prepare check-in/welcome packets for the following week - Every unit receives a packet when they check in. The packet has basic information useful to the unit. Included in the packet is the camp inspection form, duty roster, fire watch plan, and other materials as needed. In the afternoons, go to the camp office and stuff the packets. This should only take about an hour or so.

Accommodations

Access to the staff cabins for sleeping is available. Contact the Camp Director or Camp Commissioner for your assignment.

Meals are provided in the Camp Dining Hall. You have the option of eating either the A or B shift. We suggest that you rotate between the shifts so you can share a meal with as many of the units as possible. Notify the Camp Director or Camp Commissioner of any dietary needs.

Notify the Camp Health Officer of any medical needs, such as refrigeration for medicine. Please have all medications in their original package and stored in a bag with your name written on the bag. Provide a copy of your medical form with the medications.

Appendix

- 1) Map of Camp Strake
- 2) Sunday, Sunday, Sundae Sign Up Sheets
- 3) Flag Ceremony Sign Up Sheet
- 4) Campsite Daily Visitation Scorecard
- 5) Camp Org Chart
- 6) Troop Leader Comment Form
- 7) Shower House/Campsite Layout
- 8) Shower House Stall Cleanup Assignments

Camp Strake Map



Sunday, Sunday, Sundae Sign Up Sheets

Meal Serving Sign Up Sheet

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	A - B -	A - B -	A - B -
Tuesday	A - B -	A - B -	A - B -
Wednesday	A - B -	A - B -	A - B -
Thursday	A - B -	A - B -	A - B -
Friday	A - B -	A - B -	A - B -

Meal service requires at least 4 people per service side (2 sides). There might be only one shift on Wednesday dinner because of the leader appreciation dinner.

Flag Ceremony Sign Up Sheet

	AM	PM
Sunday	////////////////////	Staff
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

CAMPSITE DAILY VISITATION SCORECARD

WEEK _____ TROOP# _____ CAMPSITE# _____

RATING SYSTEM

5 = Excellent, 4 = Above Average, 3 = Average, 2 = Below Average, 1 = Needs Improvement

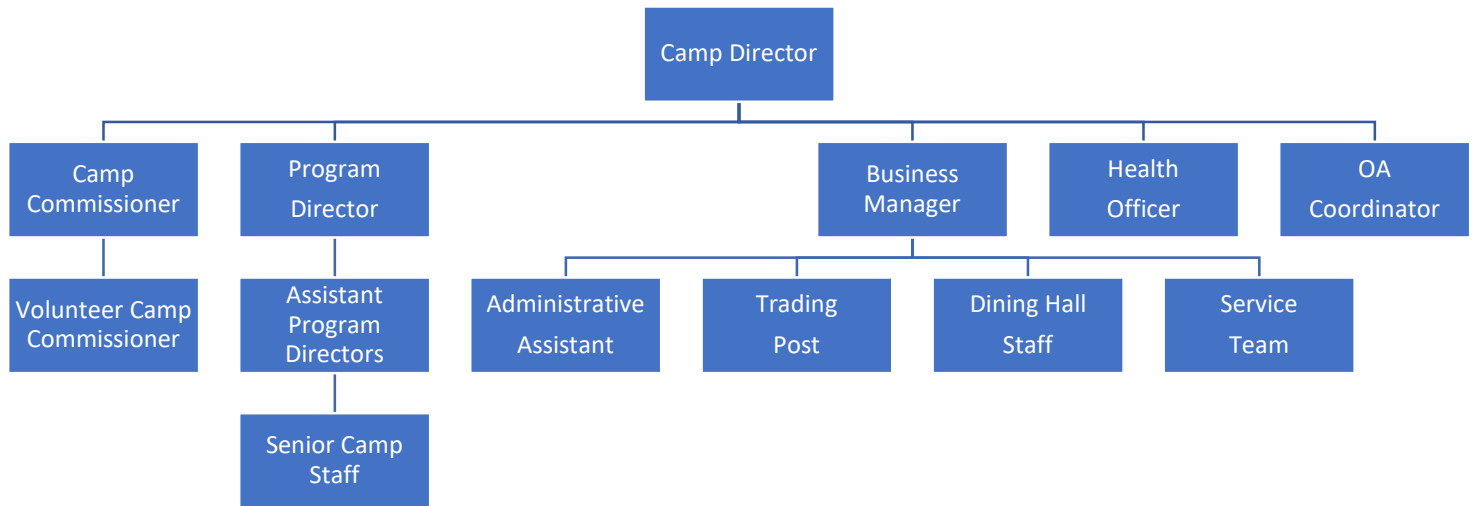
Items Checked	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Patrol Site					
All tent flaps are uniform.					
Inside/outside of tents are neat and orderly					
Area is neat and clean, free from hazards.					
Tables free from personal items					
Evidence of campsite improvement.					
Duty roster posted and up to date.					
Troop fireguard chart is posted and up to date.					
Patrol duty roster posted.					
Shower House					
Shower House is thoroughly cleaned.					
Trash disposed of properly.					
Surrounding Area					
Troop identified (sign, banner, or display of troop flag)					
Vehicles backed in, in designated parking area					
Useful camp gadgets built and on display					
Daily Totals	/65	/65	/65	/65	/65

