Adapt to the new normal, and still have FUN!

The Scouts BSA program has never been more vital to the youth of our communities. The purpose of this guide is to help volunteers keep their Scouts engaged and provide a robust Scouting program under the limitations of a pandemic. By following these guidelines, your Troop can:

- Stay on track of rank advancements,
- Incorporate safe events and service opportunities into the Troop schedule, and
- Keep Scouts socially connected with each other and their leaders.
In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities

All in-person meetings and activities must follow these safety requirements:
- All local and state governments, both where the unit is chartered and where the meeting or activity is to take place must clearly permit the activity in terms of gathering size and ability to maintain proper social distancing. All of their and the Federal CDC guidelines must be followed for all phases of the meeting or activity (such as feeding, housing/tents, swimming etc.). Find updated CDC information here.
- Chartered organizations must approve in-person activities and/or meetings prior to restoring them. Units should also consult with their chartered organization to determine the best path forward for the unit’s Scouting programs.
- Parents should be surveyed, and a majority of the parents in the Scouting unit must approve restoring in-person activities.

Additional Safety Precautions:
- Require all adults and youth to wear masks.
- Provide hand-sanitizer and encourage frequent hand-washing.
- Plan activities that do not require close contact or shared materials (see pages 7-20 for ideas!)
- Ask Scouts to bring their own snacks or meals when applicable.

Where should we meet?
The safest locations for face to face activities is outdoors. Scouting activities are to continue to take place outdoors until the change in seasons makes it necessary to meet indoors. At that time, Scouting meetings and activities may take place indoors. Local building capacity restrictions must be met, masks are required, and social distancing must be practiced at all times.
- A local park with a pavilion
- A scout camp property
- The parking lot of your chartered organization (with permission)
- We do not recommend meeting at family residences.
Virtual Troop Meetings

All virtual meetings and activities must follow these Youth Protection requirements:
- Meetings and breakouts must have at least two adults present at all times.
- Get permission from each youth's parent/guardian before recording meetings.
- Do not post a link to your meeting on Facebook or other public internet sites; send out via email or other secure method.
- Require a security password to enter the meeting and only share with your Troop.

Additional considerations:
- To protect youth privacy, don't require Scouts to have their videos on.
  - Instead, encourage using virtual backgrounds or fun filters if possible or setting up a profile picture with their bitmojis.
- Check in with Scouts throughout the meeting with non-verbal tools like the chat box or "thumbs up"/"clapping" reactions.
- Use fun online assessment tools that "gamify" learning material.

Technology Tools

Video Conferencing Applications:
- Zoom
- Google Meet
- UberConference
(Collaboration and sharing:
(Communicate with the whole group, and share documents & links on desktop or mobile)
- Google Classrooms
- Slack
- GroupMe
Gamification and Polls:
(Unique ways to engage virtually with Scouts)
- Kahoot!
- Nearpod
Camping & Transportation Guidelines

All Troop outings and camp-outs must follow the same guidelines as required for in-person meetings as well as the following:

- Camping outings are limited to no more than 72 hours.
- Campsite group size is only limited by the maximum gathering size according to State regulations.
  - For most locations, this maximum is 50 people (as of Aug. 2020).
- Tent camping is to be done one youth in each tent unless they are household members, the same gender, and less than two years apart in age. Adults are also one to each tent unless they are spouses that live together. Tents are to be spaced at least six feet apart. Follow all Youth Protection Guidelines.
- Preparing and serving food is limited to the fewest number of adults practical who prepare and serve individual portions to the entire unit. The exception to this practice is an individual preparing food for only him or herself.
- The safest method for transportation is that only household members are in a vehicle. This may not always be practical. When necessary, people outside of a household may travel in a vehicle together. Unless the vehicle is a large van, (4 rows of seats) there should not be more than four people in a vehicle, and they are to sit as far apart as possible. Masks are to be worn at all times. If possible, carpool with people who interact together in other venues such as sports teams or schools.
- As always, all Boy Scouts of America policies are to be followed, including those in the Guide to Safe Scouting.
Sample Troop Meeting Agenda

Template agenda for weekly meetings + tips for implementing virtually.

