

## Nature Merit Badge Prework

### Hidden Oaks Nature Center

The Nature merit badge is a four-hour program. Scouts should bring a snack and plenty of water. We will spend a portion of the session outside, so please come prepared with appropriate footwear and dressed for the weather.

What to bring:

- Blue card, pen and pencil
- Camera if possible (cell phone ok)
- Appropriate clothing including closed toe shoes
- Snack and water.
- Prework.

### Prework

1. Name three ways in which plants are important to animals. Identify and research a plant that is protected in your state or region. Explain why it is at risk.

2. Name three ways in which animals are important to plants. Identify and research an animal that is protected in your state or region. Explain why it is at risk.

4. a. Make and set out a birdhouse *OR* a feeding station *OR* a birdbath. Observe your station and record what birds used it during a period of one month. Evidence of work completed is required, such as photographs of setting up the station and caring for the station. Keep a daily log to record visitors (day, date, work completed). This can be done before or after class to complete the badge requirements. *Note:* Scouts should start to look for birds in the field now and practice identifying them in order to complete 4.a requirements by the end of the class. All scouts should bring their list of birds to class.

7. a. Identify three career opportunities that would use skills and knowledge in Nature. Pick one and research the training, education, certification requirements, experience, and expenses associated with entering the field. Research the prospects for employment, starting salary, advancement opportunities and career goals associated with this career.

***A Note about Collecting:*** *In the early 1900s when Scouting first formed, collections of natural objects such as insects, bird feathers, rock, plants, etc. were popular. Over time we have learned how important it is not to disturb native wildlife or their habitats when possible and instead observe them where they belong in the wild. Following Leave No Trace principles, scouts are encouraged to take photographs or drawings of animals, plants and other natural objects instead of collecting actual specimens. This way, we are respecting nature by minimizing stress to the animals and plants we are observing.*

**A reminder that NO wildlife (animals, plants, rocks, or other objects) may be removed from Hidden Oaks Nature Center or any other Fairfax County Park at any time.** Collecting animals, plants or rocks from public lands often requires a state permit and is discouraged. Owners' permission must be obtained before removing anything from private property.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelsey Jeffers by email [Kelsey.Jeffers@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Kelsey.Jeffers@fairfaxcounty.gov) or by phone (703) 941-1065