

University of Scouting Arts  
Southwest Florida Council  
BSA



Doctoral Project

Advancement Guide

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# I. Parent Advancement Guide

## About this Guide

The intention of this Guide is to help the parent and scout understand how the Troop works advancement. This is not a replacement of the Scout Handbook. It is also not meant to replace the Troops by laws or policy manual. It is a Guide through the workings of what the Scout should do to get things done within this Troop Organization. After being advancement chair for 2 years, I made a commitment to get this information on paper so the scouting families may benefit. Armed with this information, the Scout and Parent can set the right expectations and plan accordingly. Without the knowledge of when something has gone wrong or certain steps need to be taken, valuable time is lost. Your comments and suggestions about this guide are welcomed. Please send your comments to [wbadge12@embarqmail.com](mailto:wbadge12@embarqmail.com). During the creation of this Guide, I have had the aid of several people who have contributed. I would like to thank Barry Zvibleman, who helped with the Troop Strategy and also the Troop Eagle Board. Also Ange Martin, for her guidance on the idea development and coaching during its creation.

## A. Who plays a part?

### 1. The Scout Comes First

First and foremost, Scouting is about the boy. The good and the bad will come out and is part of the development. Given a chance to succeed and to fail, the scout will find his capabilities and ways of achieving. In the BSA program the scout has many choices yet still has a path. To follow this path, a balance can be found between school, sports, and other social choices. Scouting can fit, and benefit the scout. There will be a cycle to the scout's motivation, sometimes up, sometimes down, which will be influenced by peer pressure and other factors. Alert Leaders and Parents are important at such times. The BSA program has set up the advancement path to eagle so that it provides a continuous progressive challenge which is age specific. If the scout works at the path, progress & advancement will come.

### 2. The Parents - Keeping an interest & guiding the scout

There is usually an involved parent(s) behind a successful eagle scout. The difficulties which a scout will face require a strong parent that remains consistent. Guidance, patience, and coaching (and a sense of humor) will

keep the scout on the path. You are to be congratulated since your choice to read this guide means that you are interested in your scout's success. An understanding of this documents topics will help guide you in making choices within the troop. Hopefully, you will choose to become an active contributor in the organization as well as supporting your own scout. Without active adults, the scouts would not have a troop.

### **3. *The Leaders -Who they are, and who they aren't***

These are adults who have volunteered their time for the sake of scouting. Their contributions to the troop and BSA make the whole program possible. The key word here is "volunteer". Things will go well, and things will go bad, remember that the leaders are volunteers, and are trying to do their best. These roles are a very brief description and they are presented here only in the context of how they effect advancement.

**Patrol Advisors** - Usually 2 per patrol, sets the agenda for the patrols and provides close supervision on meetings & outings. The scout will have the most frequent contact with their patrol advisor. The patrol advisor can answer questions about the rank requirements and work those requirements into meetings and campouts. This is only possible if the scout knows them, and has this planning with their PA. Coaching at home, and then reviewing will help the scout get used to this process. The PA plays a minor role in the merit badges.

**Scoutmaster** - This volunteer leads advancement in the troop. By gathering support from other leaders a program that flows from one goal to the next will be presented. Individual scout needs can be worked into the program but must be coordinated thru the patrol advisors. The scout may need a requirement completed during a campout or meeting, and the PA needs to let the Scoutmaster know this. The Scoutmaster reports to the committee and provides guidance to the patrol advisors to maintain a safe BSA program. On the Eagle Rank, the Scoutmaster plays a larger role.

**Board of Review** - at least 3 adult volunteers who meet once per month. The Board will interview the scout to determine rank advancement. The workings of the BOR will be covered later.

**Advancement Chair** - coordinates Board members, consults with the Scoutmaster and Committed on advancement opportunities, and maintains the troop records. Also has the responsibility for getting the updates and documents to council, and the securing of the awards. Is present during the Court of Honor.

**Troop Committee** - Supports the Troop in financing, fundraising, and required BSA compliance.

## **B. Advancement Components**

### **1. "MAP"**

Without the Map, getting anyplace is tricky. The path to eagle has several important components, Motivation, Activity, and Planning.

#### **a) Motivation**

##### *(1) In the Beginning*

Upon entering the troop the new scout is full of enthusiasm. The first year is the most difficult and requires a clear focus of getting in step with the troops pace. Sometimes the scout and family are coming in at a very fast pace, they have earned the arrow of light and are ready to take on the challenges of boy scouts. In this case, the scout needs to concentrate on learning the requirements and understanding how he can advance. These same steps complete / demonstrate requirements, patrol advisor review, scoutmaster conference, BOR, will be repeated at each rank. In other cases, the scout and family may be new to scouting and not understand advancement at all. Talk to your patrol advisor, other parents, and be aware of the calendar. Know what is coming so that you can pace yourself and still achieve at a steady rate.

##### *(2) After Tenderfoot*

One of the earliest ranks will be tenderfoot. This rank comes early in the first year and signals that the scout has gone thru some of the required steps mentioned above and now can channel their own motivation in their rate of completing the next ranks. A scout's motivation level can change and settle in. Make sure that the scout stays among the activities which are chosen by the troop, otherwise the scout will stay at the lower ranks for too long.

##### *(3) Advanced Scouting*

First Class, Star, & Life Scouts have adapted to the pace of the troop and have selected their own level of motivation. This level establishes their pace of participation and will usually continue until they achieve the eagle rank, or move out of scouting. These years are the most important and also can be the most dangerous. It is easy to let months go by without a merit badge being worked on, or a camping trip attended. This is where the parents influence will help keep the scout on track.