1. Opening Ceremony
   - Flag Ceremony
   - Scout Oath
   - Scout Law
   - Outdoor Code

2. Announcements

3. Skill instruction
   - Basic skills for younger/newer scouts
   - Advanced skills for older/higher level scouts
   - Round robins for longer meetings

4. Patrol meetings

5. Inter-patrol game

6. Closing ceremony

7. Scoutmaster minute

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If meeting in person, be sure you have enough outdoor space for Scouts to stay 6 feet apart throughout the meeting.

Use screen-sharing to show an image of the American flag, slides showing the Scout Oath & Law, or a virtual flyer or calendar of upcoming events.

Change up which Scout leads the Scout Oath & Law, presents upcoming events, and demonstrates skills.

Utilize virtual breakout rooms to divide the Scouts by rank or by patrol throughout the meeting. (Click for instructions on setting up breakout rooms in Zoom or Google Meet).

Using Zoom, the meeting host can name patrol breakout rooms, determine when the breakouts should end and return participants to the main meeting, and communicate to all breakouts at once to remind patrol leaders of their time limits.
Monthly Scouts BSA Meetings & Activities

The following monthly themes and activities are an optional format to help your Scouts stay on track of rank advancements. Each month includes 4 weeks of Troop meeting plans as well as safe, Council-provided activities and events. Find changes to rank requirements for swimming, the camping merit badge, and the Eagle Scout extension process here.

**September**

Theme: Camping Skills
- Week 1: Campsites, Knots, & Lashes
- Week 2: Personal, Patrol, & Troop Gear
- Week 3: Hygiene & Sanitation
- Week 4: Fire & Knife Safety

Council Activities:
- **Outdoor Experience** at all Council properties.
- **Merit Badge Sessions** at various properties.
- **Fall Fun Rally** on Sep. 26.

**November**

Theme: Cooking
- Week 1: Introduction to Cooking
- Week 2: Health & Safety
- Week 3: Planning for Success
- Week 4: Cooking Basics

Council Activities:
- **Outdoor Experience** at all Council properties (ends Nov. 8!).
- **Virtual STEM University SIUE** on Nov. 7.
- **Scouting for Food** on Nov. 14, 21.

**October**

Theme: Hiking
- Week 1: Hiking 101
- Week 2: What to Bring
- Week 3: Hiking Techniques
- Week 4: Food, First Aid, & Outdoor Ethics

Council Activities:
- **Outdoor Experience** at all Council properties.
- **Merit Badge Sessions** at various properties

**December**

Theme: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- Week 1: Mendel's Minions Nova Part 1
- Week 2: Mendel's Minions Nova Part 2

Council Activities:
- **Virtual STEM University UMSL** on Dec. 12.
This month, Scouts will learn:

- Knowledge & skills to be comfortable and confident in camp.
- The importance of protecting the environment through outdoor ethics.
- Camping-related knots and when to use them.
- Knowledge of outdoor shelters and what gear to pack.
- The importance of fostering communion with nature and God.
- How to work cooperatively in small groups while living outdoors.

Week 1: Campsites, Knots, & Lashings

- Ask for a volunteer scout to repeat the Outdoor Code. Have scouts give examples of how they followed the Outdoor Code on a unit outing.
  - For those new to Scouting, ask them to give examples of following the Outdoor Code on a family outing.
- Split patrols into breakout rooms and, using the "diagrams of campsites" resource, have each patrol develop a design for the campsite they want to have during their next camping trip. Make a list of the specific patrol and troop equipment they'll need to set it up.
- In their breakouts, have scouts practice the Two Half Hitches, Taut-line Hitch, Clove Hitch, Square Knot, and Bowline.
  - For help, use these animated knot tutorials.
- Once the above knots are mastered, have Scouts practice how to join two poles together with two Round Lashings and/or how to whip rope ends.
- Review the above information and make sure all the skills are mastered. Have scouts practice any skill that is not easy to do.
- On the next troop outing, have scouts use the above campcraft skills to set up a Tarp as a patrol dining fly.
• Ask older scouts to explain the principles of Leave No Trace to the rest of the troop.
• Ask the scouts to list the ten essentials for any outing (a pocket knife, first-aid kit, extra clothing, rain gear, water bottle, flashlight, trail food, matches and fire starters, sun protection, map and compass).
• As a group, review page 268 and 269 in the Boy Scout Handbook. Review the Scouting Magazine article on patrol boxes, and have scouts inspect the contents of a patrol box.
• Have scouts discuss their existing or desired design of a patrol box. Ask if theirs would have different items in it.
• Discuss the advantages of various kinds of rainwear, fabrics, headwear, and footwear for outdoor use.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 2:
• Tenderfoot 1a
• Second Class 1b
Week 3: Hygiene & Sanitation