Final Total: _____

Comments:

Initials of Evaluator: Mon _____ Tues _____ Wed _____ Thurs _____ Fri _____

Camp Staff Org Chart



Troop Leader Comment Form

Unit: _____

Campsite: _____

District/Council: _____

Comments:

Follow Up/Assignment:

Shower House/Camp Site Layout

Shower House A	Camp Site 1 Camp Site 2 Camp Site 3
Shower House B	Campsite 4 Campsite 5 Campsite 6 Campsite 7
Shower House C	Campsite 8 Campsite 9 Campsite 10
Shower House D	Campsite 11 Campsite 12 Campsite 13
Shower House E	Campsite 14 Campsite 15 Campsite 16 Campsite 17
Shower House F	Campsite 18 Campsite 19 Campsite 20

Shower House Stall Cleaning Assignments

Shower House _____

Stall 1	
Stall 2	
Stall 3	
Stall 4	
Stall 5	
Stall 6	
Stall 7	
Stall 8	
Stall 9	
Stall 10	
Stall 11	

Units that have female attendees can assign one or two stalls as “Female Only.” Please coordinate with the other units using the same Shower House.

All units can use all stalls. These assignments are only for cleanup.

If supplies are needed, notify the Camp Commissioner during their visit or at the admin office.

Version History

Date	Version #	Who	Changes
2024/02/24	1.0.0	Joe Dante	First Version
2024/05/07	1.0.1	Joe Dante	Suggested changes accepted from Debbie Rollinson



***Progress Record for
Doctorate of
Commissioner Science
Knot Award***



Name: Joseph (Joe) Dante

Address: 46631 McGill Rd., Plantersville, TX 77363

Phone/Email: 832-859-6007 / josephpdante@gmail.com

District: Texas Skies

Council: Sam Houston Area Council

BSA Member ID: 100403308

The Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award recognizes the completion of a standardized training program including a thesis or project, the awarding of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science from a College of Commissioner Science, and the achievement of performance objectives to improve Unit Service.

Prerequisites for the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award include:

- Current registration as a commissioner
- Current BSA Youth Protection Training Certificate
- Completion of Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree
- Completion of 5 years of service in one or more positions (does not need to be consecutive) as a commissioner
- Recruit or assist in recruiting at least 3 new commissioners

Completion Date: 5/30/20

Requirements:

Bachelor of Commissioner Science Degree

Prerequisite:

- Completion of Basic Training Course including Onboarding

Course Requirements:

- Completion of seven (7) courses of instruction, including at least five (5) courses from the National College of Commissioner Science Curriculum at the Bachelor's level. The remaining two (2) courses can be national or locally created courses and focus on unit service.
- Performance
- Approval of council commissioner or designee.

Completion Date: 11/14/21

Master of Commissioner Science Degree

Prerequisites

- Completion of Bachelor's Degree
- Earn Arrowhead Honor

Course Requirements

- Completion of seven (7) additional courses of instruction (total of 14), including at least five (5) courses from the National College of Commissioner Science Curriculum at the Master's level. The remaining two (2) courses can be national or locally created courses and focus on unit service.
- Performance
Approval of council commissioner or designee.

Completion Date: 11/13/22

Doctor of Commissioner Science Degree

Prerequisites

- Completion of Master's Degree
- Earn Commissioner's Key

Course Requirements

- Completion of ten (10) additional courses of instruction (total of 24), including at least five (5) courses from the National College of Commissioner Curriculum at the Doctorate level. The remaining five (5) courses can be national or locally created courses and focus on unit service. CED courses can also qualify. Elective courses may not have been previously applied toward your Bachelor's or Master's degrees.
- Thesis or Project
Complete a thesis or project on any topic of value to unit service in the local council. The topic and final paper must be approved by the council commissioner (or designee) or the dean of the doctorate program **and** the staff advisor for commissioner service.
- Performance
 - Serve on a College of Commissioner Science faculty (instructor or support staff) or participate in training commissioners for at least one year.
 - Approval of council commissioner or designee.

Completion Date: 5/30/24

Approved by:


Council Commissioner/Designee


6/3/24

Date:

Recognition Items:

- Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award Certificate
 - Template available on the Awards and Recognition page of the Commissioner's website at Scouting.org.
- Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award Knot (#18093)