

Guide to the Camping Merit Badge

BSA Troop 467 of the Atlanta Area Council

Peachtree Road United Methodist Church

Atlanta, Georgia

Troop 467's website: <http://troop467.com>

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Why this guide?

The purpose of this guide is to dispel some of the confusion that Scouts and parents experience about the merit badge program in general and the camping merit badge in particular. We hope that Scouts will use this guide as a roadmap to earn the camping merit badge and to learn more about the role the merit badge program plays within Scouting.

How does the merit badge program relate to rank advancement?

New Scouts and parents unfamiliar with how the Scouting program works are often confused by the rank advancement system and how merit badges fit into the overall scheme of the Scouting program. The following table covers some of the key differences between rank advancements and merit badges.

Rank Advancements	Merit Badges
Requirements completed at troop meetings or on campouts.	Usually earned outside of troop meetings and campouts.
The Scoutmaster signs off on the requirements for rank advancement.	A merit badge counselor for the badge in question is the only one who can sign off on requirements for the badge. A merit badge counselor must register with the BSA as a counselor and qualify as a teacher of the badge's subject.
Requirements are covered and described in the Scout handbook.	Requirements are covered in merit badge books, also known as merit badge pamphlets.

You can find the entire process for earning a merit badge at the national council's website at <http://scouting.org>. Search for "Introduction to Merit Badges." A Scout can earn a merit badge at any time regardless of rank, but the requirements must be done while he is a Boy Scout.

Although the mechanism for earning a merit badge differs from that of earning a rank, once a Scout attains the rank of First Class he must start earning merit badges to advance. For the Star Rank, the rank immediately following First Class, a Scout must earn six merit badges, four of which must be from the list of eleven badges that are required to attain the rank of Eagle Scout. The subsequent ranks of Life and Eagle Scout each have a specified number of merit badges that a Scout must earn. In total, to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, a Scout must complete a minimum of 21 merit badges. Eleven of these badges must come from the list of Eagle-required merit badges, while the remaining badges are selected from a list of over 120 merit badges.

What is the purpose of merit badges?

The merit badge program exposes a Scout to a wide variety of subjects and teaches him about various careers as well as a wide variety of intellectual and practical pursuits. The merit badge program helps a Scout to achieve the three aims of Scouting:

- character development,
- citizenship training, and
- personal fitness.

Scouting achieves these three objectives through the application of the eight methods of Scouting: the ideals of Scouting contained in the Scout Oath, Law, motto, and slogan; the patrol method; outdoor programs; the advancement program; association with adults; personal growth; leadership development, and the Scout uniform. All merit badges touch on at least one of these eight methods, while the camping merit badge touches on all eight. For more information on the aims and methods of Scouting, refer to the Scout handbook or the national council website at <http://scouting.org>.

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When can I start the camping merit badge and how do I get started?

Although he may not have officially started to work on the camping merit badge, a Scout starts work on the badge the first time he goes camping as a Boy Scout. Each year, Troop 467 offers ten nights or more of short-term camping and at least one long-term summer camping experience. Because no Scout can attend all campouts, it usually takes two to three years and sometimes longer for a Scout to fulfill the 20 day and night camping requirement of the camping merit badge (requirement# 9). The camping requirement and how much diligence a Scout shows in completing the other requirements determines how long a Scout will work on the camping merit badge.

Steps to take to earn the camping merit badge:

