

Trail to Eagle

A Guide for Life Scouts

This booklet is designed to help Life Scouts make the big jump from Life to Eagle.

Who to Call?

Talk to your Scoutmaster, Troop Eagle Advisor, Board of Review Chairman, Committee Chairperson, District Eagle Chairman, and the Council Scout Service Center for any question you may have.

[See the actual booklet for the phone numbers of the Scoutmaster, Troop Eagle Service Project Coordinator, Troop Eagle Board of Review Chairman, District Eagle Chairman, and the Council Scout Service Center.]

Some Eagle Statistics

Roughly 1 youth in every 182 earns Eagle (0.6%). Yet over 15% of all US astronauts are Eagle Scouts. So are 10% of the cadets at both West Point and the Air Force Academy.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." --- Isaiah 40:31



"Now I see the secret of making the best persons, it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth." ---Walt Whitman

Eagle Scout is the most significant honor a boy can earn, in or out of Scouting. It marks him for life! An Eagle is an achiever who will always do great things. An Eagle is a leader who will always be ahead of the group. Society will always expect much from an Eagle, and he will deliver.

He soars high for all to see. His vision is clear and sharp. His bearing is majestic. His direction is certain and his flight swift and sure. Such is the eagle, our nation's symbol. Such is the Eagle, our nation's future.

Eagle Scouts who enlist in the US Air Force start out one rank higher than others who enlist (and with about \$100 more pay each month).

The Trail to Eagle

The trail to Eagle Scout requires tremendous commitment to stay on a long and sometimes rough path. As a Life Scout, you are just one step away from youth's most significant accomplishment and honor. But that is a big step, and only a few Life Scouts complete Eagle.

Happily, the choice is yours. And you probably have actively involved parents (few Scouts make it to Life, let alone Eagle, without this support).

You can advance at whatever rate you want but remember that all Eagle requirements except the Board of Review must be finished before your 18th birthday.

You are close to the top of a high mountain climbed by less than one out of every 182 youth, and less than 5% of all Scouts.

Eagle Scouts are valued in our society, because they have proven that they can achieve a long-term goal despite many obstacles. This will help on college admission and on job applications. This pamphlet will provide you and your parents with key information to help you make the final steps to Eagle.

The Paper Trail

The trail to Eagle is rugged, but the part most people put off until last is one of the easier sections of the trail.

You can make your last few steps to Eagle go smoother if you do a little homework along the way. We have found it best to keep your records in a notebook/binder. Keep the blue cards and the merit badge card in baseball card sleeves. Also, keep advancement records, service hours, special awards etc. Keep a log of your participation (trips, service, activities, etc....). This is the *Paper Trail*. Collect, write, and keep the following records up to date--

- Date you earned each merit badge (12 Eagle badges and 9 other badges). If you do not have complete records, the Troop Advancement Chairperson and/or counselor have these dates.
- Dates you held all leadership positions since earning Life (write in your Scout Handbook & have it signed off by an adult leader).
- Service Hours – each rank in the handbook has a log for your service hours. Put dates, task, and number of hours down. You may use the Activity-Service Log the Troop provides or Scoutbook as an alternative so long as it is kept up to date.
- Eagle Service Project Workbook
- Eagle Project Report
- Eagle Scout Application
- Letter of Recommendation format to give each letter writer.
- Letters of Recommendation
- (see information on these last five items elsewhere in this paper)
- Personal statement

Work with the Eagle Advisors to ensure your paper trail is in order.

Eagle Scout Service Project

The Eagle Scout service project is different from other service projects you have done because you are now the leader. The Eagle project must meet three criteria--

- It must be of significant value to the community outside of Scouting (town, church, school, etc...).
- It must take considerably more time than a Star or Life project (though planning and preparation time count).
- You must provide leadership to others during the project (the project idea does not have to be original, but you must be in charge; and two people cannot lead the same project).

