



Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Service Project Planning Guide

Attention Life Scouts - This guide tells you HOW TO PLAN the Project. READ ON.

This guide has been developed to help the Scouts understand the expectations; aid them in preparing their plan, and to serve as a benchmark for the adults to judge a project plan against. Criteria in preparing the project plan is that the plan should be detailed enough that another Scout could successfully work the entire project, doing only what was detailed in the plan.

This is a project planning guide that the Northern Star Council Advancement Committee has determined is within the intent of the Eagle Project and the guidelines of the BSA Eagle Service Project Workbook. It has been adopted by the Northern Star Council and distributed to troops within the Council by the Advancement Committee.

Introduction

The hardest part of your Eagle Service Project is getting started because you are not sure what is expected. This document has been prepared to provide you guidance in choosing and completing your project. This information is compiled from several BSA sources. Nothing stated herein overrides the higher authority of the district, council, or national, but is a compilation of that information to help you in doing the project. If at any time you do not understand what is expected or do not know what to do, ask a troop leader for help. If the troop leader does not understand have them contact the District Advancement Specialist.

The Eagle Project will require a lot of time to plan and complete, possibly 2 to 6 months. Since you do not have to complete all 21 Eagle merit badges before beginning your project, you should choose a period when you can most afford to put in the time. For example, summer could be a better time than the period just before Christmas. Remember, you must work within your helpers' schedules, not just your own. For the leaders and your own sake, please begin your project at least 6 months before your 18th birthday. All Eagle requirements must be completed, and that includes the project and the final write-up, before you are 18. In exceptional circumstances which are beyond the Scout's control, National BSA MAY grant an extension. Plan ahead! However, you must plan and execute your project while a Life Scout, so do not start too early.

Choosing a Project

The Eagle Project must demonstrate leadership and provide service to a worthy institution other than the Boy Scouts. See the first page of the Eagle Service Project Workbook for all requirements. You should try to choose a project idea which is truly valuable to the community and a challenge to you.

Originality

Does the project for Eagle have to be original, perhaps something you dream up that has never been done before? The answer is "No, but it certainly could be."

You may pick a project idea that has been done before, but you must accept responsibility for planning, leading, and following through to its successful completion.

Limitations

Routine labor (a job or service normally rendered) should not be considered.

Work involving council property or other BSA activities is not permitted. The project also may not be performed for a business or an individual, be of a commercial nature (profit making venture), or be a fund-raiser. (Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials or supplies needed to carry out your project. It should not be a majority of the project.)

Size

How big a project is required? There are not specific requirements, as long as the project is helpful to a religious institution, school, or community. The amount of time spent by you in planning your project and the actual working time spent in carrying out the project should be as much as necessary for you to demonstrate your leadership of others and be a challenge to you. Typical projects are from 100 to 500 total man-hours and involve a minimum of 20 people. You might find it useful to think of yourself as the senior patrol leader and your helpers as troop members. You will divide your helpers into "crews" like patrols and assign "crew" supervision to a "crew chief" much like a patrol leader.

Scouting magazine has published two articles which best illustrate the essence of Eagle Scout projects in terms of leadership, scope, size and diversity. (**Link to articles from Scouting Magazine, November-December, 1990 pp. 32, 54-55 and March-April 2000 pp.28-30, 52-53**)

Helpers

Your project may include members of your or other troops, but should include non-Scouters as well. After all, this is a project that benefits the community and is done outside the sphere of Scouting. As such, it should include helpers outside the sphere of Scouting and showcase Scouting to the community. While it is nice to do projects for your sponsoring organization, it is not at all required. Project ideas can be found in many places: in the newspaper, at your church, at your school, or from community organizations. Let the word out that you are looking for project ideas and see what input

you get. As you look around for ideas, write down several which interest you. You should not spend much time planning a project until you have talked the idea over with your Scoutmaster or other leader to insure that it is a valid idea. Further, you must confirm the validity of the idea with the district advancement chair or if they exit, the district eagle Scout coordinators before continuing.

Your Scoutmaster or his appointed advisor often serves as your project coach. This leader, along with the district advancement chair or Eagle Scout coordinators, can help you choose a project, help you determine what needs to be done in planning it, and help you get the write-up ready for approval. Always take detailed notes when talking to your advisors -- you cannot remember nearly as well as you can read your notes later. Your advisors may not want to tell you the same thing again and again.