## **b) Activity**

### *(1) Energy Directed*

Scouting is about movement. Taking the scout in a positive direction is the goal of a good scouting program. The activities (merit badges, outdoor trips, and troop meetings) all direct the scouts need to be active but while achieving a goal.

A balance of the activity level in scouting will help the scout stay in for the full path to eagle, (this takes years). Establishing that scouting is a way of life and is part of what they do is important. On the other side, burnout can occur if too many activities (sports etc..) are taken on at one time. It is easy to feel that dropping out of scouting can ease the pressure. Where the correct choice may be to back off scouting participation at certain times would create a better balance. On the other side, too little participation can lead to a lack of interest in continuing scouting. Balancing time and energy is key. You will know where your scout is if you plan the level of participation ahead of time.

## **c) Planning**

### *(1) Looking Ahead*

No planning is planning to fail. The troop updates the calendar on a regular basis and is maintained online at [www.scouttrack.com](http://www.scouttrack.com). This calendar repeats a common theme of troop meetings through the month, a PLC (patrol leader's council) once per month, a campout once per month, and a Board of Review once per month. Set your goals, and family calendar to incorporate these events. At a minimum, attendance is needed to gain information regarding upcoming merit badge offerings, campouts, and troop functions. Find the time to sit down with your scout and plan merit badge requirements into the choices. You may wish to attend events outside of the troop to help finish partials, or plan outings/vacations with merit badge requirements in mind.

## **2. Basic Components**

### **a) Ranks**

The specific requirements are not repeated here, rather a brief description and how it relates to the troops approach to advancement and how the scout progresses in the unit.

#### *(1) Scout*

Upon entrance, the scout can easily obtain this rank. There is no Board of Review necessary and the scout can seek their patrol advisors approval upon completion of the first section in their handbook.

## *(2) Tenderfoot*

Another beginning rank which the troop allows the scout to combine (scouts choice) with the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> class at their first Board of Review. The reason is because of summer camp. The scout's first summer camp will consist of a fast start program which will cover many of the requirements that the Tenderfoot & 2<sup>nd</sup> class scout have.

## *(3) 2nd Class*

This will be covered at the scout's first summer camp

## *(4) 1<sup>st</sup> Class*

Some of these requirements are completed at summer camp, but not all. Usually the Cooking requirements are what remain. The scout should be working on their cooking merit badge and both can be finished at the same time.

## *(5) Star*

Achieving this rank requires an adjustment. Eagle merit badges must be completed, as well as some electives. Also, a leadership position at the troop level, and service hours. The troop provides opportunities for the hours and positions, but the merit badges must be completed by the scout. Pay close attention to available positions, and keep the merit badges on schedule. Only service hours that the troop designates can be used for credit, so don't miss out on these!

## *(6) Life*

A repeat of the Star requirements, only harder. The bar is raised and it takes a little longer to get here. The scout is more mature, and leadership comes easier. This is preparation for the final rank of Eagle.

During this rank, the scout finishes other required merit badges and plans, and executes their Eagle project.

They finally meet with the District Board of Review to finish their requirements for the Eagle rank.

## *(7) Eagle*

There are a number of requirements upon completion of all the requirements and the scout's eagle application certified by National BSA Headquarters. The steps briefly outlined are;

Complete the eagle required merit badges and electives to a count of 21.  
Choosing Eagle Service Project & gaining Unit (Troop Committee) approval  
Eagle Service Project  
Eagle Service Project Report  
Eagle Board of Review  
Review by BSA National  
Court of Honor

### ***b) Merit Badges***

#### *(1) What are they?*

A key component of learning and advancement are the Merit Badges. Without earning merit badges, a scout will never advance to Eagle. There are requirements in the ranks of Star, Life, & Eagle that mandate specific numbers of Merit Badges to be completed and a mix of the two types, (Eagle required, and elective, see # 3 below).

#### *(2) Choosing & Scoutmaster Approval*

Each merit badge needs the Scoutmasters Approval to start. A blue card has a section titled "Application for merit badge", where the unit leader (scoutmaster) signs and dates. This should be the first thing done when starting a new merit badge. A Scoutmaster can catch when a scout is attempting a difficult merit badge too early. Sometimes the troop will be offering the requested merit badge as a group and the scout should not start the badge on their own.

#### *(3) Eagle Required & Electives*

These two types are designed to provide the scout a program with structure and also allow the scout to choose individual interests.

#### **Eagle Required**

BSA has developed these Merit Badges over time and has driven scouts development in character, citizenship, & self confidence. You will need to complete 12 Eagles, There are 10 mandatory, and 2 other groups, where you have a choice.

**10 mandatory Eagles**

Camping	Citizenship in the Community	Citizenship in the Nation
Citizenship in the World	Communications	Environmental Science
Family Life	First Aid	Personal Fitness
	Personal Management	

**And;**

Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving

**And;**

Cycling, or Hiking, or Swimming.

**Electives**

As the category implies, these badges allow the scout to choose topics which interest the individual scout. If correctly planned, elective requirements can match closely with the scouts' interests during vacations, & other activities which can contribute to completing the merit badge requirements. Choosing another 9 will be necessary to qualify for the eagle requirements. (A total of 21 Merit Badges).