So, here is what you need to do to successfully complete the Eagle Scout Service Project--

- Get the Eagle Service Project Workbook from the Scoutmaster, Eagle Project Coach, Heart of Virginia Council Office, the internet or click on the link below.
- Come up with a workable idea. This is the hardest part! Talk to the Scoutmaster and the Eagle Advisors for help. Talk to local agencies that serve the needy, or that provide services to the elderly. Contact local schools or churches for sources of other project ideas.
- Write up a preliminary plan, showing what you will do, who it will benefit, materials needed, costs, number of people involved, man hours expected to use, etc... (See Eagle Service Project Workbook). This is your concept section. Eventually, these plans need to be detailed because this plan will become your blueprint to a successful project.
- Present your preliminary plan to the Scoutmaster and Eagle Project Coach. They will help you develop your plan into an achievable project.
- Write up your concept summary and present it to the District Eagle Project Review Group. They meet the first Thursday of every month at the District Roundtable, currently meeting at Mt. Pisgah UMC on Midlothian Tpke. You will need three copies of the project besides your original. The copies do not have to be in color.
 - You will need to make an appointment with the District Advancement Committee. To make the appointment, visit the Huguenot Trails website, <http://www.huguenottrail.org> and follow the links to the Reaching Eagle link. Let the Scoutmaster and Eagle Advisors know so that an adult troop representative can be present for your presentation.
 - If possible, go to an Eagle Project review board a month or two before you are ready to present so you can be familiar with and prepared for the format and questions they ask.
 - Arrive early and in full Class A uniform with up-to-date patches and awards. Ask an adult leader to be present with you if for nothing else but moral support.
 - If possible, try not to be first or last on the agenda. Somewhere in the middle is best. They usually base the starting order on the oldest to youngest (closest to 18). This will give you some idea of the questions that may be posed and to begin framing answers to those questions.
 - Be prepared to answer questions on your project such as: How are you demonstrating leadership? How is this project of lasting value to the community? How will your Troop be involved?
 - The Review Board likes projects that involve creating and building things, raising significant funds/donated items for organizations, etc... They will not accept prefab or purchased projects.
- Upon approval of the project by the Review Group thank them for their time and assistance. Then get the names of those sitting on the panel and send them a thank you. You can do this through e-mail via the council/district website.

- You can start the actual project only after getting District Eagle Project approval. Get necessary donations or raise money for the material. Get volunteers. Do the project. You and your parents are responsible to provide necessary support for the project (transportation, snacks, meals, etc.).
- Begin detailing your plan. When writing it up, ask yourself, “If I wasn’t able to be at the project, could someone else who does not know about the project pick up my plans and directions and complete the project?” If not, be more detailed and thorough. Ask your Project Coach/SM to review your instructions with that thought in mind. Review the plans with them to get feedback and suggestions on obstacles you have not considered other suggestions, etc... Include in the plan:
 - safety equipment needed as well as first aid kit.
 - detailed drawings including measurements of areas.
 - tables or spreadsheets of costs and the man hours expected and where they will be used.
 - Detailed list of materials you will need down to the number and size of nails/screws. This will become your shopping list.
 - equipment you will need and who will be using it.

Other Considerations:

- Contact Miss Utility if your project has any digging involved regardless of size or location.
- A first aid kit and cell phone must always be present during project work.
- Chainsaws, circular saws, and log splitters can only be used by adults.
- Scouts can use other power tools with proper training. Make any training part of your project proposal.
- Fundraising is allowed and encouraged to fund your project. There are some guidelines to follow for fundraising:
 - Must complete the fundraising form in the workbook and have it approved before fundraising.
 - Identify the beneficiary.
 - Funds are held by the troop or beneficiary and dispensed as needed.
 - Unused funds are given to the beneficiary.
 - If donors want a donation letter, it must be provided by the beneficiary, not the troop or Eagle candidate. Keep a detailed time log of every hour you spend planning, phoning, coordinating, executing, etc. This will be useful at the Scoutmaster Conference and the Board of Review.
- **Take photos of the project!!!** You should have before, during and after shots. This will show the Eagle Board of Review what you have done better than words.
- Throughout the process, make sure you keep the Eagle Service Project Workbook up to date; to include changes and adaptations you had to make and make sure all signatures are there.
- Write up a brief (half page) summary of the project to include with your Eagle application (for application requirement 5). This should be what you learned about leadership and yourself as well as some of the challenges you faced and how you overcame them.
- If you received donations from any organization (vendor, sponsor, etc...) write a thank you letter to that organization and keep a copy of the letter in your project workbook. Also write thank you letters to any

adults who assisted you with their time, labor, donations, or equipment use. Add copies of these letters to your workbook as well. The Board of Review members will want to see them. You are representing not only yourself but the Troop and Scouting in general. They want to know you are making a good impression.

