

The Final Steps To Eagle

Congratulations! You are ready to complete the final steps in your trail to Eagle Scout. These steps will be the most interesting, challenging, and most rewarding of what you have done in Scouting so far. Achieving the rank of Eagle Scout will identify you with a select group of young men that are looked up to and respected by the social community and in the business community. You will be known as a person of good character, a person that completes goals, and a person that has the training to be a leader of others.

You should begin planning the final steps shortly after you reach the rank of Life Scout. The Scout Handbook (Page 179) gives the basic requirements. You must complete at least 21 merit badges (12 from the required list), completed 4 months of leadership to the Troop, and completed your Eagle Service Project. All the requirements must be completed and the paperwork turned into the San Gabriel Valley Council before your 18th birthday. The Eagle Board of Review and Court of Honor may occur after you turn 18. You officially become an Eagle Scout on the date of your Board of Review, pending National BSA approval.

The Eagle Project

The purpose of the Eagle Project is for you to identify and undertake a beneficial project in your community. You need to use your leadership skills to find, plan, organize, and lead a group of Scouts and others to carry out the project. The emphasis is on you being the leader and not on being the worker. An example might be that if you were building a cabinet of wood. You would show your helpers the drawing of what it will look like, where and how to drill the holes, and what screws to use. You would not be drilling the holes nor turning the screwdriver.

The first step in this process is to meet with either the Scoutmaster, or the Committee Chairman. You will be given a copy of this document, and directed to contact a particular adult leader who will act as your Eagle Advisor. This advisor will help guide you through the process below. Communication is very important while working on your project. You should contact your advisor about once a week. You will inform him/her what you have done, and discuss what to do next. You should write down what is discussed so details are not forgotten. If you have trouble contacting the advisor, please discuss this with the Scoutmaster or Committee Chairman.

Obtain a bound notebook to keep a journal of all your work on the project. It is important to keep track of the amount of time you and others spend in planning and completing the service project. The journal should be with you at most Scout functions. You may get some great ideas while talking to leaders or other Scouts. Write down who you talk to about the project, when and for how long. As you find possible projects, write them down. When you talk to your advisor, you can discuss the feasibility of each idea. If questions are asked at a meeting, write them down so you can find the answers.

You should next obtain the “Life to Eagle” booklet from the Scout Store. This booklet contains the application for Eagle, and official BSA guidelines for the Eagle Project. It also contains the “Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook”. You can download a replacement workbook at <http://www.nesa.org/trail/manual.html> . This workbook is the basis of your written proposal and final project report. You should prepare your proposal on a word processor using the cover page, text and format of the workbook. Ask your advisor or other Eagle Scout to see a sample of a finished proposal. There is lots of helpful information on the NESAs website.

This project is YOUR project. We want you to be proud of what you have done when it is through. It is fine to do a similar project to what someone else has done, but be sure it is of interest to you. The planning and proposal must be done through your efforts and written by you. It is your job to make phone calls, schedule meetings, and run the discussion at meetings. You need to learn how to build the project before you start it, and teach other Scouts how to do the work as part of the project.

It is sometimes confusing as to what role parents and other adults play in your project. You have probably never done a project like this before and you will need help. You may need to get advice from your parents, Eagle Advisor or other leaders in the Troop. In the example above, you may not have built a cabinet before. You will need to find an adult that has the tools you can use and will show you how to use them. The worker at the lumber yard can help you find the right wood and supplies. Most adults are glad to help out when they know you are working on your Eagle Project. Your parents should proof read your proposal, but not write it for you. They should encourage you to make phone calls in a timely manner, but not call for you. They should be at meetings, but listen as you run the meeting.

The next step is to find some project ideas you might want to do. There are many places to get ideas. Some are the leaders of the Troop, past teachers, call your church and ask the minister or elders, call schools and see if they need some work done, call the local City Halls and they might connect you to the Parks and Recreation Department that would have ideas, call the ranger station in an area you like to hike in – they may have a conservation or trail work project. You will most likely need to be called back by the organizations you contact. Make sure to leave your name and number and what time of day you can be reached. They are at work all day, but you are in school until afternoon. Make sure you write in your journal the date, time, who you talk to and their title, phone number, extension, and what ideas they give you. You may need to contact them again and set up an appointment to meet with them about the project.