You may choose to build something, do service for a nonprofit organization, present a program to a group, or correct a problem area for the benefit of an authorized organization.

Initial Planning & Project Write-up

After you have talked over possible project ideas with your troop leaders, chosen the right one for you and received approval from the district advancement chair or eagle Scout coordinator, it is now time to begin the detail planning and initial write-up which will be submitted to the District for approval.

Remember, you cannot begin actual work on the project until it is approved by the district, but there is a lot of planning to be done before you get that far.

Get a current copy of the Life to Eagle Packet, which includes the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, from the council office or from one of the troop leaders to use in preparing your plan, or download it from the internet. This is the official booklet which is submitted to the district for approval. Read everything in it before beginning to write up your plan. The project plan may be typed on a typewriter or computer. These days, most people have access to computers. It is perfectly acceptable to do all or some of your work on blank pages, and then simply write "See Attached" to the appropriate section of your Workbook and attach them to your Workbook. But be sure to add a title to each section, so the reader knows what section of your workbook they are reading.

Alternatively, you may use the electronic form of the workbook and add space as you need it. Doing your work on a computer provides several advantages. Not only is it neater, but revisions, refinements, etc. are much easier to make. Don't forget to use grammar checker and spell checker!!! Remember, we are looking at your submission as from someone who says he wants to be an Eagle Scout! While this is not an English paper, you should use your best grammar. The plan should tell someone else everything they would need to know to carry out your project without you. You should include the

following information as shown in the workbook: Versions of the project workbook are available on the internet on the Northern Star Scouting web site at <http://www.northernstarbsa.org/Forms/PDF/Ranks/EagleProjectWorkbook.pdf> and at the official BSA web site at <http://www.Scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=by>

A. - Project Description

Briefly (approximately one to two paragraphs) describe the project. This should not include any details, those will come later. Address this section as though you were telling a friend what you were going to do. Think of this as an executive summary of the overall project.

B. - Who Will Benefit

Name the group or organization which will benefit from your project and how your project will benefit them. Remember, the project cannot benefit the Boy Scouts. Do not describe the project again, just focus on the benefit of the project.

Coordination with Owner

You are entering into an agreement with a group or agency to do a project for them at no cost for labor. They are the owner of your project. The owner sets the rules for your project and you are required to meet their requirements for time and cost. Remember that you represent all of Scouting to the owner. However, avoid a project in which the benefiting organization is imposing an unrealistic time schedule upon you. If it is more important for the benefiting organization to have the project completed by a date certain and that date certain is less than three months away, it may be best to consider another project.

Discuss your coordination with the owner which is benefiting from your project. Be sure to include the name, position within the group (e.g. Personnel Director, Community Relations Coordinator, etc.) and phone number of your point of contact. Use proper titles (e.g. Mr., Mrs., Dr., Chief, etc.) when referring to adults. Keep notes on your coordination meetings with the agency to include dates you have met or talked on the phone, who was present, and exactly what they agreed to provide to you and what you agreed to do for them. Do not get into a position of saying, "I talked to some lady a few weeks ago." Whenever you call the owner again, be able to ask for your contact by name.

You are asked to obtain approval from the benefiting organization at three stages of the project. The first is for the Project Description. This is the conceptual phase and requires approval of the idea of the project, not the details of how it will be carried out. The second is after you have completed the Planning Details outlining exactly how the project will be carried out. The reason for this is not repetitive. The benefiting organization may approve the idea of your project but not the way in which you plan to carry it out. For example, they may approve of your painting the church but may not approve of Scouts

hanging from the buckets of lift-trucks with spray-painting equipment. The third is after completion of the project to certify that it has been completed.

Finances are of particular interest. Be sure both you and the owner understand all financial obligations, and preferably stated in writing. Are they going to "fund your project" or "pay up to \$100 toward your expenses"? No one should try to cheat you, but a misunderstanding can create hard feelings or cost you more than you had planned.

Another area where you should ensure complete understanding is in the materials to be provided. When an owner says they will provide building materials, make sure you both understand exactly what is to be provided (see the materials section below). Find out if the owner will deliver the materials to your work site or if you must pick them up. If you are going to have to go get materials, find out exactly where (i.e. address) and the name and phone number of the person you need to talk to when you get there. Do you need to call ahead and setup an appointment to pickup the materials? This can be particularly frustrating if you do not ensure all details are understood by both parties. Do not make assumptions.

