

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Eagle Scout Service Opportunities

The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is comprised of five counties in eastern Pennsylvania: Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Bucks. The Corridor is recognized as the birthplace of the anthracite coal industry in America and the American Industrial Revolution. The 165-mile long Delaware and Lehigh (D&L) Trail dissects the Corridor and follows the canals and railroads that once transported coal from mine to market. A multitude of Eagle Scout service opportunities exists along the trail, all of which fall into five areas that are outlined below.

Eagle Scout candidates who are interested in pursuing one of these areas as his service opportunity is asked to contact Dennis Scholl, D&L Outreach Coordinator, by telephone (610-923-3548; Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.), mail (D&LNHC, 1 South Third St., Easton, PA 18042), or e-mail (dennis@delawareandlehigh.org). Dennis or another D&L representative will meet interested candidates and serve as their D&L advisor.

1. Mapping of D&L Trail Maintenance Sites

Eagle Scout candidates will identify D&L Trail maintenance problem sites and use a compass or a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit to locate them by latitude and longitude. Locations will be plotted on a topographic map of the area, using procedures outlined on pages 171-190 of the Boy Scouts of America *Fieldbook*, 4th Edition, copyright 2004. The locations also will be photographed and recorded in a written log of activities kept by the Eagle Scout candidate. The maintenance locations will be forwarded to the Outreach Coordinator of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, who will include them in a data base of trail-wide maintenance problem sites.

The candidate will be required to formulate and execute a remedial action for one of the identified maintenance problems.

Problems to be identified and located include:

- 1) trail erosion areas
- 2) areas populated with invasive plants
- 3) areas with poor drainage
- 4) areas where trash has been disposed
- 5) areas where ATV use is compromising the character of the trail

2. GPS Mapping of Historic Sites Along D&L Trail

Eagle Scout candidates will use the same procedures as outlined in "Mapping of D&L Trail Maintenance Sites."

Historic sites can include:

- 1) Canal locks or other historic structures associated with the Lehigh or Delaware canals
- 2) Railroad switching stations, turntables, light towers and other structures associated with rail roads that were once active along the D&L Trail.
- 3) Historic buildings or other historic structures located in communities that are adjacent to the D&L Trail.

Candidates will be required to photograph sites they identify and provide a written profile of each site, using local libraries, historical societies or local residents as research sources. Residents can be recorded on videotape. The photographs, tapes and profiles will be forwarded to the Outreach Coordinator of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor.

3. Organization of D&L Trail Tenders group and trail cleanup program

Eagle Scout candidates will contact the Outreach Coordinator of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor to identify a nearby section of the D&L Trail that is not maintained by a D&L Trail Tenders volunteer group. The candidate then will work with the Outreach Coordinator to organize a new Trail Tenders group comprised of interested youth and adult volunteers. The new Trail Tenders group will "adopt" the identified portion of the D&L Trail and maintain it on a long-term basis.

As part of his responsibilities, the candidate will work with the D&L Outreach Coordinator to identify problem areas along the adopted trail segment and formulate a maintenance plan and timetable. A required

part of the maintenance plan will be a trail cleanup that the candidate will organize and supervise.

4. Creation of a D&L Trail Enhancement Site

Enhancement of a trail for the benefit of trail users can take many forms. Eagle Scout candidates who are interested in creating an enhancement site along the D&L Trail will work with the D&L Outreach Coordinator to identify an appropriate enhancement option and site, and then formulate and execute a site plan.

Enhancement options include:

- a) Signage that interprets a historic or natural resource along the trail
- b) Establishment of a natural area or wildlife observation site
 - 1) Native plant meadow
 - 2) Bird observation area
 - 3) Butterfly observation area
 - 4) Food plot for whitetail deer or wild turkeys
 - 5) Other ideas
- c) Rest spots for trail users
 - 1) Build or acquire benches for hikers and bikers to rest

Candidates will be responsible for the acquisition of enhancement site materials and construction of the site, either by individual or group effort. If funding is required for materials, the candidate is responsible for raising the funds, through community fund-raising efforts or grants from corporate or non-profit businesses and organizations.

5. Invasive plant management plan

Invasive (non-native, alien) plants pose threats to plants and wildlife that live adjacent to the D&L Trail, and to the trail itself. Invasive plants threaten the natural order of life by replacing native plant species that provide food and habitat for native wildlife. Some invasive plants that become established on the perimeter of the D&L Trail can threaten the physical structure of the trail as well. *Ailanthus*, or "Tree of Heaven," can grow root systems that undermine the trail surface and cause erosion.

Eagle Scout candidates who choose Invasive Plant Management as their service opportunity will select a half-mile segment of the D&L Trail and formulate a plan to eradicate invasive plants that live along it. The candidates will work with the D&L Outreach Coordinator to identify invasive plant species along the trail and investigate accepted methods of controlling and eventually eradicating them.

Candidates will photograph the identified invasive species and research their negative effects on native plants and wildlife. The photographs and individual profiles will be incorporated into a project plan that will include methods of eradication for each species. Copies of the plan will be provided to the D&L Outreach Coordinator and to a local Boy Scout troop that agrees to continue the eradication program on a long-term basis.

In addition to compiling documentation of invasive plants that grow along the trail, the candidate will be required to organize a group of volunteers who will employ accepted control techniques during a scheduled invasive plant "cleanup." Plants that are collected during the cleanup will be taken to an appropriate area and burned.