



## **Nature Study Merit Badge at Lake Fairfax**

Welcome to the Nature Study Merit Badge program at Lake Fairfax Park. The program is held at the Main Office located at 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive in Reston unless otherwise indicated by park staff.

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

- Please be familiar with the requirements of the program your scout has selected. Some badges take considerable time and planning to complete. Some badges may not be appropriate for younger scouts.
- Blue cards must be signed by the troop leader before attending the merit badge program. Lake Fairfax Park does not have blue cards.
- Most merit badges are not designed to be completed in a single session. Every badge requires some independent work by your scout. All requirements, including prework, the program, and postwork, must be completed before park staff can sign the merit badge card. Note: Not all badges will have postwork.
- 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.

### **What to bring to the program:**

- Merit Badge worksheet packet
- Pencil and pen
- 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.
- Come prepared to discuss and present your homework. As we move from one topic to the next during class scouts will be asked to present homework elements completed. It will be more important to prove that you have understood a requirement orally rather than just presenting written information.
- Bring your blue card signed by your scout master. (Lake Fairfax does not have blue cards.)
- Bring/wear weather appropriate clothing/outerwear. We will not go outdoors in heavy rain or thunderstorms.

- Bring a flashlight, if the program is held after dusk.
- Snack and drink

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

Merit badge worksheets may be downloaded from [meritbadge.org](http://meritbadge.org) and brought to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork.

- 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 the following:
  - a) Birds
    - ii) Make and set out a birdhouse OR feeding station OR a birdbath. List what birds used it during a period of one month. *\*Evidence of this being completed is required. Photographs of setting up the structure and a daily log of bird use is sufficient.\**

**Requirements to be completed during class:**

\*Please note that nature is fickle and we cannot guarantee good weather or that we will see lots of animals. The current plan is to do the bolded requirements below.\*

- 4) Do all the requirements in FIVE of the following fields:
  - a) Birds**
    - i) In the field, identify eight species of birds.**
    - ii) 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**
    - i) In the field, identify three species of wild mammals.**
    - ii) Make plaster casts of the tracks of a wild mammal.**
  - c) Reptiles and Amphibians**
    - i) Show that you can recognize the venomous snakes in your area.**
    - ii) In the field, identify three species of reptiles or amphibians.**
    - iii) 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

- i) Collect, mount, and label 10 species of insects or spiders.
- ii) 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**

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

**f) Mollusks and Crustaceans**

- i) Identify five species of mollusks and crustaceans.
- ii) Collect, mount, and label six shells.

**g) Plants**

- i) In the field, identify 15 species of wild plants.
- ii) Collect and label seeds of six plants; OR the leaves of 12 plants.

**h) Soils and Rocks**

- i) Collect and identify soils found in different layers of a soil profile.**
- ii) Collect and identify five different types of rocks from your area.**

**Work completed after the program:**

Once the prework, class work and postwork 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 703-471-5414 to arrange a time to meet with a merit badge counselor.

We're looking forward to working with your scout.

Lake Fairfax Park  
Fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lakefairfax  
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