

EAGLE ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES

The following is intended as a guide for scouts who are preparing to earn their Eagle Rank. Since this is just a guide, please remember that the Scoutmaster, Eagle Advancement Coordinator, and other members of your troop are happy to help with any questions that you might have. Additionally, there are many on-line resources that you can use. The troop web site has links to many sites that can be helpful. You will find attached a sampling of several sites that you may find useful.

The Trail to Eagle:

The earliest preparation for Eagle began with your advancement from the rank of Scout to that of Life. Every skill that you have learned, every service project that you have been involved in, and all your Scoutmaster Conferences and Boards of Review up to now have set the pattern for what you will encounter on the final push to Eagle.

New Life Scouts:

Eagle advancement requires careful attention to critical time deadlines such as the need for a six (6) month period of service in the troop in a leadership position since obtaining Life and the requirement that the advancement be completed prior to the scout's 18th birthday. This means that all of your merit badges, your service project, and your scoutmaster's conference must be finished prior to your 18th birthday. The Eagle Board of Review and Court of Honor can be held after your 18th birthday as long as the Board of Review is held within 3 months of your birthday. You should plan carefully for the completion of all necessary merit badges since several that must be earned for Eagle require several months of work for successful completion of the badge. For example, Family Life and Personal Fitness require a minimum of 3 months to complete. Review the requirements for all the remaining merit badges that you need and finish the ones with the longest time requirements first.

Your Eagle Service Project is perhaps the single most time consuming part of the requirements for Eagle. Please use the format that is set out in the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook Report which is attached and is also available on the troop (www.oconeetroop149.org) or National Eagle Scout Association

(www.nesa.org/how-to-manuals.html) websites. A successful service project involves a great deal of planning as well as work. Review your project idea with your Scoutmaster. Feel free to talk to other adults both in and outside of the troop for advice. It is not uncommon for Scouts to change to a new project if there are things that make the first idea unworkable. Remember, the project should be one that YOU want to do. There are many great projects that your parents or others may know of, but that doesn't mean they are the right one for you.

Make sure that you consult with professionals about any technical requirements for your project like load carrying capacities for bridges or platforms, etc. Once you have the initial "go ahead" from your Scoutmaster, work carefully with the contact adult for the beneficiary of your project, for instance, with the administrator of the school where you plan to do your work. Using the format provided in the Workbook, work up a complete description of the project including what is to be done (including a specific time-line with estimated hours per sub-task), what materials and tools are required (exact quantities along with cost per item), what safety considerations are involved, and what benefit will result to the community from the completion of the work. You should include a description of how you intend to demonstrate leadership during the project. Take several "before" photos of the site to include in your project proposal. Your project workbook should be so detailed in its description of how to complete the project that a complete stranger could pick up your workbook and know exactly what to do every step of the way to complete the project. You may use the Eagle Project Workbook in the attached sample Eagle Application as a guide. (Thanks, Sam!)

Your Scoutmaster and Eagle Advancement Coordinator will often provide feedback and suggestions. Most Scouts need two or more drafts before this step is complete. Have your final version reviewed again by your Scoutmaster and signed by the contact adult for the organization that is benefiting from the project. Once your proposal is complete, plan to appear at the next troop committee meeting with a copy of your proposal for each committee member. Wear your complete Class "A" field uniform with all badges attached including your patrol patch and sash. Look sharp!! Present your proposal to the committee using whatever visual aids that you think will best present your ideas. Be prepared to answer any questions that the committee may have. Often it will be necessary for you to do additional work on your proposal or to change it based upon suggestions from the committee. Do not be discouraged. This is done just to help insure that your project will be successful.