**(4) The Counselor**

The Merit Badge Counselor is an adult volunteer who is registered with BSA. They have submitted an application which describes their reasons why they are qualified as a counselor for each merit badge that they have listed on the application. Once submitted to council, they are reviewed and approved. Upon approval they are placed on the official council listing of merit badge counselors they are now considered registered counselors. This listing is available at the Council office, and is also held in the troop advancement records. Collier County District (Alligator) is the most convenient to choose when needing to go outside of the troop. When necessary, Lee County also has a listing.

## *(5) The Requirements*

Demonstrating that the scout has completed the requirements is mandatory to be awarded a merit Badge. First, a listing specific to that badge can be obtained from several sources. When choosing a badge, an online source such as meritbadge.com is a great resource. The scout can look through many merit badges and their requirements at a time before deciding which badge to work on. It is not required, but the scout may wish to obtain a copy of the BSA handbook for that particular merit badge. The troop maintains a library of handbooks which can be borrowed, and the handbooks can be ordered online.

Early rank scouts will usually participate in troop offered merit badges. A well prepared scout will investigate the resources and the requirements and will understand what requirements are being taught during the troop offering. During this time it is easy to gain the misunderstanding that merit badges will always be offered this way and simply need to be attended like a classroom. This is not always the case. The scout should start their troop experience with the idea that merit badge requirements and their completion is their responsibility, and not the troop's.

## *(6) The Blue Card*

This is one of the most misunderstood subjects. Keeping it simple is the best way to approach this. Think of the blue card as a convenient document for all parties, Scout, Counselor, and Advancement Chair. It is a handy way to keep track of the scout's progress thru the requirements. There are 3 parts, Applicants record, Counselor's record, and Advancement Chair record. Each part plays a role in getting the card completed.

### *The Front Side*

The two sides, front and back have specific requirements and instructions. The Front side consists of (starting on the left) information for the scout and counselor. These are the rules of the road. A very important rule, which is often overlooked, is that the merit badge application can only be approved by a registered counselor. These registered counselors are published in a booklet by the council and should be referred to. There will be times such as day camps and summer camps where the counselors teaching the merit badge may be from another council. At these times, if the merit badge camp is being run and certified by BSA, the counselors are registered where they reside. In this case, the merit badge blue card or other document(s) need to be combined with a flyer, or some sort of evidence of the camps BSA run approval. Keep this with your documentation since you will probably not get a blue card filled out from these camps. They cannot fill one out individually



***The Back Side***

On the left is the most important section of the card. The Merit badge counselor identification goes here along with their signature when completed. If the badge has not been completed and you need to seek another counselor, you need to have the first counselor's information here. You may attach a second blue card, and have the second counselor fill in this section again with their information and sign upon completion. This would be the only section you would need to attach to the original card. NOTE, the completing counselor sign in 2 areas, the second area is on the applicant's record section. Below the line, is where the Advancement leader will sign when the merit badge has been recorded into the Troop's records and will be accounted for in the correct forms to the council. Within this unit, an update of the online system [www.scouttrack.com](http://www.scouttrack.com) is made to give the scout credit for the merit badge. Scouts should check this online system after a card has been turned in to verify that the records have been updated at the Troop level.

<p>The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print)</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Name of counselor _____</p> <p>Address of counselor _____</p> <p>City _____ Zip code _____</p> <p>Telephone number of counselor _____</p> <p>Signature of counselor _____ / / _____ Date</p> <p>Checked and recorded: _____</p> <p>Date _____ INBSIS _____</p> <p>Certificate and badge presented _____ Date _____</p> <p>Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader for record posting.</p>	<p><b>APPLICANT'S RECORD</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>has given me his completed application for the _____</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Completed on _____ / _____ / _____ by _____</p> <p>Signature of counselor _____</p> <p>Signature of unit leader _____</p> <p><b>NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: Retain this copy for your permanent records.</b></p>	<p><b>COUNSELOR'S RECORD</b></p> <p>Applicant _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop <input type="checkbox"/> Team      Unit number _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Crew</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Date completed _____ / _____ / _____</p> <p>Remarks: _____</p> <p>It is suggested that the counselor keep this record for at least 1 year in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.</p>
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Blue Card - Back Side

The center of this side or the applicant's record will also need the unit leader's signature again. This is to certify that the current scoutmaster acknowledges completion of the merit badge. When this section is signed off, the merit badge is considered completed. The right side "counselor's record" can be retained by the completing counselor.

### *(7) When is it finished?*

Officially, when the Merit Badge Counselor signs off on the requirements, the Merit Badge is completed. Often times, the Merit Badge requirements will be completed and only lack the signature of a qualified counselor to sign the blue card or package. This usually occurs when the Badge is a difficult one to complete and has taken a long time. In this case the original counselor may no longer be active, or available. A check With the listing of Merit Badge Counselors (council list) for this particular merit badge will give their names & numbers. Call them up and arrange a meeting to go over the completed requirements to obtain their signature. Remember that each Merit Badge Counselor has their own schedule & are not obligated to you. Their time as a volunteer is donated & you should be meeting at their convenience. At such times it is important to keep the rules of safe scouting in practice. The scout can be accompanied by an adult, or another scout.