After you have completed all merit badges, fulfilled the minimum six months as a leader, and completed your Eagle Scout service project, contact the Scoutmaster to arrange a Scoutmaster Conference. Only the Scoutmaster or his designee does Eagle conferences.

- Prior to meeting with the Scoutmaster, present your materials to one of the Eagle Advisors to ensure your Scout Handbook and binder is up to date, project is complete, merit badges are in order, everything is signed appropriately, and the rest of the requirements are done.
- Bring your project report, Eagle Service Project Workbook, any photos, and a photocopy of the Eagle application along with a current copy of your advancement and leadership reports.
- Wear your full class A uniform, unless otherwise instructed.
- At the conference, the Scoutmaster will guide you on how to complete the Eagle Scout application and how to prepare for the Board of Review.

Eagle Scout Application

Get an Eagle Scout application from the Troop website, Heart of Virginia Council Office or Scoutbook. Make a photocopy to do your work on, and do not fill out the final application until after the Scoutmaster Conference.

The Scoutmaster will help you fill out the application.

You will need the dates for every merit badge (the Troop can provide these if your records come up short).

You will need the names of those you want to write letters of recommendation for you.

The Scoutmaster or adult advisor will help you on application requirement 6 (ambitions/life purpose, positions of leadership and honors & awards). This is a short essay that you must write and attach to your application.

Before completing the Board of Review, fill out the final application, sign it, and take it to the Committee Chairman and Scoutmaster for their signatures.

Letters of Recommendation

The Eagle Board of Review will want five or six letters of recommendation for you. You need to select the recommenders, give them the letter of recommendation request (see below), and give them a firm deadline to return the letters (about a week after the Scoutmaster Conference would be good). Have them send the letters, sealed, directly to your Scoutmaster. Ensure they have the return address of the sender as well as a statement at the bottom of the envelope “Attn: Board of Review, *Scouts Name*”.

You will need recommendations from--

- your parents
- religious leader (minister, teacher, etc; see the Scoutmaster for guidance if you do not have a church)
- school (teacher, guidance counselor or principal who knows you well)
- employer (if any)
- Troop adult leaders
- Athletic coaches
- 1 other of your choice who knows you well (neighbors, other Eagle Scouts, etc....)

The actual letter of recommendation should be personal from your recommenders and should show how you have lived like an Eagle Scout in all phases of your life (home, school, church, etc) based on their interactions and personal knowledge of you. There is no standard format.

Personal Statement

You will need to write a personal statement to the Board as well. It is a letter about you to the Board to give them more insight into you. You can mention leadership activities outside of Scouting, activities, and sports you've been involved in and how it relates to Scouting, community service projects that were meaningful to you, your academic achievements and life lessons learned through Scouting.

Some topics to talk about or expand on are:

- What does the rank of Eagle Scout mean to you?
- Your future plans in Scouting
- Your college and career plans
- What has Scouting meant to you?
- How has Scouting benefited you?
- Life lessons learned through Scouting.

In addition to this letter, you need to a listing of leadership positions you have held in your religious institution, school, camp, community or other organizations and any awards you received during this service.

Eagle Board of Review

After all requirements are complete, after the Scoutmaster Conference, after you have completed the paperwork, arrange your Eagle Board of Review. You will arrange the date and place for the Eagle Board of Review, in consultation with the District Eagle Chairman and our troop Board members.

The Eagle Board of Review may include two or three troop members familiar to you, a teacher, minister, coach or other adult important in your life (no family members) and it will include one or more district members and at least one member of the troop committee (Chairperson preferred). The District Eagle Chairman will chair the review. A minimum of 3 is needed with a maximum of 6. At least 4 are recommended in case someone cannot make it at the last minute.