Selecting the project can be one of the hardest parts. There are so many to choose from and which is the “right one”? A list of some of Troop 777s projects are listed at the end to give some ideas. There are many projects posted on the internet. Use your browser and search for “Eagle Service Project”. Below are some guidelines that your project should meet.

1. It should be of benefit to a group or organization in the area. This could be a club, church, school, park, community center, or conservation work in the forest. It is easier to get helpers if the project is in the local area, and it is good public relations to do something for our local community. The project may NOT be of direct benefit to Boy Scouts, nor a business, and it cannot be a fundraiser only.
2. The project should be of a type that a mix of kids from 11 to 17 years of age can do. Adults may be needed because of safety or complexity issues, but this should be a minor part of the total work. You must be able to teach the kids what to do, and then let them do it. Having adults do all the work while the Scouts watch is not appropriate.
3. The project should be of a size to take between 100 and 300 person hours to complete. This would include 30 – 40 hours of your time to plan, write and implement the project. The actual work portion should be accomplished over a timeframe of less than 2 months. A project that takes 1 or 2 weekends is typical.
4. Funding for your project can be a critical issue. You must have a commitment in writing for the money before your project will be approved. Most projects require materials or supplies that might range from \$10 to well over \$1000. You need to find out how that will be paid for. Churches will usually have money for these materials. Schools have a Community Club that can help. City or State parks will usually buy the materials and have them for you at the project site. If you cannot find a source of money, you may need to have a fundraiser. You can work with the Troop to have a car wash or garage sale. Many hardware stores will give a discount on what you purchase if you ask.
5. Try to select a project that you can be in control of. Projects that require architect plans, building permits, electrical inspections, or many levels of approvals from an organization can be difficult to finish. Projects like Red Cross Blood Drives are not in your control and you could not demonstrate your leadership abilities. This type project will not be approved.

NOTE – When you have selected your project you must have a meeting with your Eagle Advisor, the Scoutmaster, and the Committee Chairman. This is best done at a regular Troop meeting. You must call and let them know you wish to meet and discuss your idea. They will want to make sure the project meets the guidelines above. After you get their approval, you may begin writing the proposal.

Writing the Proposal

The Eagle Service Project Workbook is the basis for the written proposal and final report. It is recommended that you use a word processor to prepare the proposal as there are usually corrections and changes. An electronic version should be downloaded from the internet. Please include the titles, section headings, and text exactly as they are in the workbook. Your written project should look just like the official BSA Workbook, only longer to make room for what you have to say. Most workbooks are 8 – 12 pages long when turned into council. The final write up is added to the back and is 3 – 5 more pages.

The “COVER PAGE” needs to include the title “Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook” Do not make up your own title. It contains the graphic of the Eagle medallion. It has your name address and phone number. The unit (Troop 777) , District, (Golden Eagle) and Council (San Gabriel Valley Council) comes next. Then the Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) and his address and phone number. Last is the Committee Advancement Chairman with address and phone number.

The “PROJECT DESCRIPTION” is like an introduction. It should be fairly short (5-10 sentences). It should briefly cover what the project is, where it will occur, how big it is, and what it is made of. Mention any special requirements like a building permit, or removal of existing structures. Indicate who is doing the work (Scouts, youth group, school classroom). Do not go into detail here. That is covered in the “Project Details” section.

In the section “What group will benefit from the project?” list the name, address and phone number of the organization that this project is being done for. The next paragraph starts “My project will be of benefit to the group because:”. Now finish the sentence. Consider what conditions are like now, and how your project will improve something.

Enter the date you selected and discussed the project with your Scoutmaster. Then enter the name, title, and phone number of the person that represents the organization and has given you permission to do your project for them. Enter the date you first discussed the project with this person.

The “PROJECT DETAILS” is where you describe everything about your project. Write this in enough detail that someone you have never met can read the proposal and complete the project without you. The proposal must include the following subsections.

Current Conditions

When describing the current conditions, include items that are in the way or need removing or changing before you can get started. Is the area dirty or have badly peeling paint? Is the room filled with boxes of unknown stuff? Is the dirt dry and hard or are plants or lawn in the way? Include several photographs that will show the area to be working in and what the conditions are like.