### *(8) Keeping up with partials*

Partials are unfinished merit badges. The problem with partials is that the record of what requirements have been completed become misplaced, or just never received. Remember to always get a record of what requirements have completed when you are going outside of the troop. When the troop conducts merit badge training, there is a record which the leader will keep while conducting the merit badge training. It is advised that the scout becomes aware of what requirements are being done during the training and can keep a record themselves. At least keep a note of which leader is responsible for the record and ask for a copy. If this record has been turned into the advancement chair, a record can be obtained there. Once in your files, the scout does not have to wait for the troop to finish the merit badge. A counselor can be found to sign off on the rest of the requirements (using a blue card) as long as that counselor sees the original troop document. In this case, the troop document plus the blue card will complete the records for the merit badge.

## **3. Advanced Components**

### ***a) Service Hours***

At first, Service hours may be considered a necessary evil, another requirement that the scout “must” do to become eligible for advancement. However, like many challenges that the scout is placed in, a sense of accomplishment and actually having some fun in the process takes over.

### *(1) Community & Volunteering*

During a volunteer event, the scout will witness that they become part of a group which has gathered for the sake of a cause. This group is not just made up of scouts, but also may be adults, families, and other youth who have volunteered their time to help. Participating in these events proves to the scout that without this group, many events would not be possible.

### *(2) What Events?*

The Troop Committee decides on what events will qualify for service hours. Publication of a list of events, eagle projects and other opportunities are done thru the troop calendar and also thru email. If you wish to have an event considered, please submit the details in advance to the troop committee. Under no circumstances will an event or project be considered after the fact.

### *(3) Completion & Credit*

During Troop sponsored events, a roster is taken which acts as a document for attendance & completion.

Make sure that the scout has signed in and is accounted for. This record will make its way to the committee person responsible for posting service credit on scout track. For other service events, a registration table is usually set up where the scout will report to and be assigned their duties. The registration table will have a time in, time out, with the ability to give the scout a letter of attendance which the scout can add to their resume and records. A copy of the record should be turned in to the committee person or advancement.

After attending a service hour event, the scout should check scout track for posting the correct hours of service credit. It is the scouts responsibility to be sure that the troop has the records correct, and that the records have made it to the right person.

## ***b) Leadership Positions***

Learning to lead is a vital part of scouting. A scout's development is not complete without learning what it takes to get things done & have other's respect. Leadership positions become available and become important in the second and third years.

### *(1) When?*

If you look at the scout handbook, the earlier ranks do not require a leadership position. It is only required once the scout reaches first class that to progress to Star requires leadership. The type of leadership position at

this level is specific to troop level and the patrol leader positions. It is not to be confused with the patrol level (assistant patrol leader, patrol quartermaster, etc...) So, a good plan is to apply for patrol level positions during the early ranks of tenderfoot and second class. Then to apply for troop positions during first class and above.

### *(2) Planning & Approval*

Once part of the troop, begin planning what leadership position may be right for you. Choose a position which you think you would like to learn about. Don't choose one that requires too much responsibility at first since there will be plenty of opportunity later.

The troop holds elections for the troop level positions every 6 months. Usually in the beginning of the new school year and again in January. The troop (fellow scouts) will hear speeches from the candidates and hold an election. The winners of the positions will serve for the next 6 month term. If a scout does not have a leadership position and needs a position for advancement, the scoutmaster may discuss the situation with the scout and offer options of various projects or roles which will serve as the leadership position qualification.

Do not allow time to pass without the needed position or scoutmaster arrangements to help qualify for advancement.

### *(3) Role Completion*

The Scout has completed the position when the new candidates have taken over. Special arrangements with the scoutmaster may not coincide with the same term, so the scoutmaster will determine if and when the scout has completed the assigned leadership position. There are some troop positions such as the librarian, historian, quartermaster, and den chiefs which are not as visible as the senior patrol leader. These positions will require attendance at the troop meetings and outings and demonstrating the activities which these roles require. If a scout is not active, there is no way the leadership position will be considered successful or completed.

### *(4) Credit*

The troop will post in the committee minutes and advancement records the leadership positions at the beginning of the new terms. Please be sure that the advancement chair is notified of any scoutmaster arrangements that are made.

## **4. The Path**

### **a) Rank Advancement Milestones**

#### *(1) What are they?*

- a. Tenderfoot & Second Class Completed - One of the first milestones that a scout will achieve is reaching the rank of first class. This marks the completion of requirements that mean the scout has become experienced in basic scouting skills. The skills form a foundation on which the scout will build upon.
- b. First Class - The scout realizes at this point that the advancement to Star will not be as easy. The requirements consist of new elements, leadership, eagle merit badges, elective merit badges, and service hours. Attention to all these areas is necessary to get to Star.
- c. Life – Once the scout has finished the 2 ranks of First Class, and Star, he can qualify for the Life Scout Rank. At this point, the focus turns to achieving the Eagle rank.

### **b) Camps**

#### *(1) Fun while Learning*

Each summer the Troop makes a trip to a summer camp. The first year scout has the opportunity to take the beginning programs for fast start and receive a boost on his rank advancements. Second year scouts may choose advanced programs and merit badges which will help fill in their needed badge requirements. The troop also plans outings, such as whitewater rafting, kayaking, etc... to provide a break from learning.

### **c) Troop Meetings**

#### *(1) What are they for?*

- a. Troop Meetings - Several times a month the troop meets as a group to plan and give the elected scouts an opportunity to lead the troop. Business is mixed with activities which may complete needed merit badge requirements that the troop is completing as a group. Time is allowed to break up into patrols and allow the adult leaders to assess the scout's progress. This is when any requests for a scoutmaster's conference, or Board of Review should be given to the patrol advisor. Blue cards / merit badge documentation which has been completed is turned in to the patrol advisor or the advancement chairman.

b. Patrol Leader Conference - Once a month the elected scouts in the troop positions meet with the patrol advisors and plan out the next months activities. Discussions about the next campout activities, meals, and patrol assignments are worked through. Attendance by the scouts in these positions is mandatory.