1. **Ask the Scoutmaster to sign a blue card for the camping merit badge.** Use the “blue card” to track the completion of the badge’s requirements. The Scoutmaster signs the blue card to acknowledge that you are starting work on the merit badge. This is a chance for you and the Scoutmaster to touch base on your advancement plans and for the Scoutmaster to provide you with guidance. The Scoutmaster can also inform you who the merit badge counselor is for the badge.
2. **Buy the most recent copy of the camping merit badge book.** The book costs about \$4.50 and is available at the Scout Shop and online at <http://scoutstuff.org>. You do not have to have this book to earn the merit badge, but it sure does help.
3. **Read the merit badge book** and familiarize yourself with the badge’s ten requirements. Counselor sessions go a lot easier if you know the material.
4. **Meet with the merit badge counselor.** The counselor will be able to assist you get organized to earn the badge. He can offer guidance in how to approach the badge and can answer any questions you may have about the requirements. A merit badge counselor must follow Scouting’s youth protection guidelines, so he will want to meet with you and a buddy Scout, during a Scout meeting, or with one of your parents present.
5. **Work out a plan** with the Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, and the merit badge counselor to complete the ten requirements for the badge. Remember that you have your entire Scouting career of six to seven years to complete the badge, but it doesn’t have to take that long. The process of earning the camping merit badge easily integrates into the troop’s camping program. See the next section for suggestions on how to approach the badge’s requirements.
6. **Be focused** on the text of each requirement and **be purposeful** in its execution. If a requirements states (as requirement 4(a) does) *“Make a duty roster showing how your patrol is organized for an actual overnight campout. List assignments for each member,”* you will not only need to make a duty roster, you will also need to write out the assignments for each member of your patrol. You will also need to make sure that the following conditions are met:
 - a. An overnight campout has been planned;
 - b. You are part of a patrol on that campout (a patrol is three or more Scouts working together.)

You should also make these plans well before the campout and work with the Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, or other Scouts to complete the requirement. You can always check with the merit badge counselor to make sure that you are meeting the specifics of the requirement.

7. **Once you complete a requirement, get it signed off on the blue card as soon as possible.** If you have done steps 1-6, this should be easy. Remember that only the camping merit badge counselor can sign off on a camping merit badge requirement, but he may rely on others to help you with the requirement and to verify that the requirement was done. Please don’t force the merit badge counselor to take a stroll down memory lane by asking him (and yourself) to remember a campout that occurred three years ago when a requirement might

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have been completed. Also, track all campouts. You will go on a lot of campouts over several years and probably will not be able to remember all the campouts you have attended. The new Scout handbook has a place to track campouts, or you can track campouts in a notebook or just on a piece of paper.

What are the requirements for the camping merit badge?

The requirements are all spelled out in the camping merit badge book. The table on the following pages also lists the current requirements (as of December 2011), and provides some comments on each requirement to help you navigate the merit badge.

You can complete the requirements in any order, but here is a suggested way to approach them:

Step 1 – Schedule an initial meeting with your merit badge counselor: Read up on **requirements 1 and 2** and discuss them with the counselor. This is a good time to start working out your plan with the counselor for earning the camping merit badge. He can answer any questions you might have about the requirements of the badge. The merit badge counselor, Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, and other leaders within the troop will be resources for you as you work your way through the requirements.

Step 2 – Schedule a second meeting with counselor: At this meeting, plan to do requirements **5a-d, 6a-e, and 8a-c**. For 6(e), come with your sleeping bag and anything else you need to show how to make a comfortable ground bed. You can also wait until a camping trip to do the ground bed part of 6(e). Make sure that the menus you plan for 8(c) include meals that you would actually want to prepare and eat on a campout, because you will be making and eating three of these meals for **requirement 8(d)**. One of the meals should be suitable for a backpacking trail meal. Either dinner or breakfast is the best meal to plan for the trail meal, since the troop tends to eat lunch on the road or at the trailhead and there may not be a good opportunity to prepare lunch.

Step 3 - Identify a car camping trip that you can make: Identify who the adult trip leader is and tell him that you plan on completing **requirement 4(a)** and working on **requirement 8(d)** on the trip. It's OK to take a few campouts to complete requirement 8(d), but get started on it as soon as you are ready.

Step 4 - Identify a backpacking trip you can make: The troop does several backpacking trips each year. Identify the adult trip leader for the backpacking trip you choose, and tell him that you want to do **requirements 5(e), 7(a), 7(b)**, and the trail meal for **8(d)** on the trip. Get a topographic map of the area where you will be hiking and a compass or GPS unit. Sit down with the merit badge counselor prior to your trip and show him how you will get to the camping spot to satisfy **requirement 3**.

