

# 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 every Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review up to now has 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 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This means that all of your merit badges, your service project, etc., must be finished prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday although the Eagle Board of Review and Court of Honor can be held after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as long as the Board of Review is held within 3 months of your birthday. You should plan carefully for the completion of any merit badges that you need since several that must be earned for Eagle require several months of work for successful completion of the badge. For example, Family Life requires a minimum of 3 months to complete. Review the requirements for all the remaining merit badges that you need and take care of 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 website or from the scout office. 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 barriers

or issues that make their 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, etc. Again, 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. Take several "before" photos of the site.

The Scoutmaster usually will provide feedback and suggestions so that most Scouts need two or more "drafts" before this step is complete. Have this now fully-fleshed-out project proposal 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, you must appear before the troop committee at their next regular meeting with a copy 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 the approval of everyone locally, you should then submit your Workbook to Eric M., our District level Eagle Advancement Coordinator, for approval. **You should not solicit any donations or perform any work other than planning until Mr. M has given his approval.**

Finally, once your project is approved, you should contact the troop service project coordinator to schedule your work days. Give plenty of notice to the troop of your work days by making announcements at meetings while providing handouts giving details of your workdays like date, time, place, tools needed, etc. As your work days near, follow up with a similar announcement 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. Make sure that all necessary tools, supplies, first aid kits, water, etc., are ready before your first 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 it completed.

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. In your workbook, you must describe any changes to the project that occur after work begins and provide the reason for any such change. Make sure that “before”, “during” and “after” pictures are included in your Workbook. 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. It would be easiest if you could e-mail the report and form to the troop webmaster. Finally, submit at least one photo and a short write-up of your project to the local newspaper for publication. For assistance, see <<http://www.oconeetroop149.org/news.html>>

### **Eagle Candidates:**

Once all Eagle requirements are completed, you are ready for the completion of the final paperwork, your Boards of Review and, ultimately, 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 and just need to persevere through these last few requirements to reach your goal. Basically 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. (Thanks Jeremy!)

1.) Application: Have an application form along with a copy to use as a draft. An application form is available from the Jefferson office or from this link to the National Eagle Scout Association Website: <http://www.nesa.org/trail/>. At this time, applications printed off the web are accepted but you should double check with the council office or Eagle Advancement Coordinator to make sure that is still the case. 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 occupied 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, following 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 give you a **sealed** letter of reference when you ask their permission to list them as a reference. This helps avoid problems where a listed reference is out of town or otherwise unavailable later causing you to not have the necessary letters of reference from everyone listed on your application. The sealed letters of reference will be opened at your District Board of Review.

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 and the conference can take up to 2-3 hours depending on whether you need assistance with application paperwork. You should have your Handbook 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 take his Eagle packet (including copies of rank and merit badge cards) to the Council Office where it will be reviewed (currently by Martha Ann C.) for completion of all requirements and certified as ready for an Eagle Board of Review. This may take several days or more and you will have to retrieve the packet once certification is complete. At this stage the packet should include the service project report. Council office in Jefferson/Pendergrass: 800-699-8806.

4.) Troop Board of Review: This is not a requirement from BSA but is an opportunity for you to do a "warm up" before the District Board of Review. It will be set up with 3 to 5 members as is the District Board. (If you have particular people you would find it meaningful to include in the Board, please let the Eagle Advancement Coordinator know.) You should appear in full dress 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 make suggestions that might improve your presentation but is not used to coach you on what to specifically expect or to prepare for as you get ready for the District Board. 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 typically held

within several days to a week of the Troop Board. The Eagle Advancement Coordinator will work with you, the Scoutmaster, and the District Representative to find a date. The District Board of Review will include 3 to 5 people, including the District Representative (currently Eric M.), and can not include the Scoutmaster or any Assistant Scoutmasters from the troop. The Board may include individuals outside of the troop and even individuals outside of Scouting. These Boards typically last an hour and the Scoutmaster typically presents the Eagle candidate to the Board. A Scout's guide to an Eagle Board of Review is attached. Other guides are also available on the internet at various Scout and related web sites. See the handout for suggestions of various websites that can be consulted.

For the Board of Review, once again 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, Mr. M. and the Board members will sign your Application and an official advancement form.

6.) Final Paperwork: Now that your application is complete, you should take the original application to the council office for transmittal to the national office. You should only take the original application without the various letters of recommendation, service project description, etc. Under most circumstances, 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 office will 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 relatively quickly. 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 following your Board of Review. 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. Please be sure to check with the 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. This is done by personally appearing at the church's Session, their monthly planning meeting, which is held on the third Sunday of each month. (Check with the church secretary, Carol, about possible dates for your Court of Honor and the date of the next Session meeting.) Contact the Session in advance to request some time to appear to make your request. Appear in full uniform at the specified time, thank them for all of their assistance with the troop, and request your date and time. Recall that Courts of Honor are usually held between 2:00 and 5:00 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 COH invitations, and sample COH 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. If you want Mr. F. to assist, you need to make advance arrangements with him as well. An invitation to your Court of Honor is not enough to let him know that you want his help. Arrange for a reception to follow the COH and for displays/decorations for use during the COH and/or the reception. You can usually find a scout mom outside your family to organize the reception. Many Scout parents will be happy to assist in the planning of the reception and the decorations for the COH 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. 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. If recognizing people, please take care to avoid hurting someone's feelings by leaving out some adults inadvertently. Check your list carefully with your parent's 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. There are additional materials that the Troop elects to provide the Scout such as a commemorative flag, Scoutmaster staff medallion, and an 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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