#### **d) Camping Trips**

##### *(1) Importance and how they fit*

Outings are once a month during the scouting year. Variety in locations is maintained from year to year to keep the interest and attendance high. The trips are not just something to do on a weekend for the scout. If planned and communicated to the patrol advisors, the scout can use the outings as an opportunity to finish requirements in rank or merit badges. These opportunities become more important as the scout advances and needs to finish partial merit badges.

#### **e) The Home**

##### *(1) Support & Review*

The strongest part of scouting needs to be in the home. Support here is critical for the scouts continued participation and success. An understanding of the scouts requirements, and challenges with a regular review is suggested.

Planning for the scout year may include making choices of what trips the scout wishes to participate in. The District and Council offer merit badge weekends, and camps which will help the scout start or finish merit badges. The location and times are usually posted on the council web site. As the scout progresses, other school and sport interests will compete with scouting. It is up to the home to keep scouting in the mix and the scout within the program.

### **5. Rank Approval & Recognition**

#### **a) Patrol Advisor Meetings**

##### *(1) It starts here*

During troop meetings, camping trips, or a planned appointment, the patrol advisor meeting is used to review the scout's progress. The meeting can have different purposes. One reason to have a patrol advisor meeting is to demonstrate the rank requirements have been completed and you wish to have the patrol advisor signing off on the handbook. An appointment should be requested with your patrol advisor to conduct this review. The

scout should be prepared to answer questions about the requirements in their rank level. The idea here is to demonstrate that the scout has completed the requirements and has gained the experience needed. The scout should bring evidence of any service hours, and merit badge completions when the review is about the upper ranks. The scouts resume should be up to date and presented to the patrol advisor. If the patrol advisor is satisfied that the scout is ready to advance, they will sign the scout's handbook in the corresponding areas and set up a scoutmaster conference.

Another type of meeting will be a general planning meeting. Individual guidance can be conducted in these meetings to allow the scout an easier path to progress.

## **b) Scoutmaster Conference**

### *(1) When & how to set it up*

After the Patrol Advisor has signed off on the rank requirements, the scout and patrol advisor will schedule a scoutmaster conference. At this meeting, the scoutmaster will ask questions relative to the scouts rank. A check of the other requirements, merit badges, leadership position, and service hours will be completed. The resume needs to be checked for accuracy and any position or merit badge requirements have been completed. Also, a check of the scouts class a uniform is made to be sure it accurately represents the current rank. If the scoutmaster believes that the scout is ready for advancement, they will sign the scout's handbook. The next step is to schedule a Board of Review.

## **c) Board of Review**

### *(1) What it is & how to get here*

The Board is made up of adult volunteers who have the time and interest in serving on the board. The advancement chair will set up the board once per month, (on scouttrack calendar). The scout is required to send an email to the advancement chair requesting the Review, and needs to include which rank they are applying for. A prior check of their leadership, and merit badges are made to verify that these records are up to date (on scouttrack or calling the unit leaders responsible). Sometimes the scout has not met these requirements and has gotten past the scoutmaster conference. The scout can be informed that they cannot sit at Board of Review. The Board does not wish to turn down a scout because the records were not accurate.

The scout should be dressed in their full Class A uniform, including sash (first class & above), which correctly is outfitted in their current rank. The scout's resume should be updated and in a presentable form.

A binder is suggested which can be organized to contain their resume, and copies of their completed merit badges, camp attendance, and service hour letters. The scout will have an easier time explaining their scouting experiences with an accurate and up to date resume.

The theme of the Board of Review is not a test. The testing of the scout has been completed at the patrol advisor and Scoutmaster Meetings. The Board is interested in seeing how the scout relates to a group of adults in a formal review experience. There are signals and questions that are used to allow the scout to demonstrate their level of progress and confidence.

The scout is asked to leave the room while the Board discusses the scout's suitability for the applied rank. A failure to pass is usually due to a missed item in the patrol advisor or scoutmaster conference. Unfortunately, the most frequent reason a scout doesn't pass is due to a uniform problem, or the scout doesn't have their resume. A no pass is unanimous by all members. Once the decision has been reached the scout is invited back into the room and informed of the decision. If it is a no pass, the scout is informed for the reasons why. It may also be possible to invite the Scoutmaster or Patrol Advisor into the room to help explain. Upon passing the scout will begin their term in the new rank as of that date.

#### ***d) Court of Honor***

##### *(1) The reward & recognition*

Several times a year (Troop 243 hold COH 3 times), the Troop pays tribute to the achievements the scouts have earned by holding a ceremony. During the ceremony, the rank badges are awarded by level. Merit Badges are given out by patrol.

### ***C. Troop Strategy***

#### ***1. New Scouts***

After entering the Troop, a new Scout and Family is excited about the possibilities. New Leaders as well as new Scouts enter the Troop with determination to make a difference and contribute to the Troop. Each Family will bring with them different histories of Scouting. Some may have started as Tigers, some may be new to Scouting. It is important to keep an open mind that there is a rhythm to the Troop which has been developed

by BSA & past leaders that works. This pace or rhythm may not match what previous Cub Scout experiences the Scout has had, however, it is important to understand how to adapt to the Troop's pace.