Be sure the owner approves your plan and signs your paper work after all the planning details are completed and not before. Give the owner a copy of your project plan.

C. - Planning Details

This is the heart of the project plan and the area which will require the most work. The plan should include all details needed by someone else to carry out the project as though you were not around. The plan will include the sections discussed below. Since there is limited space in the workbook, you may attach extra pages with the details or, better yet, use the electronic version of the workbook in which you can add extra space as needed. The instructions in this section have compressed the **seven elements** that must be contained in every project plan in order for it to be approved. It states: "Plan your work by describing the present condition, the method, materials to be used, project helpers, and a time schedule for carrying out. Describe any safety hazards you might face and explain how you will ensure the safety of those carrying out the project."

1. Present Condition

Describe the current condition or situation that you are going to change. Do not repeat the benefit of the project, but focus on creating a word picture of how things are now. This is a good place to include pictures (either photographs or drawings) of the project area. Remember, the District Advancement Committee does not know what your church or school or park looks like so they cannot understand why your project is important unless you show and tell them.

Although you are clearly asked to describe the present condition of the place or situation your project will benefit, some Scouts ignore that instruction. Instead they either do not describe the present condition at all, or they give such a general statement that the

Advancement Committee and, later, the Board of Review can not really understand the present situation.

LACKS INFORMATION: “The church grounds need a lot of work.”

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “St. Stephen’s Church is located on Hector St. in the southeast area of Stillwater. It serves approximately 580 members, covers approximately 3.6 acres of land and consists of 3 buildings; the church a rectory and a maintenance building. The church lawn is overgrown with weeds and crabgrass, as well as having several bare patches, making it very unattractive. The lawn is approximately 1.5 acres in size. In addition, the front of the church has no landscaping and the pastor has indicated that they would like to add flower beds and shrubbery to improve its appearance, and to make the church appear more welcoming to visitors.”

LACKS INFORMATION: “The park trail needs maintenance.”

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “Dillmore Park is located 9 miles north of Smithtown. It covers 45 acres of rolling hills with half timber covered and half prairie. The park has approximately 4,500 visitors annually and offers camping, hiking, fishing and boat rentals. The park trail is littered with fallen sticks and trash, and there are tree branches growing over the trail, some right at eye level. The trail is 3 miles long and traverses rolling hills. The trail is in danger of being overgrown. This has created an eyesore, as well as being both inconvenient and dangerous for trail users.”

LACKS INFORMATION: “The church needs to be painted.”

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “St. Brian’s church is located in Springfield. It serves approximately 1,000 members, covers approximately 6.8 acres of land and consists of 7 buildings; the church, a youth building, 3 shelters, a parsonage and a maintenance building. The exterior of the church has not been painted in five years, and the paint is peeling in many places. This is unattractive, and will lead to permanent and expensive damage to the wood siding. The exterior is approximately 12,000 square feet in area”

The advancement committee wants to know the present condition so they can determine if your project is really needed, and what the true benefit will be. Be very specific in your description. This should be presented in the form of a simple narrative, with complete sentences and paragraphs.

2. Method

This is the heart and soul of the Planning Details write-up. It describes not so much what you will do but how you will do it. The “what” will emerge as the “how” is described. The biggest problem here is being too vague. Be as specific as possible in describing your method. We want to know exactly how you plan to break down into the many smaller

tasks, which have to be done, and how you plan to organize and supervise your helpers to accomplish those tasks.

LACKS INFORMATION: “When everyone arrives I will organize them to scrape and paint the church.”

This description tells us that you plan to organize your helpers, but we can probably assume that anyway. What we want to know is how you plan to organize them. Further, the above description tells us that you will do the work that you said you would do, but again, we can assume that. Instead, tell us exactly how you will break down the job into manageable tasks, and exactly how you will organize and supervise your crew to get that work done.