Step 5 - Go on as many campouts as you can: This will help you satisfy **requirement 9(a)**. Up to seven nights of summer camp count toward this requirement, so going to summer camp is an easy way to rack up a week of camping. Make sure that you cover at least two of the six options of **requirement 9(b)** on these campouts. If you don't know which trips will satisfy the requirements of 9(b), ask the Scoutmaster, trip leader, or the merit badge counselor for help.

Step 6 – Do a conservation project: Identify a conservation project that you can do. Check with the merit badge counselor to make sure that it is an appropriate project for **requirement 9(c)**. He will also have some ideas about how to find a conservation project. The conservation project does not have to be done with the troop: A school project or a conservation project done with another organization will do. If the project is appropriate, go do the project, and report back to the merit badge counselor to get this requirement signed off.

Step 7 – Help a Webelos unit or Scout patrol prepare to go camping: Wait to do this requirement until you have some camping experience under your belt and have completed many of the camping merit badge requirements. Complete **requirement 4(b)** by identifying a Webelos unit who needs help preparing to camp or a patrol you can help within Troop 467, or a patrol from another troop. If you can't find a Webelos unit, a new Scout patrol would be a good choice for this requirement. Troop 467 enlists new Scouts each year, so someone always needs assistance.

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Step 8 – Meet with the merit badge counselor to complete the merit badge: At this point, you have completed all requirements except **requirement 10**. Meet with your counselor to make sure all other requirements are completed and wrap up all your hard work by telling the merit badge counselor what you have learned by doing requirements 1 through 9. This session with the counselor will satisfy requirement 10 and will complete the badge. Congratulations!

The camping merit badge is a natural fit to the Scouting program and is an Eagle-required badge. Although the badge does take some effort, the requirements flow naturally from the troop's outdoor program. Earning this badge will help you become an expert outdoorsman or, at the very least, a better Scout.

The following requirements are current as of December 2012 and are the requirements that came into effect in on January 1, 2007. A discussion about each requirement appears in the "Comments" column. When there is a rank requirement that is similar to the merit badge requirement, the rank requirement is stated in the comments section. Scouts may wish to tackle similar rank and merit badge requirements at the same time.

It is permissible to use notes when discussing a topic with the merit badge counselor. Discuss the topics with the counselor using your own words and know the material well enough to feel comfortable talking about them. If you need some notes to remind you of the points that you think are important to cover, that is OK. It is better for you to feel comfortable with the concepts and know how to apply what you have learned than to blindly recite some words that you will soon forget.

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	Requirement	Comments
1	Show that you know first aid for and how to prevent injuries or illnesses that could occur while camping, including hypothermia, frostbite, heat reactions, dehydration, altitude sickness, insect stings, tick bites, snakebite, blisters, and hyperventilation.	<p>The treatment for these injuries and illnesses are covered in the camping merit badge book. You can also refer to the first aid merit badge book or the Scout handbook.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: <i>Although this requirement overlaps with some rank requirements, you must demonstrate your first aid knowledge to the camping merit badge counselor.</i></p>
2	Learn the Leave No Trace principles and the Outdoor Code and explain what they mean. Write a personal plan for implementing these principles on your next outing.	<p>You must learn and explain the <i>Leave No Trace</i> principles and the <i>Outdoor Code</i> to the counselor. You should then write a plan using these principles that you will follow on your next campout.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Second Class Req#2 Discuss the principles of Leave No Trace.</p> <p><i>You must demonstrate your knowledge of Leave No Trace principles to the counselor.</i></p>
3	Make a written plan for an overnight trek and show how to get to your camping spot using a topographical map and compass OR a topographical map and a GPS receiver.	<p>This is an actual written plan. Here the camping merit badge book is invaluable for what goes into the plan. You should acquire a map of the camping area and show the counselor how you would use a topographical map in conjunction with either a compass or a GPS unit to get to the campsite.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Second Class Req#1b Using a compass and a map together, take a five-mile hike (or 10 miles by bike) approved by your adult leader and your parent or guardian.</p> <p><i>Although the rank requirement and the merit badge requirement are similar, you must demonstrate your map reading knowledge to the counselor as outlined in the merit badge requirement.</i></p>