### **a) *The first Merit Badges***

There are several MB's which the Troop needs the new Scouts to work on first.

#### **1. *Swimming***

Swimming is the most important. Leaders need to know what skill levels the Scout has in order to participate in the outdoor activities. Obtaining the Swimming MB will act as an indicator for the Scout & Leaders. This MB is usually started within the first 2 months of new Scouts entering the troop.

#### **2. *First Aid***

First Aid MB is an important tool to establish a sense of safety. Learning and demonstrating knowledge of burns, wounds, & heat exhaustion, sets a baseline of behavior and a reminder that things can happen. This MB can be started by looking up the requirements before summer camp, but taken during the new scout's first summer camp.

#### **3. *Cooking***

Cooking MB provides the new scout with a sense of accomplishment and ability for self sufficiency. It not only applies toward the MB, but meets requirements for Rank. This MB can be started within the first few months, taken during first summer camp, & finished in the fall of the New Year.

#### **4. *Physical Fitness***

By January of the first year, the scout may begin this Merit Badge with the idea that the attention is to the scout's physical development. This attention will help the scout in the advanced outdoor activities and ability to enjoy summer camp outings.

### **b) *Camp duties***

Overnight camping provides opportunities for the Scouts to learn responsibilities that are needed to make the overnight campouts a success.

A Scout led Troop needs scouts who know the routine of Troop camping from setup to departure.

## **2. Summer Camp**

### **a) First year Scouts**

This is all about the fast start programs. The scout should look up their tenderfoot, 2<sup>nd</sup> class, & 1<sup>st</sup> class requirements. Become familiar with them and also choose some elective merit badges. When information about the camp is sent out, investigate the camp, sign up for your choice of merit badges. Prepare your equipment and what you will take in advance. A footlocker (plastic locking type) is required. All equipment, clothing, and gear needs to fit into this locker. There will be lists of equipment and advice that will be given to the troop during troop meetings. Activities outside of camp (whitewater rafting, canoeing) will also be planned.

### **b) 2<sup>nd</sup> year Scouts**

These scouts have a more flexible program. Advanced merit badges are taken and elective / eagle merit badges can be completed. Advanced programs and outings can be done. It is VERY important to have the scout plan their time wisely.

### **c) 3<sup>rd</sup> year and above**

Traditionally another camp or outing is planned. In the past, older scouts have enjoyed Philmont, and Camp Wente (Colorado). The outing is usually planned 2 years in advance.

## **3. The Eagle Merit Badges**

### **a) Which ones & when**

As mentioned in the troop strategy section, First Aid, and Swimming, must be completed within the first year. Others which are started early will include Physical Fitness, Camping, and Hiking. Each of these 3 will take a while to complete and it is best to know the requirements and update them as campouts, hikes, and events are attended. Eventually, they will be completed.

The more difficult Eagles, Personal Management, the Citizenships, (World, Community & Nation), Family Life, and Environmental Science will take some time to complete and should only be attempted by the upper

rank scouts (1<sup>st</sup> Class-Life). These require some paperwork which is usually hardest for the scouts to complete.

#### **4. Junior Leadership Training**

##### **a) Learning to Lead**

Not mandatory, but helpful, the council conducts this training once per year. If a scout wishes to develop their leadership skills, attendance is a great idea. The training is usually held at Camp Miles in January & February of each year. Early registration is required and must be arranged in advance. Described as a Wood Badge course for youth, the enrollment is limited to 48 youth in the council.

#### **D. The Troop Eagle Board**

##### **1. Purpose**

The Eagle Scout process can be confusing and to the first time Eagle Scout parent insurmountable. The purpose of the board is to help guide the scout through the many events and activities which make up the path to achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. Board meetings are advisory, informal and not meant to act as a Board of Review. The Board is there to aid the scout and family. Meetings will be conducted on a regular scheduled basis where the scout will request a time available. The Board will serve as an advisory body to the Troop Committee where a recommendation on the Scouts Project & progress will be given.

##### **2. The role of the Board member**

The Board member is experienced in the process of achieving the rank. The members are adult leaders or volunteers with time available to provide guidance & information to the scout.

##### **3. How does it work?**

- a.** Upon achieving the rank of Life Scout, the Scout will be invited to the next Eagle Board meeting. The Scout is suggested to prepare a list of questions which they would like to discuss.
- b.** First meeting – Parent(s) may attend. The scout receives a checklist and the BSA Eagle Project package. This first meeting is used as an information exchange where questions can be answered.

A checklist which serves as a progress document is given to the scout. The checklist outlines BSA requirements and Troop requirements. The checklist will also set a series of milestones for the scout to help establish a timeline

c. After the First meeting it is up to the scout to develop project ideas (maybe several), & achievements they wish to complete. The schedule for completion will also be up to the scout. However, the choices must be committed to the checklist. It is up to the scout to decide how soon they wish to have a second meeting with the Eagle Board.

d. Second Meeting - Before this meeting the scout has prepared the checklist & made a copy which will be left with the Board. This record helps the Board to measure the scout's progress. The scout will present his choices to the Board with possible ideas on how to complete. After the Board has had a chance to review & openly discuss the ideas, suggestions on how to develop the project idea into the format of the BSA project package will be given. From here forward the scout will schedule follow-up meetings to inform the Board of their progress.

#### **4. Scout's responsibilities**

The scout is entirely responsible for their achieving the rank of Eagle. They must demonstrate to the District Board of Review that they have developed the skills and Leadership abilities to be awarded the rank. The troop Eagle Board is a guiding body which is set up to aid the scout and facilitate the committee approval process. This approval is a required step in the starting of the eagle project.