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “I will break my work crew down into five smaller crews, each with at least five Scouts and one adult. An older Scout will be appointed to serve as Crew Leader, and the adult will be his advisor. The first four crews will each be assigned one side of the church building to scrape and paint. The fifth crew will be in charge of physical arrangements and administration, such as sign-in, and sign-out, insuring that everyone has the equipment they need, carrying drinking water to the workers, preparing and serving lunch, etc. I will provide overall supervision to the five Crew Leaders and their crews.”

Be specific as possible in describing how you will accomplish the project. If in doubt, be more specific. A good rule of thumb...you can't be too specific. This should be presented in the form of a simple narrative, with complete sentences and paragraphs.

3. Materials

The Scout should provide a detailed list of all materials, including how many of each, the source of the materials, how they will get to the project and how they will be returned or disposed of after the completion of the project. All too often, the Scout will provide a general list.

LACKS INFORMATION: “Paint brushes and other supplies.”

This is far too vague, and is really just a statement of the obvious. Further, it almost certainly omits numerous things which are also needed, such as drop cloths, paint thinner, paint stirring sticks, rags, paper, drinking cups, water coolers, all food and serving materials for lunch, etc. Instead, list every single item which will be needed, quantify each item, identify how it will be provided, how it will get to the project site and how it will be returned or if a disposable item, how it will be disposed of.

CLEAR & COMPLETE:

- * Eight 4-inch paint brushes. Purchase

- * Eight 1-inch paint brushes for trim. Borrow from the following church members who will bring them to the site and take them home afterward.
- * Eight paint rollers and handles. Borrow from the following church members who will bring them to the site and take them home afterward.
- * Eight roller pans. Borrow from the following church members who will bring them to the site and take them home afterward.
- * Twenty paint scrapers. Borrow ten from the following Scouts, ten from the following church members.
- * Sixteen large paint rags. Borrow from the following church members who will bring them to the site and take them home afterward.
 - * One gallon paint thinner. Purchase.
 - * Four paint stirring sticks. Free at Home Depot.
 - * Paint rags. Each helper brings two from home.
 - * Two 5-gallon drink coolers/dispensers. Borrow from McDonalds. Mr. Jones will pick up Friday and return after the end of the project.
 - * Ten bags of rice. Purchase at Rainbow. My mom will pick them up, cook the rice and bring it to the project site.
 - * Soft drink mix, enough to make 20 gallons. Donated by McDonalds. Mr. Jones will pick up with the coolers.

This is only a partial list. There are additional items that have not been listed because of space restrictions here. List every single item you will need, and do not generalize or lump items into general categories. This should be presented in the form of a simple chart with 5 sections ITEM, QUANTITY, SOURCE, HOW GETTING TO PROJECT and HOW RETURNED OR DISPOSED OF.

4. Project Helpers

In the METHOD section you described the kind and number of people you need to complete the project. In this section you should describe how you intend to recruit project helpers and how, and how often, you or your crew chiefs will follow up to insure you have the number and kind of people where you need them when you need them. For example, will you make personal appearances? Will you post notices in church, troop, community, etc. bulletins? Will you recruit by telephone calls? Or will you use a combination of these techniques? Will you follow-up after your initial contact? How often will you follow up? Typically, only 40% of the people who say they will help on an Eagle Scout service project actually show up. Further, people have a greater sense of commitment if they sign their own names rather than have them copied on a list by someone else.

LACKS INFORMATION: “I’ll check with folks before the project.”

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “Initially, I will publish notices of my project in area church bulletins and follow up by staffing sign-up tables after services on the following two Sundays. Three weeks before the project, I will follow-up with phone calls to insure all volunteers will attend and that they have transportation to the project for both days of

the project. The night before the project, crew chiefs will call all members of their crews and confirm attendance and transportation.” This should be presented in the form of a simple narrative, with complete sentences and paragraphs.

5. TIME SCHEDULE

For this section you should list each and every single step in your project, from first discussing it with your Scoutmaster to preparing the final report. After each step list the date you have completed or plan to complete that step. For example, let’s look at part of the planning for painting a church:

LACKS INFORMATION: “Arrange for the needed materials and get them to the job site.”

This is an example of a typical vague planning step. The Scout has not told the Advancement Committee how he will determine what materials are needed, where he will get the materials, how he will arrange to purchase or borrow the materials, or how he will get them to the project site. In fact, nothing has really been revealed that the Advancement Committee could not have guessed anyway. This single incomplete step should actually be several steps that are more detailed.

