

# Trail to Eagle

## A Letter to the Parents

Welcome to the place where the Life scouts dwell! Your son getting here is a great achievement to his dedication to scouting and his commitment to personal development in leadership. Several scouts have reached this plateau, rested, rested, rested some more and then finally retire from scouts as they turn 18 years of age as a Life scout. But, many also go on to achieve one of the most recognized leadership awards in our country, the Rank of Eagle Scout. Your son achieving the rank of Life, has provided an indication to the scouts and the leadership team of our unit that he is interested in reaching the Eagle Rank.

**YOU MAY SAY:** This is great news, I am new to this what happens next?

Our goal in the Troop leadership is to provide a foundation and support structure to provide the best environment on the scout's path to Eagle. This foundation is not a machine or foolproof path to Eagle, or a group of people to "drive" your son to Eagle. It is a set of resources that are available to the scout to assist in navigating the path to Eagle. With that in mind, it is the scout's responsibility to make the step from Life to Eagle, not the Scoutmaster/Eagle Advisor/Parents/ Neighbor/Pastor. These people are all available for support, encouragement, advice, and help, but the path is a challenge for the scout with the goal of leadership development. For the scout the path includes: merit badges, a Service Project, Letters of Recommendations, a Scoutmasters conference, and 2 Boards of Review that need to be accomplished. Of course his Eagle Advisor is there to provide experienced feedback each step of the way.

So what are the expectations of parents through this process?

It is really up to the parents to define how engaged they are with their scout through this process. Our experience shows that those scouts whose parents provide support and encouragement and take an active role through the Eagle Scout process have a higher achievement rate and at an earlier age. Take an active interest in your son's path to Eagle and continue to stress the importance in your mind in his undertaking of this task. This is important to ensure that becoming an Eagle Scout stays near the "Top of the List" as our experience shows that as a scout enters high school, distractions, work, girls (yes girls) take more and more time and the rank of Eagle is put off to tomorrow. Several Life scouts rest, rest.....

Remember, it is the scout that is to provide the leadership on the service project – you can be the support structure and sometimes the temporary motivation when they get stuck. As a parent, you are not the quarterback, project manager, writer, it is not your Eagle project, it is your son's. Although it is up to your scout to get to Eagle, you can be active in the process and the weathervane pointing to what he will consider to be one of his more important accomplishments later in life, the Rank of Eagle scout.

After the Scout Advances to Life, the steps to Eagle....

- 1) In the past the scout was given an “Eagle packet” once they achieved the rank of Life, gratis from Monmouth Council. That has been replaced with forms available on the Monmouth Council web site: [www.monmouthbsa.com](http://www.monmouthbsa.com) as Monmouth Council no longer provides “Eagle Packets”. To get the forms, and once at the web site, on the left hand side is a list of selections, go into “General”, then “Forms Online”. Scroll down and you will see a section on material and forms for the Eagle Scout. This cuts down on “Re-prints” as the scouts tend to “lose” the first 1 or 2 packets. It is the scout’s responsibility to view/print these forms. In addition, the Troop now provides a Word “Eagle Service Project Workbook” in Microsoft Word. This is available through your Eagle Advisor and is strongly suggested that the scout uses this document. An Eagle Application is no longer produced by the Scout, this is provided by Monmouth Council and instructions are in the Eagle Checklist.
- 2) An Eagle advisor and back-up are assigned by the Troop as a mentor.
- 3) Periodic meetings are scheduled by the Advisor with the Scout to start the review process and Service Project selection and scoping. The more interest and response the Scout has to the Eagle Advisor, the quicker this process goes.
- 4) Once a Scout is a Life scout they can technically start their service project selection/scoping/doing/documenting, but realistically before that happens they should be down to 1-3 merit badges left for Eagle (this is usually not a problem).
- 5) The Life scout needs to meet with the Scout Master at several stages (of which will require signature) as they go through the process. See the Eagle Scout checklist.
- 6) Parents can be a key component to the responsiveness and encouragement of the Life scout. We all believe that a scout grows his leadership skills through the Eagle Scout Service Project, but we find that parents that are encouraging and supportive through the process accelerate this grow!
- 7) A Court of Honor for Eagle Scouts is typically held twice a year and coordination for this will be with the Troop 50 Committee Chairman – scheduling will be determined by the number of Eagle Scouts and the schedule of the Eagle Scouts family – each Eagle Court of Honor can include 1 to 3 Eagle Scouts. Please begin the coordination phase with the Troop 50 Committee Chairman as your son approaches his final Eagle BOR. The Troop will provide the Court of Honor, Standard Troop 50 Eagle Ceremony, and hold the Court of Honor at the church. Any deviations from this as well as decorations, refreshments, special invitee list, customization of the ceremony, personal family invitations are the responsibility of the parents/family and coordination with the Troop 50 Committee Chairman and Eagle Advisor. As you get closer, you can discuss with your Eagle Advisor and Committee Chair on this process.

Of course any questions on this process can be addressed to your Eagle Advisor or Scoutmaster and they will either be able to handle your request or point you in the direction to get your answer.

Yours in Scouts,

*Troop 50 Leadership Team*