When you have secured troop approval, you then need to appear before the District Eagle Board of Review to submit your Workbook for its approval. The Board meets at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month at Milledge Avenue Baptist Church in Athens. E-mail your proposal to the chair of the District Eagle Board of Review, Bob White, at docbob8341@aol.com before your appearance so he can review it in advance and let you know if any changes are suggested before your appearance before the Board. As with your appearance before the troop committee, you should have your original proposal and copies for each of the Board members. Usually your proposal will be reviewed by 2 or 3 members but be prepared for more. Wear your complete Class "A" uniform and be prepared to answer any questions that the Board members may have about your project. Again, do not be discouraged if you are asked to revise your proposal before getting final approval. **You should not solicit any donations or perform any work other than planning until the Board has given its approval.**

Finally, once your project is approved, you should contact our troop service project coordinators to schedule your work days. Their contact information is included in the Troop 149 Phone List. Give plenty of notice to the troop of your work days by making announcements at meetings while providing handouts describing your workdays with details about the date, time, place, tools needed, etc. As your work days near, follow up with similar announcements on the list serve. Finally, consider calling scouts several days prior to a work day to insure that you have a good crew of workers. You might enlist the help of the patrol leaders to call their patrols. Make sure that all necessary tools, supplies, first aid kits, water, etc., are ready before each workday. Remember that the primary goal of an Eagle project is not the amount of physical labor that you do but is the quality of your planning and the leadership skills that you demonstrate in getting the project completed.

Once the project is finished, you should finalize the Eagle Project Workbook. In your workbook you must describe any changes to the project that occur after work begins and provide the reason for any such change. As usual, you will need to keep track of the number of hours that you and anyone else contribute in any way to the completion of the project. Make sure that "before", "during" and "after" pictures are included in your Workbook. You might want to ask a specific Scout or adult on your project to be in charge of taking pictures. Once the project is complete, sign the Workbook and have your Scoutmaster and adult contact sign as well to indicate that the project was finished in a satisfactory fashion. **Complete**

and turn in the troop's own separate service project report form with some photos so we can include the project on the website. E-mail the report and form to the troop webmaster at the following address: vetpharm@aol.com. Send a copy of the troop service project form to our troop service project coordinators as well. Finally, submit at least one photo and a short write-up of your project to the local newspaper for publication. For assistance, see www.oconeetroop149.org/news.html.

Eagle Candidates:

Now that you have met all your Eagle requirements, you are ready for the completion of the final paperwork, your Boards of Review and your Eagle Court of Honor. Although the paperwork can be time consuming and the Boards of Review a bit intimidating, be confident in your ability to get everything done. You now have all the skills you need to finish. Just persevere through these last few requirements to reach your goal. The next step is to complete your Eagle Scout Application with its supporting documents. A copy of an Eagle Scout Application for one of our Troop 149 Eagles is attached as an example.

1.) Application: Have an application form and a copy to use as a draft. An application form is available from the troop website as well as the National and Council websites. You can type your information directly into the form on our website. Use the draft to accurately note the people who will serve as your references and the completion dates for each of your merit badges. Fill in the leadership positions that you have held for at least 6 months since obtaining Life (ideally starting with the date of your Life Board of Review). Draft a Statement of Life Goals that includes your awards and leadership activities and future goals. Follow the suggestions in Requirement 6 of the Application. Make a copy of your rank advancement cards, merit badge cards, and Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook to attach to your application. Once you are sure that everything is accurate, fill in the original application. Even though you will not need to have the letters of recommendation in hand until your District Board of Review, ask your references to immediately give you a **sealed** letter of reference when you ask their permission to list them as a reference. This

helps avoid problems if a listed reference is out of town or otherwise unavailable at the time of your Board of Review. The sealed letters of reference will be opened at your District Board of Review, but you will not see them at any time.

2.) Scoutmaster's Conference: This needs to be accomplished prior to any Board of Review. It is important to schedule this as soon as it is convenient for your Scoutmaster. It usually works best to invite him for dinner since the conference can take up to 2-3 hours depending on whether you need assistance with application paperwork. You should have your Handbook and past rank and merit badge cards as well as the Project Workbook and Eagle Application ready. Once you have finished your conference, your Scoutmaster and Troop Committee Chair need to sign your original Application showing that you are approved at the troop level. Keep the Eagle Advancement Coordinator informed about this requirement.

