

Nature Study Merit program @ Huntley Meadows Park

Important information about how to prepare for a merit badge program at Huntley Meadows Park.

Merit badges are also supposed to be done with the buddy system. **We highly recommend that you attend the program with your scout especially if he does not have a buddy**, the chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge, during the allotted time, increases dramatically when he is properly motivated. There is never a fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. Also our policy is that the program will not proceed if there are not 2 or more adults present for the program especially those containing hikes. We will attempt to enlist adult volunteers from our center but this is not always possible so **prepare for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout**. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the boys individually if necessary, while other adults keep the atmosphere calm and productive.

These programs are 3-5 hours long be sure to pack a snack and water for your scout and that he is dressed appropriately for being outdoors for some or all of the program time. Merit Badges are in general not designed to be completed in an afternoon therefore in order to complete the badge there is some work the scouts need to do outside of the workshop. We call this prework. We suggest this is done prior to the badge program date but we realize this is not always practical or possible, in these cases we will if requested sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program or ask that you bring/ send back all the work and the card in order to sign off on the blue card all at once.

Nature is fickle so we **can not** guarantee good weather or that we will see lots of animals. The current plan is to do **bolded** requirements 1, 2, and 3 and then from requirement 4, all of b, c, e, and g. We will also attempt to do 4a. 1 That means if you can do Birds 4a, 2 before you come you will be finished that day. If you want you may also finish those parts after the program and bring me your results, then I will sign your card when you finish. Feel free to contact me with questions.

Nature Requirements

- 1. Name three ways in which plants are important to animals. Name a plant that is important to animals that is protected in your state or region, and explain why it is at risk.**
- 2. Name three ways in which animals are important to plants. Name an animal that is protected in your state or region, and explain why it is at risk.**
- 3. Explain the term "food chain." Give an example of a four-step land food chain and a four-step water food chain.**
4. Do all the requirements in FIVE of the following fields:
 - a. Birds
 - 1. In the field, identify eight species of birds.**

2. Make and set out a birdhouse OR a feeding station OR a birdbath. List what birds used it during a period of one month.

b. Mammals

- 1. In the field, identify three species of wild animals.**
- 2. Make plaster casts of the tracks of a wild animal.**

c. Reptiles and Amphibians

- 1. Show that you can recognize the poisonous snakes in your area.**
- 2. In the field, identify three species of reptiles or amphibians.**
- 3. Recognize one species of toad or frog by voice; OR identify one reptile or amphibian by eggs, den, burrow or other signs.**

d. Insects and Spiders

1. Collect, mount, and label 10 species of insects or spiders.
2. Hatch an insect from the pupa or cocoon; OR hatch adults from nymphs; OR keep larvae until they form pupae or cocoons; OR keep a colony of ants or bees through one season.

e. Fish

- 1. Catch and identify two species of fish.**
- 2. Collect four kinds of animal food eaten by fish in the wild.**

f. Mollusks and Crustaceans

1. Identify five species of mollusks and crustaceans.
2. Collect, mount, and label six shells.

g. Plants

- 1. In the field, identify 15 species of wild plants.**
- 2. Collect and label seeds of six plants; OR the leaves of 12 plants.**

h. Soils and Rocks

1. Collect and identify soils found in different layers of a soil profile.
2. Collect and identify five different types of rocks from your area

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