Project Detailed Description (The Method)

When describing your project, use details. Describe the overall dimensions, what kind and size materials it is made from. Whenever possible include drawings to show what the project looks like and where it will be placed. If you are building a cabinet or bench, show a top, front, and side view of it. Show a floor plan or map of where the project will go. Show dimensions on the drawing. It is best to draw them to a scale (i.e. 1/2 in.= 1 ft.). Contact your advisor for help on how to make a drawing. Make the drawing very neat. Use graph paper, ruler, and compass.

It works well to write this in a step by step format that has subheadings like below.

- Step 1 – Planning with the PLC
- Step 2 – Preparing paperwork
- Step 3 – Getting Troop volunteers
- Step 4 – Gather tools and materials.
- Step 5 – Prepare the area by
- Step 6 - Cutting the material....
- Step 7 – Organizing the Workers

Make each step a new paragraph. Each step should cover what you will do to make the tasks get done. Ie “I will show the scouts how and where to drill the holes, or dig the trench, or cut the branches. You need to cover where you will meet and who is doing what tasks. Include what tools and materials are used for that task. If you have a trail work project, describe in detail how each part of the trail will be repaired. Will you use rock or lumber? What kind? How many steps will be made, how many feet of shoulder needs to be raised, and how many turns leveled. Are there any big obstacles to deal with? How much brush is along the trail? How will you cut it and how will you dispose of the cuttings?

Safety

Include a subsection called “Safety” and describe what you will do to ensure the scouts are safe while working on your project. Cover tool safety, eye safety, gloves etc. Cover needing a first aid kit, filing a tour permit with Council. Cover the need to have two adult leaders at all project activities.

NOTE – The only tool that BSA prohibits Scouts to use is a chainsaw. All other types of tools are allowed as long as proper safety guidelines are followed. Adult leaders may use a chainsaw if needed.

Labor Estimate

Prepare a list (table) of the steps / tasks described above. Include the number oh helpers for that task, the estimated hours to do that task, and the total man hours for each task. Ie. 4 Scouts x 1.2 hours = 4.8 man hours. Give a total for everything except yourself at the bottom of the table. Make a second table for your tasks and put that total there. Under that show the “Total estimated project hours”.

Project Schedule

Include a schedule to show when you will do the various steps above. (What dates look best). Show an alternate set of dates if the schedule needs to be shifted due to weather or other factors. Discuss any critical dates that you must meet. This can be done in a table format or a time line.

Project Materials and Tools

Include a list (table) of materials / supplies with estimated costs, and where they will come from. Show a total estimated cost at the bottom of the list. Next show a list of tools needed and who will provide them. If your project is trail work or collecting clothing for

a shelter, you will still need trash bags or boxes and packing tape. Make a list to show what tools are needed and where they will come from. Adult leaders in the troop are a great resource.

Project Finances

You must include a paragraph on how much your project will cost (from the materials list) and who will pay for it. Don't forget about sales tax in your prices. Explain if you need to purchase the materials first, and then will be reimbursed by a school or church for your expenses. Do not count on discounts from a business unless they have given you a letter stating they will.

You must also get a signed letter from the person or group that will pay for the project. You should ask for a little more than what you think it will cost to cover anything you forgot to include or the cost of the supplies going up before you buy them. i.e. your estimate is for \$178. You should ask for a reimbursement of money not to exceed \$200. Put a copy of this letter in the back of your proposal. It will not be approved if you don't have this item. Make sure you keep copies of all receipts to show what you spend.

Signature Page

Make the signature page a separate piece of paper in the proposal. That way when signatures are obtained, you won't have to get them again if small changes are needed in the rest of the proposal.

Note – Do not include the parts of “Carrying out the Project” This is completed after the project is done.

Presenting your proposal

When you have finished writing your proposal (signatures not required) as described above, contact the Committee Chairman. You will need to set an appointment for the parent's committee to review your project. This usually happens after a troop meeting and takes about 30 minutes. Four to six adults will stay to hear about your project and review the proposal. They will ask questions, so be ready to tell them about how your project will be accomplished. Have a copy of your proposal for each adult.

This is your opportunity to ask for adult support of your project. They can help with tools, materials and transportation. Let them know what dates you have in mind so they can get this on their calendars.