3.) Council Certification: Following the Scoutmaster's conference, the candidate must get the Eagle Application (including copies of rank advancement card, merit badge cards, and your service project report) to the Council Office where it will be reviewed for completion of all requirements and certified as ready for an Eagle Board of Review. This may take several days. You will need to plan to retrieve the packet once certification is complete. To check on the completion of your Eagle paperwork, call the Council office in Jefferson/Pendergrass at 1-800-699-8806.

4.) Troop Board of Review: This troop requirement is not a requirement from BSA but is an opportunity for you to do a "warm up" before appearing at the District Board of Review. It will be set up with 3 to 5 members as is the District Board. Please let your Eagle Advancement Coordinator know if you have particular people you would like to include in the Board. You should appear in your full Class "A" uniform including your merit badge sash with all patches attached. Have enough copies of your Eagle Application for everyone to have their own copy. This Troop Board will not be identical to the District Board of Review but will give you a very good indication of what to expect. This is an opportunity to make sure that your uniform and materials are in order and to get

suggestions that might improve your presentation. It is not used to coach you on what to specifically expect as you get ready for the District Board. However, please be sure you know the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code!

5.) District Board of Review: The District Board of Review is held on the third Thursday of each month at Milledge Avenue Baptist Church in the same location where you presented your Eagle Project proposal. The Board convenes at 7:00 pm but your time may vary depending on how many candidates are being reviewed. As with your project proposal, send your complete application by e-mail in advance to the District Eagle Coordinator, Bob White, at docbob8341@aol.com for his review prior to the BOR. We typically try to schedule the troop Board several days prior to the District Board so that you are comfortable with the process before appearing before the District Board. District Boards of Review usually include 3 to 5 people and cannot include your Scoutmaster or any assistant Scoutmaster from the troop. The Board will usually include individuals outside of the troop and may include individuals outside of Scouting. Your Scoutmaster or Eagle Advancement Chair typically will introduce you to the Board. The Boards typically last about an hour. A Scout's guide to an Eagle Board of Review is attached to help you prepare. Other guides are also available on the internet at various Scout and related web sites. See the attached handout for suggestions of various websites that can be consulted. Also, feel free to ask your Scoutmaster or Eagle Advancement Coordinator any questions that you may have.

For the Board of Review, make sure that your uniform is complete, neat, and in good order. You should use good posture, maintain good eye contact with the Board members, present yourself well, and avoid fidgeting or other indications of nervousness or inattention. You should not be argumentative under any circumstances and should try to answer all questions to the best of your ability without resorting to "I don't know." However, it cannot be emphasized enough that there are rarely questions with only one right answer and that you will be assessed by the quality of your presentation rather than on any specific opinion that you may express. At the successful conclusion of your Eagle Board of Review, the Board members will sign your Application and an official advancement form. You are now officially an Eagle!

6.) Final Paperwork: Now that your application is complete, the Chair of the Board of Review will sign and take the original application to the council office for transmittal to the national office. The transmittal from the council to the national office is done electronically to speed the return of your Eagle Award (pin, badge, certificate, etc., which are to be presented to you at the Eagle Court of Honor). When transmitted electronically, the Eagle Award will usually be received at the council office within a week. The council office will usually call you to let you know that it has arrived so you can make arrangements to pick it up. It is a good idea for you to check with the council office to see if they have it if you do not hear from them within a week. Outside of your family, only designated members of the troop are eligible to pick up the Eagle Award for you and it must be signed for by that representative.

