



**BOY SCOUT TROOP 5**  
Wilmette, Illinois

**TO:** Eagle Scout Candidates  
Parents of Eagle Scout Candidates

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**RE:** The Journey to Eagle: Overview of the Eagle Scout Path

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This memorandum is an overview for Eagle Scout candidates and their parents of the path from Life Scout to Eagle Scout. There is no single right way to go about this process. Many Scouts have reached the rank of Eagle in Troop 5 in a lot of different ways.

This memorandum is based on the experiences we have had in working with these Eagle Scouts. What follows below are some steps we suggest that Eagle candidates and their parents take to make the process as productive and meaningful as possible.

We often refer below to documents that can be obtained from the Troop 5 website, [www.troop5.com](http://www.troop5.com). These documents are all on the Life to Eagle page of the website. Get to know that page really well; it has a lot of useful information.

### **A Parent's Role**

Before we get too far, a couple words are in order on a parent's role in the path to Eagle. Those words are, "Get involved!"

It is the case that a number of Scouts and Scouters will be working with your son on various aspects of the Eagle requirements. On the project, in particular, the project coach and the Life to Eagle Advisor ("**LTE Advisor**") will be heavily involved. But parents nonetheless have an important role, even in the project. A parent should take an active interest – know what the requirements are, and know how your son is doing on his progress toward those requirements. Know what the deadlines are, and help your son manage so that the deadlines do not become problems. Read his proposal, read the comments on his proposal (the LTE Advisor is known to make a lot of comments!), and help him work through the revisions.

It is a challenge to make Eagle. It is much harder than the other ranks, and Eagle candidates are challenged in ways that are quantitatively and qualitatively different from the challenges they faced in earning earlier ranks. The Scouts who make it almost always have a great deal of family support along the way. As an Eagle parent, you will get a pin at his Eagle Court of Honor, and you will have earned that pin.

### **Rank Requirements**

There are a number of requirements to achieve the rank of Eagle, including:

*Merit Badges.* Earn 21 merit badges, including 13 that are “Eagle-required.” We won’t dwell on these requirements here. But don’t put this off; remember that several Eagle-required merit badges take at least 3 months to earn.

*Position of Responsibility.* While a Life Scout, hold one or more positions of responsibility for at least 6 months.

*Leadership Service Project.* We discuss this requirement below and in the companion memorandum titled “Journey to Eagle: Timing & Approvals for an Eagle Project Proposal.” That memorandum is available on the Troop 5 website. Another important document on the Troop 5 website is the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook (the “**Project Workbook**”).

*Eagle Paperwork.* Once the Eagle Project is finished, there is a lot of writing that the Eagle candidate needs to do, including primarily the Project Report and the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose. We discuss these items in detail in the companion memorandum titled “Journey to Eagle: The Eagle Home Stretch,” which is also on the Troop 5 website.

***Very important note:*** All Eagle requirements, other than the Board of Review, must be completed by the Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday.

### **Eagle Service Project**

Eagle Scout rank requirement number 5 reads as follows:

*While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community. (The project must benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) A project proposal must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your unit leader and unit committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement.*

Perhaps the hardest part of this requirement is the identification of the project. It can be daunting to try to find something suitable to do for your project. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide some guidance to you on how you can go about identifying and confirming an Eagle Service Project.

**Step 1: Read the Project Workbook.** Pages 2 through 6 of the Project Workbook are the authoritative source of rules on Eagle projects; make sure you read those thoroughly.

**Step 2: Find a Project Coach.** Find an adult who will act as the project coach, or mentor, for you in this process. It is really valuable to have someone to meet with, who can be a sounding board, a source of advice and a helpful source of guidance. There are many adults in Troop 5 who have served as mentors and project coaches for other Eagle Scouts, and there are many more who are willing to serve.

**Step 3: Look Around for Projects.** There are possible Eagle projects in many different places. Talk to your parents about projects; there are many ideas suggested by an Eagle candidate's parents over the years that have turned into successful Eagle projects. Talk to other adults at school, at your place of worship and around town. Read the newspaper; talk with your project coach. Think about other Eagle projects you have worked on, or heard about. Do an online search for projects. Be receptive to lots of ideas. Don't feel like you need to cure cancer to have a successful project.

The LTE Advisor has a list of Eagle Projects completed by Eagle Scouts over the past 12 years. Look at that list to see what others have done.

There are a few things that are "off limits" as Eagle Projects:

- You cannot do a fundraising drive as your project. (You can raise funds for the purpose of acquiring materials for your project, but you cannot just raise funds for a beneficiary organization as the purpose of your project.)
- You should not do a "collection drive" project (Scouting for Food being an example of a collection drive). We used to allow these, but they became much too repetitive and formulaic, so we no longer do collection drives.
- Your project needs to demonstrate leadership, so you cannot do something where professionals are doing all or almost all the work (e.g., a blood drive).
- The beneficiary can be "any religious institution, any school, or your community." and "community" is interpreted very broadly. But the beneficiary cannot be a Scouting organization.

**Step 4: Meet with Your Project Coach Frequently.** Some Eagle candidates find their projects before they line up a project coach; others find the coach first, and then work with that coach on finding a project. Whichever way you proceed, try to meet frequently with your project coach to talk about the project or the search for a project.

**Step 5: Get Preliminary Clearance for your Project.** Once you have identified a possible project for a beneficiary, contact the LTE Advisor to arrange a meeting to describe it. The LTE Advisor has a lot of experience with different Eagle projects, and he may be able to save you some precious time by vetting your project idea early on.

**Step 6: Start Working on Your Proposal!** Once you have identified a project and a beneficiary, it is time to start working on your Eagle Project Proposal. If you are doing a construction project, the first place to start might be with some drawings of the item(s) you will be constructing. If you are doing a conservation project, it might be a trip to the location to

photograph the existing conditions. At some point, it will be appropriate to start drafting the Proposal. For that purpose, please review the documents at the following links on the Troop 5 website, which have detailed instructions on this process:

- *Timing & Approvals for an Eagle Project Proposal* - this memorandum discusses how long it can take to write a proposal and obtain all necessary approvals
- *Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal - Word* - this is a Word version of the BSA form for completing your proposal
- *Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal Annotated* - this is an annotation of the Proposal form; it contains suggestions on how to draft your Proposal

### **Timing**

Eagle candidates and their parents must recognize that it takes a long time to plan and complete an Eagle Project and to do the “Home Stretch” paperwork following completion of the Project. It almost always takes *at least* three months from the time an Eagle candidate identifies a project until the time that he is ready to hold his first workday – and it has been considerably longer in many cases. Following project completion, it often takes another two to three months to finish the “Home Stretch” paperwork.

So do not delay. Let’s not get close to your 18th birthday!