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	Requirement	Comments
4	Do the following: (a) Make a duty roster showing how your patrol is organized for an actual overnight campout. List assignments for each member.	This is an actual written duty roster and a written list of assignments for each patrol member. Refer to the camping merit badge book for what goes into these documents. Since you will need to work with a patrol to organize assignments, this requirement takes some time and planning. For the purpose of this requirement, a patrol is a group of three or more Scouts who work together on a campout.
	(b) Help a Scout patrol or a Webelos Scout unit in your area prepare for an actual campout, including creating the duty roster, menu planning, equipment needs, general planning, and setting up camp.	You must either find a Webelos unit that is going camping or a Scout patrol that you can assist. The patrol can be a patrol within Troop 467 such as a new Scout patrol or a patrol outside of the troop.
5	Do the following: (a) Prepare a list of clothing you would need for overnight campouts in both warm and cold weather. Explain the term "layering."	This is an actual written list. You must explain the concept of "layering" to the counselor.
	(b) Discuss footwear for different kinds of weather and how the right footwear is important for protecting your feet.	This does not have to be written, although notes would be helpful to make sure all the bases are covered.
	(c) Explain the proper care and storage of camping equipment (clothing, footwear, bedding).	This does not have to be written, although notes would be helpful to make sure all the bases are covered.
	(d) List the outdoor essentials necessary for any campout, and explain why each item is needed.	This is either a written list, or you can enumerate the essentials verbally to the merit badge counselor and explain why each item is needed.

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	Requirement	Comments
	(e) Present yourself to your Scoutmaster with your pack for inspection. Be correctly clothed and equipped for an overnight campout.	<p>You must present yourself at the start of an outing with your backpack and be ready to discuss what you are carrying and why. You can do this requirement with requirement 7(b).</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Tenderfoot req#1 - Present yourself to your leader, properly dressed, before going on an overnight camping trip. Show the camping gear you will use. Show the right way to pack and carry it.</p> <p><i>The camping merit badge and Tenderfoot requirements are basically the same, but you must present yourself for inspection - just showing up and going on a campout is not sufficient. See the comments for requirement 7(b).</i></p>
6	<p>Do the following:</p> <p>(a) Describe the features of four types of tents, when and where they could be used, and how to care for tents. Working with another Scout, pitch a tent.</p>	<p>You can describe the types of tents in conference with the merit badge counselor. Pitching of the tent can be done on a campout or as a demonstration to the counselor.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Tenderfoot req#2 - Spend at least one night on a patrol or troop campout. Sleep in a tent you have helped pitch.</p> <p>Second Class req#3b: On one of these campouts, select your patrol site and sleep in a tent that you pitched. Explain what factors you should consider when choosing a patrol site and where to pitch a tent.</p> <p><i>You must describe the four types of tents to the counselor, but you can use either rank requirement to satisfy the part of the requirement that asks you to pitch a tent with another Scout.</i></p>

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	Requirement	Comments
	(b) Discuss the importance of camp sanitation and tell why water treatment is essential. Then demonstrate two ways to treat water.	The discussion can be done in conference with the counselor. The demonstration of two ways to treat water can be done on a campout or at a meeting with the counselor.
	(c) Describe the factors to be considered in deciding where to pitch your tent.	Can be done in conference with the merit badge counselor. Similar rank requirements: Second Class req#3b: On one of these campouts, select your patrol site and sleep in a tent that you pitched. Explain what factors you should consider when choosing a patrol site and where to pitch a tent. <i>You must do the requirement for the counselor.</i>
	(d) Tell the difference between internal- and external-frame packs. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.	Can be done in conference with the merit badge counselor.
	(e) Discuss the types of sleeping bags and what kind would be suitable for different conditions. Explain the proper care of your sleeping bag and how to keep it dry. Make a comfortable ground bed.	Can be done in conference with the merit badge counselor. Make a comfortable ground bed either on a campout or as a demonstration to the merit badge counselor.
7	Prepare for an overnight campout with your patrol by doing the following:	
	(a) Make a checklist of personal and patrol gear that will be needed.	This is an actual written checklist. This checklist can be used for all subsequent campouts.

