

GSLAC -- River Trails District

A Parent's Guide in the Life to Eagle Process (03/01/12)

This document will show. . .

- how to help your son earn his Eagle Scout Rank;
- things that help;
- things that don't help.

Encouragement

One of the most important things you can do for your Scout is to provide encouragement. Many young men get discouraged while others get distracted. They may feel pressure from their peers that Scouting isn't "cool". You can encourage him and remind him that earning the Eagle Scout rank will have more long-term significance throughout his life than almost anything else he does as a youth. He must make the decision to reach for this accomplishment, but your support and encouragement often makes the biggest difference. Help him set deadlines, timelines, and goals so that he does not run out of time to complete the process.

Life to Eagle Seminar

You and your son should attend a Life to Eagle Seminar together. You will hear the same things he does and can help him absorb all the information presented. This seminar concentrates on the planning and carrying out the Eagle Scout leadership service project. Attendance will save many hours of work and frustration. Make sure he has the Eagle Scout Packet before the seminar. Read the packet to ensure you understand the process.

Selecting an Eagle Project Coach

Your son will work with his Scoutmaster to select an Eagle Project Coach from his troop. This troop leader will be a registered leader who has attended the Basic Boy Scout Training and is certified in Youth Protection program. This leader will serve as the guide for your Scout through the entire Eagle process. It would be best for the Scout if the Coach is not a relative.

Finding a Project

When your son is ready to find a project, help him to evaluate ideas in light of his skills and interests. The project he chooses must present an opportunity for planning, development, and leadership. Whatever he chooses to do, he will have to teach and lead a group of youth and adults to carry out the project. If he has worked with tools all his life, a construction project might be a good choice. If he is a computer expert, he might consider using those skills. If he has a green thumb, a landscaping project might be the best choice. Encourage him to choose something he is interested in or a cause/organization he is interested in helping. Suggest he talk to other Eagle Scouts, his Scoutmaster, and other Scout leaders. The Scout should communicate and work with his Coach to select his project. The project should be challenging enough to keep his interest, but not to the point of overwhelming him. The restrictions on what makes an acceptable Eagle project are detailed in the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook. If your son has any questions, have **him** call the District Eagle Board of Review Chairman.

Learning the Skills Needed to Carry Out the Project

Your son may need to learn new skills. You can help your son find people who can help him learn these skills. Remember that he will need to understand these skills well enough to lead and direct others to complete the project. You may have skills and information that he needs. Other Scout leaders or parents may be able to help him out. In some cases your son may need to contact a professional for help. The internet or library are always good sources of information.

Writing the Proposal

Once your son has decided on a project and learned the skills to plan, develop, and lead the project, he needs to write up the project in the Workbook. He must write the proposal in the Workbook. Writing up the details is an important step in the planning process. By writing the proposal, he demonstrates to himself and others that he is ready to lead the project. You can help with reading, spelling, formatting, and editing. Make sure he follows the instructions carefully. The written plan will become his blueprint to lead to his success. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Benefitting Organization.

Reviewing the Proposal

Your son should be able to tell to you step by step what the boys working on the project will be doing. He will be leading his project. The boys working with him will know much less about the project than he does. You can help him visualize the project steps. Asking questions such as: "*On the first day of your project you are at your site and have a pile of materials, tools, and a group of boys ready to work, what will you tell them to do?*" "*How should they do it (remember these are boys, not skilled craftsmen)?*" "*What next?*" And so forth, through the entire project to completion. Ask, "*When you go to buy the materials, exactly what materials, types, sizes, and quantities will you buy?*" All these details should be laid out fully in the Workbook project plan details. These are the similar to the types of questions he will be asked when he is ready to get his proposal approved by his Scoutmaster, Troop Committee, and the District Eagle Board of Review.

Funding

In many cases, the organization that is benefiting from the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project provides any necessary funding, but this is not a requirement. In most cases the Scout will be able to get donations or discounts on necessary materials. In some cases the Scout may need to do fundraising to provide funds for project materials. Please note there are special fundraising procedures the Scout must follow. The Scout will review the fundraising plan with the benefiting organization and will require their signature for approval. The benefiting organization can help the Scout by providing him with tax-exempt ID numbers to save sales tax on purchases for the project, but this is not a requirement. Refer to the Project Workbook for fundraising requirements the Scout must complete and follow.

Carrying Out the Project

You and other adults in the troop should have very little leading to do while your son is actually carrying out the project. Be careful not to take over running **HIS** project. This is **HIS** Eagle Project. You may need to be involved with transportation. Only adults can operate certain tools and machinery (refer to *Guide to Safe Scouting*). Beyond these few specific activities, often the most helpful thing you can do is to bring a lawn chair, a good book, and a camera. Stay close enough that you can be reached in an emergency, but far enough away that he (and his workers) will not be tempted to turn to you with questions that he needs to answer. Your Scout should be the answer man for his project, so he takes ownership and feels he has accomplished his goal/project.

Writing the Report

Here again, you can help with encouragement, review, and ideas for improvement. Help him to be sure he has covered all the points listed in the Workbook under "Project Report". Remind your son that this report is a key piece in demonstrating that he was the leader in **HIS** project and that he will become one of that top 2% in scouting. It should be the kind of report he would turn in at school for a yearlong project with the expectation of receiving an A+ grade. For most of the Board of Review members, this is the only exposure they have to his project and represents a significant basis for approving his project. It would be very helpful for your Scout to keep the suggested detailed notes in a notebook during the project. These notes can serve as a rough outline or guideline when completing his final report.

Recognition

While your son and the troop are planning for his Eagle Court of Honor, work with them to help make this event have the importance and lasting significance to your son that is appropriate for the great accomplishment he has achieved. If your son is not sure what he wants, he can talk to other boys and troops about what they have done for an Eagle Court of Honor. The Internet is a good resource to search for ideas. Keep in mind that troops handle the planning of the Eagle Court of Honor differently. Some troops plan it with the scout and other troops leave it up to the scout and his family. Check with your troop committee on how it is handled.

Suggestions for Success

- * Help your Scout set a realistic timeline and goals for his project. Consider "Plan B" contingencies.
- * Follow the "Workbook". Carefully read the full workbook and directions before starting. Each requirement has an explanation of what is expected and the corresponding page number(s).
- * Follow the NEW fundraising guidelines. Be aware of the new guidelines BEFORE making any plans to fundraise or starting the fundraising.
- * Practice, practice, PRACTICE! Have your Scout present his project proposal to you. Allow him to be a "salesman" and sell his project to you so he is prepared for his Eagle Board of Review.
- * Use the Internet to answer questions and/or get ideas.
- * Use the "River Trails District Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Trail" check-off list as a guide for project completion.