

# Planning and Executing Successful Eagle Scout Service Projects



by Dave Tracewell

All across America, on any given day, there is a young man demonstrating his leadership and organizational skills by performing a service in his community that will be of lasting value. This young man, after spending years "training" for this event, will plan, develop, orchestrate, and lead a team of other volunteers to succeed in this task. Since 1911, there have been over one million young men like him who have contributed millions of hours of community service, helping innumerable churches, schools, parks, and communities by providing substantial service projects to these organizations. He is about to join the ranks of great men like The Honorable Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States, movie director Steven Spielberg, Apollo Astronaut James A. Lovell Jr., Business Executive H. Ross Perot, millionaire and Founder of Electronic Data Systems Corporation, and thousands of other famous and successful men who have traveled these steps before him. He is the Boy Scout who is on the final "leg" of his journey to achieve his Eagle Scout award.

The Eagle Scout award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well documented and maintained over the years. Only about 2.5 percent of all Boy Scouts ever achieve this prestigious award. It has always carried with it a special significance not only in Scouting, but also in business or industry, higher education, the U.S. Armed Forces and in everyday life. It is a highly regarded mark of achievement.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, the highest advancement

rank in Scouting, a Boy Scout must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills. Along the way, he epitomizes the aims of Scouting: "Good character, mental and physical development, and participating citizenship." There are many choices along this trail, and the young Scout must choose options that demonstrate proficiency in a number of specific skills. His must first advance through six lower "ranks" before he can even attempt to earn his Eagle Scout award. To advance, a Boy Scout must pass specific tests, which are organized by requirements for each of these ranks and a minimum of 22 merit badges. This effort is culminated with a "Service Project."

The Service Project associated with the earning of the Eagle Scout award is a significant part of the rank and serves as a final testament of his ability to plan, develop, organize, and lead a significant project of lasting value. The Boy Scout Handbook lists the requirement in the following manner:

"While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to your religious institution, school, or community. The project idea must be approved by your Scoutmaster and troop committee, and reviewed by the council or district before you start."

Eagle Scout Projects can be a difficult, sometimes overwhelming, experience that ultimately gives the young Scout a great feeling of accomplishment and pride. It is beneficial experience not only to the Scout, but to the organization who benefits from the project, and the Scouts and Scouters who help. Probably the most difficult part of the project is determining what it is you are going to do.

## 21 Eagle Scout Service Project Ideas To Help You Get Started

The following are some ideas that can help you in choosing an appropriate Eagle Project. There is no minimum time requirement set by the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America, but the project should be of "lasting value" and should "demonstrate leadership" by the Life Scout. The project should also be helpful or fulfill a need of the religious institution, school, or community. While the following projects were all successful Eagle Scout Projects for other Eagle Scouts, this is not a complete list and many others have been, and can be just as successful.

**Bike Trail Map** – Design, publish and distribute a map of bicycle trails, including "bicycle lanes" on public streets within your community.

**Bike Safety Rodeo** – Organize and conduct a bicycle safety event within your school or community. Include bicycle maintenance inspection, licensing, and safe riding seminars.



**Hiking & Riding Trail Map** – Design, publish and distribute a map of hiking and horseriding trails for a park or wilderness area in your community. Possibly provide a multi-lingual version of the map for non-English speaking members of your community.

**Emergency Supply Containers** – Provide or build a storage container, and stock it with emergency supplies for local schools. This project could involve developing an inventory control system to monitor and replace perishable water, food and medical supplies, as well as getting local agencies or organizations to sponsor certain aspects of the project.

**Collect Children's Books** – Collect children's books and toys and setup a play area at a public hospital neighborhood clinic.



**Flag Pole** – Build or provide a flag pole for your school, park, or local community building.

**Gravestone or Marker Restoration** – Repair and/or replace broken gravestones in a local historic graveyard. Help identify lost or stolen gravestones and markers.

**Drowning Prevention Class** – Hold a Drowning Prevention Class in your community. Distribute drowning prevention brochures at shopping centers and in neighborhoods. Work with local agencies to get information out to the public.



**Paint Fire Hydrants** – Paint fire hydrants and clear away any high grass and/or debris around them in your community.

**Fingerprint Children** – Working with your local Police department, conduct a program for children about dangers of abduction and fingerprint them for their parents.



**Acquire Computers** – get local companies to donate old computers and software to local schools. Make sure the computers are in good working order and have the proper software installed. Deliver and set up the computers in the schools.

**Historic Rehabilitation** – Restore or rehabilitate an old historic structure or site within your community.

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