7.) Eagle Court of Honor: Preparations can be made for your Court of Honor once the council has received your original Eagle application. This may either be an individual Court of Honor or a collective Court of Honor for multiple Eagles. However, most families prefer separate Courts of Honor to highlight the achievements of the individual Scout. Look for a date for your Court of Honor that will not only be convenient for your family and friends but also will not conflict with a scheduled troop activity or other significant local events. Please be sure to check with your Scoutmaster about his availability. If you plan to use Friendship Presbyterian as the location for your Court of Honor, you must reserve the facility not more than 6 weeks in advance. Check with the church secretary, Donna Rigsby, 706-543-6077, about possible dates for your Court of Honor. Recall that Courts of Honor are usually held between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays in order to minimize disruption of church activities. Do not ask for a Sunday when the church plans to have an afternoon meeting such as the Session.

Once the date is reserved, invitations should be prepared and promptly mailed. Don't forget to invite family and friends outside of the troop and please send an invitation to Friendship Presbyterian to be included in their bulletin. The Eagle Advancement Coordinator will provide you with a troop Eagle

packet with many useful examples of items that you will need for your Court of Honor. Consult the materials in the Eagle packet which include the BSA sample Eagle Court of Honor programs booklet, sample invitations, and sample printed programs.

Prepare your program, make sure that you enlist (and confirm!) the help of any Scouts or adults that you wish to be involved in the ceremony, and prepare your own printed program for distribution to those attending. Make arrangements for a photographer and/or videographer. Arrange for a reception to follow the Court of Honor and for displays/decorations for use during the Court of Honor and the reception. You should recruit a Scout mom outside your family to organize the reception so your parents can relax and enjoy the Court of Honor. Don't hesitate to ask for help. Many Scout parents (especially those whose sons are nearing Eagle as well) will be happy to assist in the planning of the reception and the decorations for the Court of Honor but it is up to you to make sure that this is done by enlisting help. Personalize your displays with pictures, awards, etc., of your time in scouting to help illustrate your scouting career. You may wish to hold a practice session for Scouts and adults participating in the ceremony. Note that you will probably want to get the keys to the church from the Scoutmaster in advance (the church does not give out spares) for setting up. The Scout and his family are also responsible for making sure that the facilities are left clean and at least in the same order as they were before the ceremony.

Many scouts think it appropriate to thank individuals who have played a significant role in their advancement with either a verbal acknowledgement during the Court of Honor or by the presentation of a small commemorative gift that can either be handcrafted or purchased. However, this is not a requirement by any means. Check your list carefully with your parents' help to make sure that you have included everyone who deserves your recognition.

Your Eagle Award package will include the Eagle pin and patch, the parent pins, a mentor pin, a certificate and wallet card as well as an application to join the National Eagle Scout Association. The mentor pin is for you to award to the person that you feel has been most significant to your development. Your selected "mentor" can be someone in scouting or completely unrelated to scouting. Most scouts present the mentor pin during the Court of Honor but you can present it privately if you prefer. If you have already turned 18

by the time of your COH we will also provide the Eagle square knot. There are additional materials that the Troop elects to provide the Scout such as a commemorative flag, Scoutmaster staff medallion, and the payment for the initial registration with the National Eagle Scout Association. The troop will provide a flag box or you can buy one or have one made by a family member or friend if you prefer. Just make sure that you discuss this with your Eagle Advancement Coordinator. Your Eagle Advancement Coordinator will obtain letters of commendation for you from various local and national political and business leaders. A list of the individuals that we contact for letters of commendation is attached. If there is anyone else that you would prefer to have contacted, please let your Eagle Advancement Coordinator know.

8.) After the ceremony: **STAY INVOLVED IN THE TROOP!!** There is no greater resource for inspiration and instruction for other scouts than an Eagle Scout. Throughout the process described above, make sure that you understand and respect that position and responsibility.

CREDITS: This is based on material and information provided by John H. and Shawn T., two former Eagle Advancement Coordinators, and Paul M., Scoutmaster, Troop 149, along with editing by Paul M. and Doug K.. Thanks, guys!!

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