

## **Nature Merit Badge at Riverbend Park**

Welcome to the Environmental Science Merit Badge program at Riverbend Park. The program may be held at either the Riverbend Visitor Center located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street in Great Falls, or the Riverbend Nature Center located at 8814 Jeffery Road. Please review your confirmation email or call the park at 703-759-9018 for location.

### **Important general Merit Badge information for parents:**

Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements for the merit badge your scout has selected. Some badges may take considerable time and planning to complete and may not be appropriate for younger scouts. Blue cards must be signed by your Troop Leader prior to attending the merit badge class. Park staff will not sign off on any blue cards missing this signature.

Most merit badges are not designed to be completed in a single session with an instructor, so it is not always possible to walk away with a completed and signed blue card at the end of a program. Every badge requires some independent work by your scout.

Please be prepared for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout. We encourage that one or more adults remain. There is no fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. 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. Additionally, adults may help keep the atmosphere calm and productive. It is also in keeping with the scouting guidelines for youth protection.

### **Below is the recommended homework to be completed before the program:**

Please download the merit badge worksheets from [meritbadge.org](http://meritbadge.org) and bring these worksheets to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork. We will go over all of the merit badge requirements during class but it is helpful if the scout has reviewed the worksheet ahead of time.

Requirement 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.

Requirement 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.

Requirement 3. Explain the term "food chain." Give an example of a four-step land food chain and a four-step water food chain.

Requirement 4.a.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. This can be completed as homework before or after the program date. Evidence of work completed is required. Photographs of setting up the station and caring for the station everyday (completed by keeping a log: day, date, work completed).

Requirement 4.c.1. Show that you can recognize venomous snakes in your area.

Requirement 4.h.2. Collect and identify 5 different types of rocks from your area. If you cannot identify them at home we can help you during the program.

**What to bring to the program:**

- Bring your blue card (Riverbend does not have blue cards.)
- Bring your completed homework. It is OK if you cannot complete the homework before class. You can bring completed homework in at a later date for sign-off.
- Bring/wear weather appropriate clothing/outerwear. We will not go outdoors in heavy rain or thunderstorms.
- Bring a pencil and pen.
- Bring a flashlight, if the program is held after dusk.
- We recommend that you download the merit badge worksheets from [meritbadge.com](http://meritbadge.com) and bring these worksheets to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork.
- Bring a snack and drink or money to purchase some at the visitor center. Bring more substantial food if your program is longer than four hours.

**Homework to be completed after the program:**

Requirement 4.a.2., if not completed before the program date. See homework list above.

Your scout must provide evidence of completion in order to obtain blue card sign-off. Digital photographs of your scout doing the element and a picture of the completed requirement will be sufficient evidence.

Once the homework, class work and post homework are completed, all elements of the merit badge will be complete.

If your scout needs blue card sign-off after the class date, please call 703-759-9018 to arrange a time to meet with a merit badge counselor.

We're looking forward to working with your scout.

Riverbend Park  
[Fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend](http://Fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend)  
703-759-9018  
8700 Potomac Hills Street  
Great Falls, VA 22066