

The Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project - & - Your Unit

The 2011 printing of the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook and the 2011 printing of the Guide to Advancement have made quite a splashy entrance into our world – sort of like arriving at a new school or in a new class... you may not want to be there, but until something changes, this is it. The changes were needed and look like they are for the better. Once you become familiar with the changes and can see the positive experience they provide for your Scouts, you should like them.

So let's begin with the short list of concepts that haven't really changed:

- No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements
- Work on a project, including planning, begins after the Life Scout board of review
- There is no requirement a Scout work with an Eagle Advisor/Coach but it is highly recommended
- The project must provide sufficient opportunity to fulfill Requirement 5
- An Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project belongs to the Eagle Scout candidate
- To be approved, a proposal must show planning, development, and leadership
- To be approved, safety issues must be addressed
- There is no requirement for a minimum number of hours that must be worked on an Eagle Scout service project
- Routine labor is not normally considered appropriate for a project
- To begin a project prior to approval is counter to the requirements and well covered in various documents
- If a Scout is unable to complete all the requirements before age 18 due to no fault of his own, he should apply for a Time Extension
- Special Needs Scouts have special considerations

No big surprises here!

At one time or another, each leader has been forced to interpret the intent of a Requirement, explain a concept, promote an understanding or define a word or phrase... and just as soon as your last word is released, wham! the fussing begins, and continues, and continues, and continues, until replaced by angry words and bad feelings... .. but you were just trying to help.

National BSA to the rescue!

Many if not most of these quote "new changes" are really just variations that provide more detail and some clarity.

... so let's take another look at those concepts that - haven't really changed:

- No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to
 - produce or require additional forms, or to add or change requirements, or to make any additions, deletions, or changes in the text, outlines, links, graphics, or other layout or informational elements of the workbook
- Yes, work on a project, including planning, begins after the Life Scout board of review
 - This is not meant to preclude an enthusiastic Star Scout from talking with his Scoutmaster, religious leader, or principal about what a good project might be
- There is no requirement a Scout work with an Eagle Advisor/Coach but it is highly recommended
 - A coach does not have the authority to dictate changes, withdraw approval, or take any other such directive action. Their value is in their life experiences, assisting the Eagle Candidate evaluate their plan by discussing the strengths, weaknesses, and risks.
 - (See Coach Presentation for additional information)
- An Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project belongs to the Eagle Scout candidate.
 - The Eagle Scout service project is an individualized experience - no more than one candidate may receive credit for working on the same project.
- To be approved, a proposal must show planning, development, and leadership.
 - One of the purposes for the project is to demonstrate leadership.
 - Give leadership to others... "Others" mean at least two people besides the Scout.
 - Parents and others may help, but the Scout must be the leader.
 - Project appears to be feasible.
 - Identify key steps for success.
 - Includes Contingency Plans
 - Funding Plan (see Fundraising Presentation for additional information)
 - A reasonable chance for a positive experience
 - Reviewers must not require more planning and development than necessary to execute the project.
- To be approved, safety issues must be addressed.
 - Hazards and safety issues are addressed.
 - Formulate a plan to advise workforce of safety issues as project is conducted.
 - The health and safety of those working on Eagle projects must be integrated into project execution.
- There is no requirement for a minimum number of hours that must be worked on an Eagle Scout service project.
 - No unit, district, council, or individual shall place any requirement or other arbitrary standard on the number of hours spent on a project
 - If the proposal is lengthy and complicated, the project may be too complex
- Routine labor is not normally considered appropriate for a project.
 - The real test has to do with the scale and impact.
 - If 'routine labor' is conducted on so large a scale it requires planning, development, and leadership, it may have sufficient impact.
- To begin a project prior to approval is counter to the requirements and well covered in various documents.
 - It may be practical for a Scout to select a different project.

- If a Scout is unable to complete all the requirements before age 18 due to no fault of his own, he should apply for a Time Extension.
 - BSA will welcome Scouts back after a period of inactivity – but all time requirements must still be met.
 - Scouts reactivating too late to complete time-oriented requirements will not be granted extensions.
 - Scouts who remain active but simply did not focus on advancement will not be granted extensions.
 - Examples of circumstances that might be considered
 - health-related incident requiring a hospital stay
 - a disabling injury
 - a significant employment conflict
 - a family emergency
 - a natural disaster
 - severe unseasonable weather that could not have been anticipated
 - unforeseen actions of others affecting the youth's ability to complete the requirements (Planned & anticipated issues are not "unforeseen")
- Special Needs Scouts have special considerations
 - Refer to the Guide to Advancement 2011 – Section 10.1.0.0

Again, no big surprises here – just BSA saying what many leaders believe appropriate

So what's new???

