

Important information for parents about how to prepare your scout for any merit badge program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park!



Please bring your blue card (your scout master should sign it). We do not have blue cards!

Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements for the merit badge your scout has selected. Some badges can be very demanding and may take considerable time and planning to complete. Some badges are not appropriate for younger scouts.

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. We call this "pre-work" because, if these requirements are performed *prior* to our program, we can complete and sign the merit badge card. Otherwise we will on the specific requirements covered at the completion of our program and will have qualified counselors review assignments on an individual basis at a later date. Note you will have to contact and schedule an appointment with an appropriate staff member to do this. Not all staff members are qualified for all badges.

Please *prepare 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, while other adults keep the atmosphere calm and productive. It is also in keeping with the scouting guidelines for youth protection.

Be sure your scout is dressed appropriately for being outdoors for some or all of the program time. Packing water and snacks is wise for long programs and programs scheduled in hot weather months. Lastly, obtaining copies of the scout resource booklet for the merit badge can help prepare your scout working with his counselor and for completing any independent study. Books for the badges can be ordered at your local scouting store or at www.scoutstuff.org.

Thank you! And best wishes for success to your scout.

Nature Study: This is one 4-hour class. PLEASE BRING A CAMERA.

Optional Pre-Work (or Post-Work if we don't catch fish): Requirement 4B.2 Build a bird-house, feeding station, or birdbath. List what birds used it during a period of one month.

NATURE STUDY MERIT BADGE

BE PREPARED: The Nature Study Merit Badge session is **four hours long** and covers *a lot* of material and a lot of ground: we will be doing a good bit of walking. Please bring water and snacks to keep up your energy. Dress for the weather. Wear hiking boots or a similar shoe that will support your feet and you don't mind getting muddy.

Please bring your blue card. We do not have them.

We hope to cover all of the requirements for the badge in the four-hour time period. It is possible that we will have an outstanding requirement if Nature does not provide all that we need. In that case there will be post-work and you will have to return here for final approval on your blue card.

A Note about Collecting: When Scouting first began collections of natural objects, such as insects, bird nests, rock, plants, etc. were popular. But removing animals and items from natural can pose serious problems to animals and their habitats, especially in populated areas. We heartily encourage collecting photographs or drawings of animals, plants and natural objects instead of the collection of actual specimens. And even this sort of collecting must be done with respect and with minimum stress to the animals and plants you are observing.

NO animals, plants, rocks, or other objects may be taken from any Fairfax County park (except fish). Therefore our collecting will be of photographs (or drawings) and observations, not of objects. Please bring a camera (a cell phone camera is fine) in order to collect specimens.

Outside the park, the laws regarding collecting animals, plants rocks, etc. are complex and contradictory, but often require a state permit on public land. You must obtain owner permission to collect on private lands.

PRE/POST-WORK:

- Please read the badge requirements carefully (see below) Any reading or research you can do on these topics before we meet will help to speed your completion of the workbook and the badge.
- We will complete requirements 1-3. and for #4, b, c, e, g, & h: mammals, reptiles & amphibians, fish, plants, and soil & rocks. If we cannot complete all of these options scouts may have to complete option 4A, birds, at home.

NATURE STUDY MERIT BADGE REQUIREMENTS



1. Name three ways in which plants are important to animals. Name a plant 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 of the requirements in FIVE of the following fields:
 - (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 venomous 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.
 - (e) Fish
 - (1) Catch and identify two species of fish.
 - (2) Collect four kinds of animal food eaten by fish in the wild
 - (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.

In case we cannot complete 4.E (1): catch and identify two species of fish, we will complete:

- 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.

Requirement 4.A (2) would have to be completed at home.