- Ask older scouts to explain the principles of *Tread Lightly!* to the rest of the troop.
- Have scouts discuss why it’s important to wash their hands while on a camping trip. What are some ways to do this when away from modern plumbing?
- Ask scouts to describe:
  - The proper way to wash personal and patrol eating and cooking gear on a camping trip. Discuss the proper way to set up a dishwashing assembly line and why this is the most efficient way to clean dishes as a patrol.
  - How to properly make and use a sump hole for “grey water” and a cathole for personal use.
  - How to keep your camp kitchen clean and organized.
  - What to do with trash and garbage.
- On the next troop outing, use troop supplies to lash together a hand wash station and a self standing garbage bag holder.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 3:
- Tenderfoot 2b*, 2c
- First Class 1b
*This meeting may cover the discussion and preparation for this requirement, but it will need to be completed during a unit outing.

Week 4: Fire & Knife Safety

To be completed on a troop campout. All demonstrations should first be done by a trained unit leader, then by each youth. Each participant must wear gloves, and any shared equipment should be sanitized between uses.

- Demonstrate how to safely handle a knife, hand axe/hatchet, and camp saw.
- Using a sharpening stone, demonstrate how to properly sharpen a knife.
- Have all scouts prepare a fuzz stick.
Week 4: Fire & Knife Safety (cont'd)

- Using a bow saw, demonstrate how to safely cut a piece of wood.
- Using a hatchet and the contact method, demonstrate how to split a piece of fuel-sized wood into pieces of kindling.
- Use a hatchet, saw, and knife to prepare some kindling and tinder. (You can use a 2×4, 10 inches long.)
- Using a hatchet, saw, and knife, transform the entire 10 inch length of 2×4 into a sorted collection of tinder and kindling.
  - Store this material in a dry place for future use.
- Describe the characteristics of good tinder, kindling and fuel. Discuss how good tinder and kindling can be prepared and where these materials can be found.
- On a fire pan or in an established fireplace, using a supply of tinder and kindling, carefully lay a small teepee fire and then light it.
  - Let it burn completely out, and take all safety measures.
- Sort a small supply of tinder and kindling. Light some tinder and carefully feed it with thicker material until the supply is completely burned.
  - Take all safety measures.
- Carefully sort the stored supply of tinder and kindling prepared from the 10-inch piece of 2×4. Using whatever method you like, burn the entire quantity of wood, starting the fire with a hot spark kit and a piece of cotton.
  - Burn the entire supply, taking all safety measures.

Idea Corner: Try a game where each Scout (with adult supervision) puts a piece of twine above their fire to see whose twine burns up first. This can be done virtually if all Scouts have a safe place to build their fire and set their twine to the same height.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 4:
- Tenderfoot 3d
- Second Class 2a, b, c
**September Council Activities:**

Outdoor Experience:
- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, swimming, & fishing at various properties.
- Register: [https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/](https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/)

Merit Badge Workshops:
- Outdoor sessions hosted with social distancing at various GSLAC Camp properties.
- Register and find the full schedule here:

Fall Fun Rally:
- September 26 at Beaumont Scout Reservation.
- For Venturing youth or Scouts BSA youth ages 14+.
- Register and find more information here: [http://fallfunrally.org/](http://fallfunrally.org/).
This month, Scouts will learn:

- To improve their physical fitness through hiking.
- How to prevent & mitigate hazards that may be encountered while hiking; first aid to treat potential injuries.
- Skills to build confidence that they can take care of themselves on the trail.
- The importance of fostering a communion with nature and God and a deeper appreciation for the outdoors.
- To commit to following the Outdoor Code and no-trace methods for hiking.