Council Approval

When your proposal is complete and you have gathered all signatures, it is time to deliver it to San Gabriel Council. The proposal can be dropped off in the Scout Store. Normally someone will give it a quick look over to be sure the major parts are there. The Eagle Review Panel will take about 2 weeks to check over your proposal. They will either sign it and tell you to go ahead with your project, or there will be a list of items to add or

change. You will need to make the necessary changes and then resubmit the proposal for another review.

Carrying Out the Project

Once Council has approved your proposal, it is time to implement your plan. You need to contact the Scoutmaster and the group you are doing the project for, about getting some dates set for the project. It may take several calls to do this. Once you have the dates, the Scoutmaster may ask you to discuss them with the PLC, so they can tell their patrols about the project. You should also call the Committee Chairman so he can get the date on the calendar. The troop newsletter person could also be called for an article about your project.

You should make up flyers to pass out at troop meetings about 3 weeks before your project begins. Show the date, time and location where the scouts are to meet. Let them know what type of clothing to wear and if tools or gloves are needed. Let them know if they need a lunch or if you are providing one.

Make a sign up list available at each troop meeting. Remind the scouts about the project each week and ask them to sign up so you will know how many to expect. Limit the sign up list to as many scouts as you need. If you only need 5 scouts, you don't want 25 showing up. Don't forget to ask some adult leaders to sign up as well. You **MUST** have 2 adult leaders at your project for the entire day.

About 4 weeks before your work day, start preparing a Tour Permit. This needs adult signatures and must be turned into Council 2 weeks before the work day. The adult in charge of campouts can assist you with this. You need to contact the adult that handles the Troop Medical Records, so they will be available on the work day.

About 3 weeks before the work day, you should contact the group you are doing the work for. Make sure they will be ready for you to do the work. Many places like schools are locked up on weekends and for the summer. They will need to unlock the gates, turn on water, open restrooms, etc. for you. If the group is providing materials, make sure they are going to have them ready on your work day.

Final Preparations

Make sure you have everything ready the night before your work day. Everything should be loaded in the car already. Be sure you have all the needed materials and tools. Make sure you have a sign in sheet for all your helpers. Bring along a troop roster in case phone calls need to be made. Bring a camera and have someone assigned to take action pictures of your workers. Make sure you have covered food, water, trash, and restrooms. Do you need a table or shade canopy?

The work day(s)

Plan to be at the work location at least ½ hour before everyone else. You will need to get organized and be ready to get the scouts signed in as they arrive. They need to sign out

when they leave as well. You should gather the workers together and discuss what you expect to accomplish with their help. Discuss safety rules, behavior, and where things like water, food and restrooms can be found. If you have a lot of scouts, you should select a couple of older ones to help as team leaders. Spend time with the group or individually, letting them know what needs to be done and how to do it. You should be moving amongst your helpers, letting them know if they are doing a good job. A positive attitude is important to good leadership.

When you are done for the day, make sure everything is picked up and there is no trash in the area. Make sure all the scouts are picked up by their parents before you go home.

The Final Write Up

The section "Carrying Out the Project" is added to the original project proposal. This will then all be turned into council along with your Eagle Application. The Scoutmaster and Eagle Advisor should review your paperwork before it goes to council.

Troop 777 Projects

Made large sign at entrance to Walnut Library
Made 6 wooden benches at Quail Summit School
Built 2 wood / cement benches at Sycamore Park
Cleared hillside and reinstalled sprinkler system at YMCA
Dug a long trench for electrical for outdoor lighting at church
Major pruning and clean up of arboretum in San Dimas Mountains
Removed shrubs and made 50 ft sidewalk at church
Cleaned out storage area and painted classrooms at church
Removed wooden benches and made new cement benches at church
Planted numerous bushes along entire front of school
Created large enclosed garden for kindergarten class
Installed 300 ft of rail fence at state park
Installed posts and signs along nature trail
Planted numerous bushes and trees at state park
Repaired sprinkler system at church
Restored washed out trail at Mt. Wilson
Created cement stage for youth group at church
Painted outside of several buildings at park
Cleaned and trimmed 1 mile of trail at park
Restore painted shapes on playground blacktop
Paint map of United States on School blacktop
Made a large puppet theater for school
Sanded and repainted 2 bridges at park
Cleared and extended 500 ft. of bicycle trail
Built 2 benches at school
Repainted basketball courts
Rebuilt/ refinished benches at school

Collecting food for an orphanage in Mexico
Repainted 5 cargo containers at school