



The Arizona Game and Fish Department uses this Eagle Scout's project to help age elk that are brought to regional check stations.

GEORGE ANDREJKO

# Arizona Scouting



One cornerstone of the Boy Scouts of America scouting program is an outdoor code that states, "As an American, I will do my best to be clean in my outdoor manners, be careful with fire, be considerate in the outdoors, and be conservation minded."

About 100 years ago, around the same time scouting was introduced in America, the great conservation-minded President Theodore Roosevelt said, "There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country." John James Audubon said it this way, "A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his Fathers but borrowed from his children."

Many Boy Scouts in Arizona follow the lead of Roosevelt and Audubon, proving their conservation-mindedness on projects that serve Arizona wildlife and habitat.

By Terry Clapp

As they work on these projects, Boy Scouts have opportunities to enhance their character and leadership skills while serving in outdoor areas of greatest need. Along the way, they earn merit badges, and a few even attain the coveted rank of Eagle, the highest offered by the Scouts.

Merit Badges Support Wildlife Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting and the Venturing Programs boast nearly 3 million members in America. The focus of the Boy Scouts from their onset in 1910 has been nature and woodcraft involving skill-building outdoor experiences such as hiking, camping and canoeing.

Among the 121 merit badges that a scout can earn while having such experiences, many reinforce the preservation and prudent use of natural resources. Fish and Wildlife Management, Mammal Study, Plant Science, Nature, Bird Study, Soil and Water Conservation, Reptile and Amphibian Study, Geology, Animal Science, Backpacking and Wilderness Survival are some of these merit badges.

Many merit badges have conservation, respect for natural resources and respect for the laws of the land as goals. For example, Forestry and Fire Safety merit badges are

## A Heritage of Service

available. In June 1990, the Dude Fire consumed 24,000 acres on the Tonto National Forest near the Mogollon Rim. By the summer of 1991, Boy Scouts from Mesa and Phoenix were in the burn area, plant-



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and habitat: Environmental Science and Camping.

The Eagle Project is the dissertation part on the trail to the Eagle Rank. It involves researching an appropriate service project. The scout then gets approval for the project and organizes and plans the project. In addition, the scout must obtain the funds and organize the manpower to complete the project. A minimum of 100 hours of community service time must be devoted to the project.

When asked, the Arizona Game and Fish Department

ing seedling ponderosa pines. Now 17 years later, the young forest provides not only wildlife habitat but also an excellent seed source for future generations of trees.

Several Boy Scout troops in Arizona, seeking community service projects, have partnered with the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Adopt-a-Ranch Program. Boy Scout Troop 148 maintains three wildlife water catchments and conducted clean-up projects on three different ranches as a part of this program. In a state like Arizona, water catchments are a necessity for wildlife survival.

Boy Scout Troop 434 did a clean-up project to help maintain public access on a ranch near Prescott Valley. Boy Scout Troop 625 cleaned up wildcat shooting sites on a ranch near Gold Canyon. Wildcat shooting sites are places where people discharge their weapons without permission. Lots of trash can build up in these areas as people shoot bottles, cans and other discarded trash.

Earning merit badges on projects such as these helps deepen a scout's appreciation for natural resources and nature.

### A Contribution from Eagles

The Ph.D. of scouting is the coveted Eagle Scout rank. To achieve this rank, a scout must earn 21 merit badges, 12 required and nine selected by the scout depending on his areas of interest. Of the 12 required merit badges, two are most closely related to wildlife

works closely with scouts who choose wildlife-related projects. Arizona's wildlife and habitat benefit greatly from the partnerships, as the following examples show.

A project completed by Eagle Scout Brian McNiece and Boy Scout Troop 911 in January 2007 assisted the Arizona Bald Eagle Nest Watch Program. The scouts built six portable shade screens using PVC pipe and shade cloth to help protect nest-watchers from the elements as they perform their duties in the wild. Nest-watchers live in the wilderness near nesting areas to monitor and protect bald eagles and eaglets during the breeding cycle. The portable shade screens provide shelter from the sun.

The Monofilament Recycling Program was given a big boost when Eagle Scout Tony Maxwell and Boy Scout Troop 46 constructed and installed five monofilament recycling stations at strategic locations around Alamo Lake in western Arizona. Transparent monofilament line often causes problems when discarded into water and wetland environments. Uncontained line can entangle and kill wildlife, waterfowl and fish. The recycling stations not only provide a receptacle for discarded line, but also remind anglers to properly discard trash while enjoying the wild environment.

The people who watch over Arizona's nesting bald eagles can do so from the shade, thanks to the efforts of Brian McNiece and Boy Scout Troup 911 (above).



EDGAR MAXWELL



PAUL HOBAICA

Boy Scouts have placed monofilament recycling stations at Alamo Lake (top) and nest boxes at Raymond Ranch Wildlife Area (bottom).

Brothers James and Rick Hobaica chose to do their Eagle Scout service projects at Raymond Ranch Wildlife Area. Here where the buffalo roam, Rick Hobaica helped establish wetland habitats. Rick and members of Boy Scout Troop 43 strategically located 200 plants near two water sources on the buffalo ranch. James Hobaica and the scouts of Boy Scout Troop 43 constructed and placed 20 nest boxes. Now near the water sources, visitors to the area see not only buffalo, but also increased numbers of birds as well.

### Ben Avery Shooting Facility

The Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix, owned by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, gets a lot of tender love and care from the Boy Scouts through cleanup and restoration projects. Scouts have replaced or refinished shooting benches and built rattlesnake transportation and containment boxes.

At the facility, scouts also have created and helped maintain the "A Drip for Arizona Watering Program." These small water catchment basins provide water for small animals that grace the grounds at Ben Avery, including perky top-knotted Gambel's quail, desert cottontail or thirsty cactus wrens looking for a drink.

### The Spirit of Scouting

Scouts in Arizona are involved throughout the state volunteering thousands of hours of community service to wildlife and wildlife habitat. During 2007, 1,151 Eagle projects were completed in Arizona communities. These efforts resulted in 193,677 hours of service given.

Not all of these projects are devoted to wildlife — but many are. Scouts may be found redeveloping a spring in southern Arizona, cleaning up public access areas on ranches, modifying fences to improve antelope habitat, cleaning up recreation sites, maintaining trails and helping with special events, festivals and educational activities.

Volunteer service by scouts provides the Arizona Game and Fish Department with a direct savings of \$8.90/hr. to \$11.90/hr. for each hour of service given, according to the department's volunteer coordinator. The direct benefit to wildlife resources in Arizona is difficult to measure, but one thing is certain: Work on merit badges and Eagle projects trains young men to respect and enjoy the outdoors while learning to leave things better than they found them. For that, we can all be grateful. 🦋

■ A freelance writer based in Arizona, Terry Clapp says, "I get the same great feeling whether I'm stepping outdoors into nature or writing about it."



Fish and Wildlife Management



Mammal Study



Plant Science



Nature



Bird Study



Soil and Water Conservation



Reptile and Amphibian Study



Geology



Insect Study



Archaeology



Rifle Shooting