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	(b) Pack your own gear and your share of the patrol equipment and food for proper carrying. Show that your pack is right for quickly getting what is needed first, and that it has been assembled properly for comfort, weight, balance, size, and neatness.	<p>Can be done with requirement 5(e).</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Tenderfoot req#1: Present yourself to your leader, properly dressed, before going on an overnight camping trip. Show the camping gear you will use. Show the right way to pack and carry it.</p> <p><i>The merit badge requirement is more detailed than the rank requirement and alludes to packing for a backpacking trip while the rank requirement can be satisfied on a car camping trip. You will have to do the entire requirement for the counselor. You may do the merit badge requirement with the rank requirement at the same time if you specify that you are doing both and you are embarking on a backpacking trip.</i></p>
8	<p>Do the following:</p> <p>(a) Explain the safety procedures for: 1 Using a propane or butane/propane stove 2 Using a liquid fuel stove 3 Proper storage of extra fuel</p>	<p>Can be done in conference with the merit badge counselor.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Second Class req#3e: Discuss when it is appropriate to use a cooking fire and a lightweight stove. Discuss the safety procedures for using both.</p> <p><i>This rank and the merit badge requirements are similar, but the rank requirement will not count toward the merit badge requirement. You must do all of 8(a) for the counselor.</i></p>
	(b) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different types of lightweight cooking stoves.	Can be done in conference with the merit badge counselor.

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	Requirement	Comments
	<p>(c) Prepare a camp menu. Explain how the menu would differ from a menu for a backpacking or float trip. Give recipes and make a food list for your patrol. Plan two breakfasts, three lunches, and two suppers. Discuss how to protect your food against bad weather, animals, and contamination.</p>	<p>Requirements 8(c) and 8(d) go together and require some forethought and planning. For 8(c), you must prepare a written menu for the specified meals. These meals are what would usually be required for a three-day outing. In conjunction with the menu, you must prepare a food list and give the recipes for each meal and the quantity of the ingredients.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Second Class req#3g – On one campout, plan and cook one hot breakfast or lunch, selecting foods from the food guide pyramid. Explain the importance of good nutrition. Tell how to transport, store, and prepare the foods you selected.</p> <p>First Class req#4a – Help plan a patrol menu for one campout that includes at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner, and that requires cooking at least two of the meals. Tell how the menu includes the foods from the food pyramid and meets nutritional needs.</p> <p>First Class req#4b - Using the menu planned in requirement 4a, make a list showing the cost and food amounts needed to feed three or more boys and secure the ingredients.</p> <p>First Class req#4d - Explain the procedures to follow in the safe handling and storage of fresh meats, dairy products, eggs, vegetables, and other perishable food products. Tell how to properly dispose of camp garbage, cans, plastic containers, and other rubbish.</p> <p><i>You must do the merit badge requirement as stated, but the meals that you plan may overlap with the meals planned for the rank requirements.</i></p>

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	Requirement	Comments
	<p>(d) Cook at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner for your patrol from the meals you have planned for requirement 8c. At least one of those meals must be a trail meal requiring the use of a lightweight stove.</p>	<p>You must actually prepare a breakfast, lunch, and dinner from the meals you have planned in 8(c). You do not have to prepare all these meals on the same outing. One meal that you prepare must be a backpacking trail meal prepared with a lightweight stove. You can prepare the other meals on a car camping trip with a heavier propane camp stove or over an open fire.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements:</p> <p>Tenderfoot req#3 – On the campout, assist in preparing and cooking one of your patrol’s meals. Tell why it is important for each patrol member to share in meal preparation and cleanup, and explain the importance of eating together.</p> <p>Second Class req#3g – On one campout, plan and cook one hot breakfast or lunch, selecting foods from the food guide pyramid. Explain the importance of good nutrition. Tell how to transport, store, and prepare the foods you selected.</p> <p>First Class req#4a – Help plan a patrol menu for one campout that includes at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner, and that requires cooking at least two of the meals. Tell how the menu includes the foods from the food pyramid and meets nutritional needs.</p> <p>First Class req#4e - On one campout, serve as your patrol's cook. Supervise your assistant(s) in using a stove or building a cooking fire. Prepare the breakfast, lunch, and dinner planned in requirement 4a. Lead your patrol in saying grace at the meals and supervise cleanup.</p> <p><i>You must do the merit badge requirement as stated, but the meals that you prepare can overlap with the meals planned for the rank requirements.</i></p>