You will be presented to the Board by the Scoutmaster or designee who will also provide a troop recommendation for advancement. The Board will ask about your project, leadership, and how becoming an Eagle affects and changes you. This is typically your toughest Board of Review. You need to be prepared to recite the Scout Oath, Law, Slogan and Motto and answer questions about other advancement requirements. The Board members will enjoy seeing the fruits of several years of Scouting in you. The Eagle Board of Review is like a job interview and a summary of the completion of your long, challenging, and successful journey toward Eagle.

The Board of Review can be held anywhere convenient. Typically, Troop 897 uses one of the classrooms at Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church. Make reservations with the church office, 804-794-5856. Ensure you have a key to get into the church. If you schedule it on a Monday evening, we already have the rooms reserved and you do not need to reserve anything nor need a key.

Prior to the Board meeting, feel free to request a practice Board of Review from the troop Eagle Advisor or Scoutmaster. Just like sitting for a test, study, and practice. Your results are always better.

After successfully completing the Eagle Board of Review, you will then bring the application to the Heart of Virginia Council along with your Eagle Project workbook, where they will check all information and dates. If everything is OK, they will order the Eagle Award kit and contact the Scoutmaster when everything is ready. If anything is not OK, they will send it back to the Scoutmaster for correction.

As with the other steps in the process, send thank you letters to the BOR members for their time, advice, commitment to Scouting, etc... You are representing our Troop and they will make an impression about future Scouts from our Troop based on their interaction with you.

In the unlikely event you do not pass the Eagle Board of Review, the District representative will outline your course of action. It may be as simple as completing paperwork or reviewing your responses and rescheduling the Board of Review. The appeal process will also be provided, as necessary.

Eagle Court of Honor

The Eagle Court of Honor is special, and it is separate from our regular Courts of Honor. The ceremony can be as simple or elaborate as the Eagle Scout and his family desire. It can be done at the weekly meeting, at the end of a regular Court of Honor or at another separate time. The Eagle and his family are responsible for all aspects of the ceremony--

- Planning--The Scoutmaster has information about ceremonies, but there is no set Eagle Court of Honor format. The troop provides flags & stands, Law/Promise candle stands, troop Eagle plaque, the Eagle presentation kit, and Eagle neckerchief. Most ceremonies have a reception afterward with a cake and punch, though some get much more elaborate.
- Date/Time/Place--The Eagle and his family select a date and time, in consultation with the Scoutmaster and troop calendar. If you give the Scoutmaster enough notice, he can get the information into the troop newsletter. The ceremony can occur at Mt. Pisgah in the sanctuary, small chapel or CFLC, or you can choose to have it at your church, home, yard, or other appropriate place.
- Cost--The Eagle's family is responsible for any costs of the ceremony, including refreshments. The troop provides the Eagle presentation kit [1 of each - Eagle medal, Eagle patch, mom's pin, dad's pin, mentor pin], Eagle troop neckerchief and Eagles Nest engraved name plate. If you wish to buy more of any of these or additional ceremony items [grandparents pin, Eagle kerchief slide, etc..] they are available on-line or at the Scout shop.
- Participants--You determine the color guard, speakers, etc, and you are responsible to invite them and make sure they will be there. The most important guest is the one you select to "charge" the Eagle with his responsibilities as an Eagle Scout. He should be an Eagle Scout (past or present-once an Eagle, always an Eagle) and a person of importance in the Eagle's life. You also need to choose who will pin on the Eagle badge (often but not always a parent).
- Invitations/Programs--You can purchase special Eagle invitations from the local Council office or make your own and have them engraved or photocopied. You can also buy program covers for the program, which can be photocopied on the covers. The program typically also has biographical information about the Eagle, list of accomplishments, awards, etc.

Typical Eagle Court of Honor Program

This is a simple and typical program. You can get more elaborate; add music or a special touch unique to the Eagle. You may design the ceremony any way you wish, and you do not have to follow this program. And there are several items the Eagle receives (card, certificate, etc) that can be presented by brothers & sisters or other family members if desired. There are many well planned programs available on the internet, the Scoutmaster and from other Eagle Scouts.

It is nice to have a printed program (your responsibility). Print the date/location/title on the front cover, with biographical information and the program inside. You could also include a summary of the Eagle service project, poem, interesting statistics, etc.