CLEAR & COMPLETE: “Measure the exterior of the church to obtain the number of square feet of the area to be painted. May 1.”

“Visit Home Depot’s paint answer booth to determine the number of gallons of paint needed as well as a list of other suggested materials. While there obtain prices for all needed materials. May 5.”

“Prepare a list of materials I think we must purchase, and those we can borrow. Call Scouts, friends and family to determine what materials can be borrowed. Develop a tentative budget. May 6.”

“Meet with the church’s Building and Grounds Chairman to discuss the needed materials and their cost. Show list of materials I have already arranged to borrow, and determine what other materials the church already has, or can borrow from other church members. Finalize budget, and determine how Home Depot will be paid. May 10.”

Write confirming letter to each person who is loaning materials. Arrange with Mr. Smith to drive me to Home Depot in his truck the day before the project to pick up the materials. Arrange with Mike W. to accompany Mr. Smith and me when we pick up materials. May 14.”

“Mike and I drive with Mr. Smith to Home Depot to purchase materials and then deliver them to church garage for storage. Have John S. make reminder calls to those who are loaning materials. May 25.”

As you can see, the first single, vague planning step did not come close to describing what really needed to be done. The Scout who wrote that vague step probably knew what he had to do, but he did not put it on paper, and that omission would result in the Workbook being returned to him for additional planning. This should be presented in the form of a simple chart with 2 sections EVENT and DATE.

6. & 7. SAFETY HAZARDS AND HOW YOU WILL ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THOSE CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT

The best advice that can be offered here is to remind you that there is no greater leadership responsibility than to ensure the safety of those who have volunteered to help you complete your Eagle Scout Project! Six and seven should be treated as separate sections. Section six should identify all possible safety hazards that could befall a project helper. Section seven should discuss plans for preventing any injury from occurring. At a very minimum every project should have a well-stocked first aid kit and someone who is well trained in its use. The project site(s) should also have available ground transportation in case anyone needs to be transported to medical attention and a telephone or cell phone in case it is necessary to summon medical help. Lastly, each project should have a safety talk provided by a competent authority outlining the safety hazards of the project and the safety rules that have been established to prevent injury and insure a safe experience for all. This talk should be repeated at each stage of the project in which new crews may join the project or each new day of a project.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

TIP 1: When your workbook is completed, email, mail, or deliver it to the Eagle Scout Coordinator or Advancement Chair for your District., be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you mail your project. Further, be sure that the envelope you send is large enough to hold all of your paperwork and the 2-3 page letter that the Eagle Scout Coordinator or Advancement Chair may return to you, and that it has sufficient postage. Better yet, use the electronic workbook and e-mail the material back and forth.

TIP 2: When you need information from the Eagle Scout Coordinator, you may feel free to telephone him/her at any reasonable time. But as an Eagle Scout candidate, make the call your self; don't ask your parent or Scoutmaster to make it for you.

It is surprising how often the Eagle Scout Coordinator or Advancement Chair receives telephone calls from the parent of a Life Scout, asking a question about the Eagle Scout process. One has to presume that the Life Scout wants the Eagle Scout Coordinator to think that he is a leader, and that he is qualified to be an Eagle Scout, and yet he has his parent, or occasionally, his Scoutmaster, make his telephone calls for him. The usual response to such a call is to tell the caller that when working on his Eagle Scout award, the Eagle Scout candidate should make his own telephone calls.

TIP 3: Don't wait until the last minute before you plan to conduct your project to contact the Eagle Scout Coordinator for approval. If there is a problem with your

planning or paperwork, you then won't have time to correct the problem before the project is scheduled to begin. To be safe submit your paperwork a month or so before your planned starting date. In unusual cases, we can do a "rush" job of approving your project, but that presumes that everything is perfect the first time.

TIP 4: Plans / Drawings / Designs

If your project is to build something, you will need detail plans or drawings. These are like blue prints and should show all dimensions, paint schemes, floor plans, layouts, or other detail that can be drawn.

Plans or drawings are usually done on graph paper which has guidelines, but blank paper is acceptable as long as you are neat. Photographs may also be of value here for some projects. If you have made a design (e.g. emblem, logo, etc.) include it in this section. Again, electronic documents are much easier to e-mail.