Week 1: Hiking 101

- Practice reading a compass and learn how to set a pace.
- Teach Scouts how to make their own compass.
- Review the rules and particulars of trail, cross-country, and back-roads hiking. (See the Hiking merit badge pamphlet).
- Review the rules and particulars of night and urban hiking.
- Review the rules and particulars of snow, tundra, and desert hiking.
- As a troop, begin planning a hiking outing for the second half of the month.
  Select the type of destination (state park, city, etc.).

Idea Corner: Create your own "mystery hike" based on the game, "Clue".

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 1:
- Tenderfoot 5c
- First Class 3a, 3b, 3c
- Second Class 4a
Practice figuring the heights and widths of objects (refer to Boy Scout Handbook, “Navigation” chapter).

Review the Scout Basic Essentials. Have scouts do a “show and tell” where each scout describes their particular model/brand of gear.

Work on packing up for a group hike; study maps of the hike route.

Review unit equipment needed for a group hike. Make plans to acquire any equipment needed, and discuss how to pack their backpacks.

Finalize the location for the troop hike. Determine the distance of the hike and what information is needed to continue planning accordingly.

Practice reading topographic maps. Instruct scouts to obtain a sample topographic map prior to the meeting.


Plan a game for the troop to use during the hike.
- The game should not require close contact between Scouts.

Have older scouts help younger Scouts with map-reading skills. Depending on the size of your troop, have breakout rooms for scouts to meet.

Review options for extra activities you can do during the hike (scenic overlooks, historic sites, recreational opportunities, etc.).

Review all information for upcoming troop hike. Establish travel and equipment plans.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 3:
- Tenderfoot 5b
Learn how to prevent and treat blisters.
Learn how to treat a sprained ankle.
Discuss how to avoid getting lost and how to get found if you are lost, including leaving a travel plan with someone at home, emergency signaling, and using GPS-based emergency locators.
Finalize details for your troop’s hiking outing.

October Council Activities

Outdoor Experience:
- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, swimming, & fishing at various properties.
- Register: https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/

Merit Badge Workshops:
- Outdoor sessions hosted with social distancing at various GSLAC Camp properties.
- Register and find the full schedule here: https://stlbsa.org/achievement/advancement/merit-badge-skill-centers/.
November Troop Guide: Cooking

This month, Scouts will learn:
- Basic skills to become self-sufficient in cooking for themselves & others.
- A variety of cooking methods utilizing different heat sources.
- The importance of good nutrition, as described in the USDA MyPlate Guidelines.
- Potential cooking hazards and how to prevent them.
- How to plan menus, purchase ingredients, and store perishables properly.

Week 1: Introduction to Cooking

- As Scouts arrive/logon, ask them what was the worst camp meal they have ever eaten. Ask why they didn’t like it (Were meals cooked improperly? Were the ingredients substandard?) and how it could have been made better.
  - Explain that this month’s meetings will help them learn to be better cooks and to be proud of their meals.
- Explain that there are six essentials to cooking a good meal: time, ingredients, recipes, cookware, heat sources, and technique.
- Give each patrol a complete dinner menu. Then assign the patrols a breakout room/outdoor area, and give them 25 minutes to plan what they need for the six essentials and who will take each role in the preparation.
- For the balance of the time, have a review board evaluate the groups’ plans and then help in reviewing them.
  - If you have Scouts with strong experience in cooking, have them serve on the review boards, as well as complete the menu activity.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 1:
- Tenderfoot 2c
- Second Class 2d
November Troop Guide: Cooking