Each choice and decision that the scout makes is up to them and their ability to complete those choices. The Scout needs to clearly communicate with the Board by asking questions and documenting their progress.

### **E. Eagle**

#### **a) When?**

##### *(1) The time is right*

There is no specific age a scout will be when the time is right for them to make Eagle. Remember it is a path which the scout takes, and their progress becomes obvious. Some scouts will achieve this goal early, while others will scramble to complete the requirements just before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It depends on the three parts

of the triangle, Scout, Parent(s), Leaders. Combined with the “MAP” (Motivation, Activity, & Planning) elements.

## ***b) The Importance of Records***

### *(1) What counts*

Everything. Merit Badge Blue Cards, partial documents, and camp merit badge completion forms, letters of service hours, leadership positions, and troop Board of Review forms. When the scout turns Life, it is too late to start the record keeping. Troop 243 requires a resume, however it is up to the scout to keep it up to date. It is important to keep all the mentioned documents so that if a dispute ever arises, you will have evidence to back up your claim. The local BSA Council will have the final determination of which merit badges, & ranks have been earned. At any time, the scout can request their own copy of their record to examine for any discrepancies. These records (council) will need to be up to date when an Eagle Package is submitted.

An online tool is being used which has mentioned before, scouttrack is very useful for keeping up with merit badge and rank advancement at the troop level. The key to scout track is understanding that what you see is on the troop records and not council's. They are and will be two different records until documents are submitted to council. Copies of these documents are sent out by email after the most recent Court of Honor. These documents can help supplement your records and when printed out, can be added to your scout resume.

For a reference of the flow of the documents to Council see the Appendix 1. Advancement Leader's reference.

## ***c) The Eagle Project***

### *(1) The Project Pamphlet – Roadmap for success*

Foremost in understanding the Eagle Project will be the Pamphlet that comes from BSA National. This is also available from the Eagle Board. Read this pamphlet thoroughly before deciding on a project. It is easier to start off right & execute a project that fits the Project Pamphlet guidelines. Copy your original several times and use the copies as your work books.

### *(2) Making a Choice & Your Project – what is important to the scout?*

The choice of a project comes from the scout. It should be their decision on what to do as a project. They can seek ideas, talk to other scouts, and will usually have a good idea of what they would like to do. It is very

important to be discussing the potential project with the Scoutmaster and Troop Eagle Board. These two groups will be capable of advising the scout if the idea fits the criteria and is not being done by another scout.

Discussing ideas early will avoid time traps and wasted effort. The amount of work which goes into this project means that the scout should choose something that will last, and mean something to them. An element of pride and accomplishment will be enhanced if the results are truly beneficial to the community.

### *(3) Approvals – The Troop, and the District*

Within the pamphlet paperwork, there are four approvals that are needed to **begin** the project.

- 1 The first is the Troop Eagle Board. This advisory committee (presented later), will have a good understanding on how the scout is progressing and be able to advise the scout if the project is suitable. The Troop Eagle Board will notify the Troop Committee when a scout's project is being developed, and controls when the scout's project is ready to present to the Troop Committee for approval.
- 2 The Scoutmasters approval. This is done in coordination with the Troop Eagle Board where the scout is directed to get the Scoutmaster approval or the Scoutmaster participates with the Troop Eagle Board. (Scoutmaster's choice based on time availability)
- 3 Representative from the benefitting Organization. This approval is primary to the ability to begin planning the project.
- 4 The District Advancement Committee. After the Troop Committee has approved the project, the scout may apply to the District Committee for approval.

Once all approvals have been given, the Scout may schedule the project on the Troop Calendar and solicit scouts for participation.

### *(4) Project Day - Lead & Direct*

The purpose of an Eagle Project is to develop and demonstrate Leadership skills in the Eagle candidate. It is the trees for the forest point of view. A scout should develop and understand their project fully. Their comprehension of how and what needs to be done determines their ability to communicate and direct the other scouts on Project Day. This is not the parent's role, it is the Eagle candidate's role to execute. There should be record keeping that goes along with the project. Taking lots of pictures and notes will help in the creating of the Project Report which is required to finish the pamphlet. The representative of the Organization will need to

sign off on the project completion. Make sure that the paperwork and representative are available to complete this part. Also, the Scoutmaster will need to acknowledge completion by their signature.

#### **d) Scoutmaster Conference**

As in each previous rank, a Scoutmaster Conference is conducted before the eagle scout candidate is ready for a Board of Review. At this time, all documents, project papers, and applications should be checked.

There is a deadline of the scouts 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday for this Scoutmaster Conference. All merit badges and his Eagle project must be done before the Scoutmaster Conference. The District Board of Review can come after his 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **e) Mock Board of Review**

##### *(1) What is it?*

Upon request and some time to schedule, the advancement chairman can arrange a Mock Board of Review.

Scout leaders outside the troop, that the scout is not familiar with are asked to participate. The group asks the scout questions similar to what their experience will be with the actual District Eagle Board.

The goal is to build the scouts confidence before an unfamiliar board.

##### *(2) How to prepare*

When the request is made, a date & time should be given. (Allow 3 weeks minimum) Once requested, this date & time commitment must be met. The scout should be in their class A, sash, and be well groomed. A patrol advisor or other leader can accompany the scout to introduce him to the board. This leader can take notes and help the scout review weaknesses & board suggestions.