This new Guide to Advancement 2011 provides an important collection of Responsibilities, Requirements and Realities for the Unit Leadership. These 3 R's must be incorporated into your Unit as part of your standard operating procedures. Inclusion with the rest of your normal policies will go a long way to create and maintain a level playing field for your Eagle Candidates and their projects.

- **Responsibilities**
 - Ultimately... the responsibility for success belongs to the Scout, and final evaluation is left to the board of review.
 - All Eagle Scout service projects constitute official Scouting activity and thus are subject to Boy Scouts of America policies and procedures.
 - Projects are considered part of a unit's program and are treated as such with regard to policies, procedures, and requirements regarding Youth Protection, two-deep leadership, etc.
 - As with any Scouting activity, the Guide to Safe Scouting applies.
 - As the Guide to Safe Scouting is updated, it will affect how services projects are conducted.
 - Soon to be updated changes limit the use of hazardous power tools, machinery, and equipment, and also such activities as working at heights or on ladders, and driving motor vehicles.

- Anyone under 18 who uses any power tool of any size must be supervised by a mature adult experienced in the use of the (specific) tool.
- The "Sweet 16 of BSA Safety" must also be consulted as an appropriate planning tool.
- ...Scouting activities may not include activities for youth that, by law, they would not be allowed to do in a workplace.
- It is important also to obey restrictions manufacturers impose or suggest for the use of their tools or other products, or potentially hazardous chemicals such as paints, stains, lacquers, etc.
- Unit leadership should be aware of project plans and schedules and the possible need for tour permits.
- BSA insurance covers Official Scouting activities.
 - Registered Scouts are provided primary coverage while involved in Scouting activities
 - Unregistered participants in a Scouting activity are provided coverage in excess of their personal insurance.
 - In some cases chartered organizations might provide insurance.
 - This should be verified, it must not be assumed.
- The Candidate's Signature offers the Promise:
 - I have read this entire workbook
 - Including the "Message to Scouts and Parents or Guardians"...
 - I promise to be the leader of this project.
 - I promise to do my best to carry it out for the maximum benefit to the beneficiary
- The Approval Signature from the Beneficiary warrants:
 - This service project will provide significant benefit.
 - We will do all we can to see it through.
 - We realize funding on our part is not required.
 - We have informed the Scout of any financial support (if any) we have agreed to.
 - We understand any fundraising he conducts will be in our name.
 - We understand any leftover fundraising funds will come to us.
 - We will provide receipts to donors as required.
- Your Approval Signature as a Unit Leader warrants:
 - I have reviewed this proposal and discussed it with the candidate.
 - I believe it provides impact worthy of an Eagle project.
 - I believe it will involve planning, development, and leadership.
 - I am comfortable the Scout understands what to do.
 - I am comfortable the Scout understands how to lead the effort.
 - I will see that the project is monitored.
 - I will see that adults or others present will not overshadow the Scout.
- Your Approval Signature for the Unit Committee warrants:
 - This Eagle Scout candidate is a Life Scout.
 - This Eagle Scout candidate is registered in our unit.
 - I am comfortable the project is feasible.
 - I will do everything I can to see our unit measures up to the level of support we have agreed to provide...

- I certify that I have been authorized by our unit committee to provide its approval for this proposal.

• Requirements

- Projects must be evaluated primarily on impact.
 - Impact is the extent of benefit to the religious institution, school, or community, and on the leadership provided by the candidate.
- Project reviewers must not require more planning and development than necessary to execute the project.
 - The elements of the paperwork must not overshadow the project.
- Project expectations will match Eagle Scout Requirement 5.
- Project reviewers will not require proposals to include more than described in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook.
- There is no requirement a project must have a lasting value.

• Realities

- Project review questions and probing for his understanding of the project, the proposal, and what must be done, shall be conducted in a helpful, friendly, courteous, and kindhearted manner. We will respect the Scout's dignity.
- The Candidate will be allowed, if he chooses, to have a parent, unit leader, or other adult present as an observer at any time he is discussing his proposal or project with someone who is reviewing it.
- The project beneficiary can stop work on an approved project.
 - If enough has been done, the project may still be given final approval.
- There may be instances where, upon its completion, the Unit Leader or Project Beneficiary choose not to approve a project.
- The Unit Leader or Project Beneficiary may determine modifications were so material that the extent of service or the impact of the project was insufficient to warrant approval.
- The candidate may be requested to do more work or even start over with another project
 - The Candidate may choose to meet these requests.
 - The Candidate may decide, if he believes his project is worthy and in compliance, to submit his workbook without final approval.
 - The Candidate must be granted a board of review, should he request it.
 - If the Candidate believes he has been mistreated or his proposal wrongly rejected, he will be provided a method of redress. This will include the opportunity for a second opinion and approval, whether through another volunteer or professional advancement administrator, or Scout Executive, as determined by the council advancement committee or executive board.