Week 2: Health & Safety

- Present the importance of safety while cooking.
- Discuss the risk of burns and how to minimize burn incidents. Also discuss other possible cooking injuries, primarily cuts, and how to prevent them.
- Explain proper treatment for burns, cuts, etc.
- Introduce proper food handling procedures to prevent food borne illnesses.
  - Emphasize the need to follow safe handling practices including cleanliness and proper food storage.
- Discuss the need to be aware of allergies and food intolerances among those who will eat the meal you are cooking.
- Present nutritional guidelines based on the USDA’s MyPlate model.
- Explain the balance needed from the food groups and how the proper mix may vary depending on activities and the age and size of those for whom you are cooking.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 1:
- Tenderfoot 2b*
- First Class 2d
  *This meeting may cover the discussion and preparation for this requirement, but it will need to be completed during a unit outing

Week 3: Planning for Success

- Form multiple groups, each including some Scouts who are more experienced than the others. Have the experienced Scouts teach by example how to develop a full menu plan for a weekend trip. Include two breakfasts, two lunches, and two dinners. Focus on:
  - Planning complete, tasty meals.
  - Developing a complete ingredient list.
Making plans to prepare and cook the food.
• Determining the costs and how the food items will be purchased.

• Prepare for Meeting 4 by informing scouts that they will be asked to cook a meal “live” on Zoom using one of the following methods:
  a. Camp stoves,
  b. Foil packs,
  c. Backpacking stoves,
  d. Dutch oven,
  e. Home stove/oven

• Encourage scouts to pick different cooking methods for the next meeting's activity to learn a variety of ways to prepare food.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 3:
• First Class 2a, 2b, 2c

Week 4: Cooking Basics

• Have scouts enter the virtual meeting from their cooking location via their phone or tablet.
  o This can be done by-patrol or by-troop, depending on group size.

• An adult leader “emcees” the patrol/troop’s cookout by asking questions of each scout as they prepare their dish.
  o The questions should focus on the benefits of each style and how to use them effectively. Encourage scouts to ask questions of each other while cooking.

• Have each scout eat their meal and talk about its flavors. Have them describe how their cooking style influenced what they are tasting.

Idea Corner: Have Scouts or Patrols compete in a version of "Chopped".

November Troop Guide: Cooking
November Troop Guide: Cooking

**November Council Activities:**

Outdoor Experience (ends Nov. 8!):
- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, swimming, & fishing at various properties.
- Register: [https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/](https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/)

Virtual STEM University SIUE (Nov. 7):
- Theme: Third Rock from the Sun (geology, Earth science, and space!)
- Earn STEM-based Novas and Merit Badges with STEM professionals and University Professors.
- Complete fun, "at-home challenges" throughout the day.
- Kit of materials and an event patch (part 1 of 4!) sent out before the event.
- Register: [stem.stlbsa.org](http://stem.stlbsa.org)

Scouting For Food (Nov. 14, 21):
- Help thousands of Scouts deliver and pick up over 1 million blue Scouting For Food bags full of nonperishable food donations!
- Register: [https://stlbsa.org/activities/events/scouting-for-food/](https://stlbsa.org/activities/events/scouting-for-food/)
This month, Scouts will learn:

- The importance of learning Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics.
- About the STEM Nova Program and how to earn connect with a Nova Counselor for further learning.
- How genetic information affects everyday life.
- About DNA extraction, formation, and protein production.

Week 1: Mendel's Minions (Part 1)

- As they arrive to the meeting, have the Scouts discuss why Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math are important concepts to learn.
- Prior to the meeting, have each scout obtain the ingredients and tools necessary to complete the DNA Extraction experiment with bananas and/or strawberries.
  - SAFETY TIP: Do not eat the fruit after it has been soaked in alcohol.
- Discuss safety precautions when conducting experiments. Have each Scout conduct the experiment during the meeting following the directions on the link above and share their results.
  - Be careful to keep all electronic devices clear of the experiment workspace.
- Watch this 10-minute video about heredity.
- Inform Scouts that they just completed some of the requirements for the Mendel’s Minions Nova Award. Review the rest of the requirements with the Scouts and encourage them to continue working towards the Nova.
  - They can find a Nova Counselor in their District using the Merit Badge Counselor Directory.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 1:
- Mendel's Minions Nova Req. 1a (partial), 3b
Week 2: Mendel's Minions (Part 2)