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9	<p>(a) Show experience in camping by doing the following: Camp a total of at least 20 days and 20 nights. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. The 20 days and 20 nights must be at a designated Scouting activity or event. You may use a week of long-term camp toward this requirement. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.</p> <p>[This requirement has generated much discussion in the online community of Scouting. Here is a clear description of how to interpret this requirement from a representative of the National Council of Scouting. (See Ask the Expert: Interpreting Camping merit badge Requirement 9a for a PDF version of the web page referenced above if that web page is not longer available.)]</p>	<p>This is the core requirement of the camping merit badge. A "designated Scouting activity or event" includes all troop campouts, but also include any campouts sponsored by the Scout council such as NYLT training camp or the national council such as a jamboree. <i>Camping done with school, with the family or other non-Scouting group cannot be counted toward this requirement.</i> A long-term camp is defined as a campout lasting more than 72 hours. Please note that the definition of a long-term camp relates solely to the length of the camp; so, a 12-day trek is Philmont is a long-term camp even though you may camp in a different spot each night. So, if a Scout attends summer camp four summers in a row and racks up 20 nights at these camps, only seven nights would. Thirteen nights must be earned on short-term campouts.</p> <p>Similar rank requirements: Tenderfoot req#2 – Spend at least one night on a patrol or troop campout. Sleep in a tent you have helped pitch.</p> <p>Second Class req#3a – Since joining, have participated in five separate troop/patrol activities (other than troop/ patrol meetings), two of which included camping overnight.</p> <p>First Class req#3 - Since joining, have participated in 10 separate troop/patrol activities (other than troop/patrol meetings), three of which included camping overnight. Demonstrate the principles of Leave No Trace on these outings.</p> <p><i>Nights spent camping counted toward the rank requirements above will also count toward the camping merit badge camping requirement as long as the details of the merit badge requirement are met.</i></p>

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	Requirement	Comments
	<p>(b) On any of these camping experiences, you must do TWO of the following, only with proper preparation and under qualified supervision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Hike up a mountain, gaining at least 1,000 vertical feet. 2 Backpack, snowshoe, or cross-country ski for at least 4 miles. 3 Take a bike trip of at least 15 miles or at least four hours. 4 Take a non-motorized trip on the water of at least four hours or 5 miles. 5 Plan and carry out an overnight snow camping experience. 6 Rappel down a rappel route of 30 feet or more. 	<p>You can pick any two of the sub-requirements to do on the campouts taken in requirement 9(a). Not every campout includes an activity covered by this requirement.</p>
	<p>(c) Perform a conservation project approved by the landowner or land managing agency.</p>	<p>This is a project that you can do on your own or in connection with a group. The project must have something to do with conservation and should be non-trivial and something that you do not do on a routine basis. Philmont hikers almost always do some sort of conservation project on their hikes. Although there is no time span specified for this requirement, projects should usually last two or more hours. Most work with the Forest Service, Big Trees, and other conservation groups will qualify. This is a pretty straightforward requirement to do, but it does require planning. Check with the merit badge counselor before starting a project to make sure that it will count as a conservation project. You cannot use a project to satisfy this requirement if you have used the project to satisfy another requirement for Scouting.</p>
10	<p>Discuss how the things you did to earn this badge have taught you about personal health and safety, survival, public health, conservation, and good citizenship. In your discussion, tell how Scout spirit and the Scout Oath and Law apply to camping and outdoor ethics.</p>	<p>This requirement serves to wrap-up the merit badge and is the last requirement that will be completed.</p>

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