#### **f) District Eagle Board of Review**

##### *(1) When to schedule*

When all Eagle requirements have been met, their project and the project workbook is complete and they have had a Scoutmaster Conference, their completed Eagle Scout application is sent to the Council office. The Council office after verifying that all records are complete and correct, then forwards the application to our District Eagle Board of Review, who will notify the candidate and the candidates Scoutmaster of the date and time set for the District Eagle Board of Review.

## *(2) Preparation*

After the Review is scheduled a Mock Board of Review can be set up. It is not always necessary and is up to the scout. Either way, the scout can prepare by looking at what they have done during their scouting years.

This is where the resume and scout's history will help. The details are not as important compared to what the scout has learned from the experiences. Attention during the Eagle BOR is paid to the scout's development as a leader. Reflection upon what the scout has done, during their years and their Eagle Project will be very important.

## *(3) Who attends*

The Scout and the Scout's Unit Leader attend the BOR. There will be at least 3 members of the Board who will convene at least 30 minutes before the beginning of the meeting.

## *(4) What to expect*

The Scout's Unit Leader will introduce the Candidate. The Leader remains in the room, but does not participate in the discussion unless asked to do so.

A discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout law will take place. An examination of the Scouts standards and attitude will play a strong role in the questions. When the Board has completed their questioning of the Candidate, the Leader & Candidate will leave the room & remain outside. During this time, the Board will discuss the Candidates acceptability for the Rank of Eagle Scout. The Board's decision must be unanimous. The Scout will be asked to return to the room and informed of the Board's decision.

## ***g) National Council Review***

Once the Board has signed the application, the application and all documentation, project reports, and reference letters, along with an Advancement Report, are sent to the Council Service Center. The Scout executive reviews all the documentation. If approved, certification of the Scout for the Eagle Award by the Eagle Scout Service for the National Council is granted. Notice of approval is sent to the local council. Once the local council receives the notice a Court of Honor may be scheduled.

## ***h) Eagle Court of Honor***

The Eagle Court of Honor is for the Scout. The family arranges with the help of the Troop a place and ceremony. There are many formats of the ceremony and online or in the Troop archives can be searched to find one which is a good starting point. The format of the ceremony follows the regular Court of Honor except it is for the Eagle Scout only. It is up to a parent to administer the necessary people and facilities to make the Court of Honor happen. The Troop leaders and sponsoring organization are very happy to help in whatever is needed but they need direction from the parent. The Family's wishes are the most important in the design of the ceremony.

At the planning stages it is customary to invite friends and people outside the Troop who have had an influence on the scout's development. People who have contributed to the Project and letters of recommendation are usually invited. The Troop plays a role, with leaders and invited scouts administering the color guard and talk thrus of the ceremony. The Troop's storage should contain the needed items, such as the rank candelabra, and any BSA scouting banners. However, if any special decorations, keepsakes, etc.... are needed, it is up to the family to provide. Some families have had programs printed as keepsakes of the event. As of late, tradition has started a presentation of photographs taking during the scout's history. This presentation may be shown during the ceremony, or immediately following.

Following the Ceremony, a reception may be held where food and beverages can be served. The troop has started a tradition that each new Eagle Scout gets to sign their name to the Troop's Eagle Flag. This can be incorporated into the ceremony or done during the reception. This flag may be displayed during the reception, but needs to be returned to the Troops storage immediately following.

## ***F. Summary***

This document is not finished. It should never be finished because new ways and methods in the scouting program are always being introduced. However, the core of BSA's methods are to conduct a program in progressive steps and allow enough flexibility for the troop and scout to make choices. The troop learns what works and attempts to pass these procedures onto the next group of leaders as they move through the ranks with their scout. It is important to first learn what has been done before, and then adjust as needed.

Understanding the Troops Calendar & procedures will provide a more quality experience for the scout and

family. No one wants to be “left out” and have their scout suffer. With the participation comes the responsibility of the scout and the parent(s) as being the primary roles in the success of the scout. Know the merit badges, plan for the future, guide when needed, and become involved. The program offers great opportunities for the family and scout to share which will always be remembered.

## **G. Appendix 1**

### **Advancement Leaders Reference**

This appendix is designed to give the new Advancement leader an idea of the flow of records. A brief outline and chart is presented to establish a repeating cycle which is followed from each Court of Honor to another. Boards of Review are conducted monthly thru the school year. They are usually held the 3<sup>rd</sup> week and after campouts. This allows patrol advisors and the scoutmaster to conduct scoutmaster conferences to update handbooks on camping trips since there are only 3 Courts of Honor each year, the cycle consists of;

### **Advancement Cycle**

1. Collecting merit badge cards at all times
2. Board of Review
3. Board of Review
4. Deadline for merit badges - allowing at least 2 weeks before the Court of Honor
5. Update of scouttrack & troop email to request confirmations on merit badges earned.
6. Board of Review – last before the Court of Honor
7. Final update of scouttrack & records output, creation of the pdf files.
8. Ordering of awards, sending all documentation to scout shop & council. Make sure to be requesting rank badge cards for the ranks.
9. Packaging and sorting of awards by rank on rank awards, then merit badges by patrol. ( you may use the electronic files that accompany this document for letter format)
10. Court of Honor
11. Email send to troop the documents (pdf files) that were sent to council for their scout records.
12. Repeat 2 more times

*Please see the next page for a diagram of this process.*

# Advancement Cycle