- Prior to the meeting, have each scout obtain the ingredients and tools necessary to complete the Have Your DNA and Eat it Too! experiment.
- Have each Scout conduct the experiment during the meeting following the directions on the link above and share their results.
- Have Scouts explain how DNA leads to the production of protein.
- Watch this 10-minute video on epigenetics.
- Discuss how genetics and genomics affect everyday life and how Scouts think it will affect us in the future.
- Inform Scouts that they have completed requirement 3D for the Mendel's Minions Nova Award. Ask scouts to share the progress they have made towards other requirements for the Nova.
  - If necessary, kick start the conversation by asking a Scout to tell their experience completing one of the Merit Badges that can be earned toward the Nova.

Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 2:
- Mendel's Minions Nova Req. 1a (partial), 3d, 6

December Council Activities:

Virtual STEM University UMSL (Dec. 12):
- Theme: STEM U Live Stream (life science, water, oceanography)
- Earn STEM-based Novas and Merit Badges with STEM professionals and University Professors.
- Complete fun, "at-home challenges" throughout the day.
- Kit of materials and an event patch (part 2 of 4!) sent out before the event.
- Register: stem.stlbsa.org
In a time where people need more help than ever, finding safe opportunities to serve the community is challenging. Many organizations will need to make special arrangements for your group or may not be accepting volunteers at all. Consider the safe service opportunities below to keep your Scouts engaged with their communities.

**Safe ways to serve your community:**

- Write letters to healthcare workers or nursing home residents.
- Clean up litter at a park, stream, or public property.
- Partner with a school to provide virtual tutoring to younger kids.
- Provide a virtual outdoor experience for nursing home residents.
- Make and donate face masks to your local hospital.
- Work with your local Meals on Wheels to deliver food to vulnerable seniors.
- Partner with your school to deliver meals to youth in need.
- Participate in Scouting For Food (register here).
- Connect with organizations to volunteer from home (search by zip code here).

**Eagle Project Guidance:**

Need an idea for an Eagle Scout project? The Eagle Project Idea Generator offers a decision-tree approach for giving you a few project ideas to help you develop your own project. It is not intended to take the work out of identifying a project for you; instead, these are only ideas of what might be done.

Plus, checkout this cool article about a Scout that developed his project to provide face coverings to a local senior center.

Click here for information on the COVID-19 extension for earning Eagle.
Additional Resources

Utilize the links below to stay up-to-date on safety guidelines, National BSA policies, and additional ideas for safe Scouting activities.

Safety & Policy Guidance

CDC Guidance for Parents:

CDC General COVID-19 Prevention Guidance:

Missouri COVID-19 Regulations:

Illinois COVID-19 Policies:
https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/

St. Louis City & County Regulations:
https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/communicable-disease/covid-19/index.cfm#CP_JUMP_808128

National BSA COVID-19 Policies and Advancement Revisions:

Additional Scouting Ideas

ScoutShare Remote Scouting Ideas:
http://scoutshare.org/Resources/Articles/category/remote-scouting

General Troop Resources:
https://troopresources.scouting.org/

Additional Service Ideas:

https://scoutermom.com/21913/service-projects-while-social-distancing/
For over one hundred years, the Boy Scouts of America has prepared young people for life through some of the most outstanding leadership and growth programs available nationally. Whether it’s camping, hiking, community outreach or building remote controlled robots, Scouting offers exciting programs designed to inspire, build character and instill the values that boys and girls need to succeed today.

We offer programs for girls and boys ages 6-21. Scouting programs foster and strengthen self-confidence, ethics, respect for others, academic skills, and leadership abilities that stay with them their entire lives.

The Greater St. Louis Area Council, one of the largest in the Boy Scouts of America, has more than 66,000 members and nearly 15,000 adult volunteers. They come from 51 different counties in the Southeast Missouri, Southern Illinois and St. Louis Metropolitan areas.

Scouting units in the Greater St. Louis area Council are chartered by over 1,000 different community groups that include civic, non-profit, religious, educational and business organizations throughout the region.