It is always interesting to have photos and other Scouting memorabilia on display.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

- Opening Ceremony—Color Guard and Committee Chairman
- Invocation--
- Presentation of the Eagle
- Invitation to Other Eagles
- The Eagle, A Brief Biography with Some Amusing (or at least embarrassing) Anecdotes - Scoutmaster
- The Eagle Scout Charge—Another Eagle Scout (past or present)
- Presentation of the Eagle Badge—Scout/Leader assist
- Mother's Pin & Father's Tie Tack—Eagle and parents
- Eagle Neckerchief--father
- Eagle Certificate--father
- The Eagle's Response--Eagle
- Benediction/closing – Committee Chairman
- Closing Ceremony—color guard

Sample Envelope – it is recommended you enclose a completed, stamped return envelope with your recommendation request.

Return address of Sender.

*To keep track of letters received
And not received. This is not the
Scouts address*

Jenny Marshall
Scoutmaster Troop 897
1610 Colehollow Drive
Midlothian VA, 23113

CONFIDENTIAL

EAGLE SCOUT BOARD OF REVIEW REFERENCE

Scout's Name



Heart of Virginia Council
Boy Scouts of America

Dear Sir or Madam:

The young man presenting this to you is a Life Scout in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 897 and is a candidate for the rank of Eagle Scout.

As the final step in the process of determining the qualifications for the rank of Eagle Scout, an Eagle Scout Board of Review must be conducted. At that time, members of the Board of Review will discuss, with the Scout, his achievements as a Boy Scout, and in his daily life, and determine if he meets the requirements for the high rank of Eagle Scout. Those requirements include a series of advancements, the earning of at least 21 Merit Badges, and evidence of leadership skills. A candidate for Eagle Scout must serve in one or more leadership positions in the Troop, and must plan, develop, and lead others in a service project helpful to a religious institution, school, camp, or other community organization not affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America.

An Eagle Scout candidate must also demonstrate that he lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Law in his daily life. In this regard, the candidate has indicated that you know him personally, and that you would be willing to provide a letter of recommendation on his behalf. I have enclosed a copy of the Scout Oath and Law for your reference in preparing the letter.

If you are willing to do so, please send a letter, addressed to me in the enclosed envelope, as soon as possible. If you are unwilling to provide such a letter please notify the Scout, so that he may arrange for an alternative reference. It would be greatly appreciated if you could mail this letter within one [1] week of receipt of this request.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Scouting,

Jenny Marshall
Scoutmaster
Troop 897

The Scout Oath

**On my Honor, I will do my best.
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.**

The Scout Law

A Scout is TRUSTWORTHY. A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. Honesty is a Part of his code of conduct. People can always depend on him.

A Scout is LOYAL. A Scout is true to his family, friends, Scout leaders, school, nation, and world community.

A Scout is HELPFUL. A Scout is concerned about other people. He willingly volunteers to help others without expecting payment or reward.

A Scout is FRIENDLY. A Scout is a friend to all. He is a brother to other Scouts. He seeks to understand others. He respects those with ideas and customs that are different from his own.

A Scout is COURTEOUS. A Scout is polite to everyone regardless of age or position. He knows that good manners make it easier for people to get along together.

A Scout is KIND. A Scout understands there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. He does not harm or kill anything without reason.

A Scout is OBEDIENT. A Scout follows the rules of his family school, and troop. He obeys the laws of his community and country. If he thinks these rules and laws are unfair, he tries to have them changed in an orderly manner rather than disobey them.

A Scout is CHEERFUL. A Scout looks for the bright side of life. He cheerfully does tasks that come his way. He tries to make others happy.

A Scout is THRIFTY. A Scout works to pay his way and to help others. He saves for the future. He protects and conserves natural resources. He carefully uses time and property.

A Scout is BRAVE. A Scout can face danger even if he is afraid. He has the courage to stand for what he thinks is right even if others laugh at him or threaten him.

A Scout is CLEAN. A Scout keeps his body and mind fit and clean. He goes around with those who believe in living by these same ideals. He helps keep his home and community clean.

A Scout is REVERENT. A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.