

BLUEBIRDS – Through the Eye of an Eagle Scout

By Dylan Huber

To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, a service project is required that involves at least six hours of volunteer work. I am an Eagle Scout from Troop 117 in Kellner, Wisconsin. I achieved my Eagle award in the fall of 2008 at the age of 15.

When I first started thinking of what I could do for my service project, I contacted the DNR to see if they had any ideas. They gave me the name and number of bluebird expert, Dr. Kent Hall. Dr. Hall had a project for me. He suggested that I could construct twenty five bluebird houses and install them around my community, and then asked if I'd be willing to take on the task of monitoring the houses for an entire

season. My bluebird trail ended up being eight miles long with 27 boxes and even included one box by my house.

In January, 2008, I lead the construction phase of the boxes with the help of my family and my troop. Dr. Hall, my friend Dalton, and I set out to install the boxes on March 21, 2008. We got three boxes in, and we had to quit because a blizzard had started



and the snow was blowing too hard and was too deep. On April 20th we installed the rest of the boxes and checked the ones that were already in place. On the 27th we monitored the boxes again and reinforced them by screwing the tops down better and caulking the sides. Every week after that, I had to monitor and record what was in each individual box. I would need to record if there was a nest in the box, what kind of birds built the nest, if there were any eggs, if any eggs had hatched, and how old the chicks were. Then when I got home, I needed to record the total number of nests, eggs, and chicks there were for every different species. Dr. Hall helped me with the identification of what type of birds they were. Our goal was to attract bluebirds, but we also got a lot of tree swallows and house wrens. I hated checking the tree swallow nests because when you walked

continued on next page

Eagle Scout . . .

continued from page 5



up to the bird's box, they would start to dive bomb you. At the end of the summer we figured out that if you took an umbrella with you when you went, you would feel a little safer and have more time to check the box.

I learned more from my project than I would ever have imagined. Thanks to Dr. Kent Hall, I learned a lot of cool facts about all different kinds of song birds and that monitoring boxes requires a lot of time, commitment and hard work. My project ended up being a total of 101-1/2 volunteer hours. Now when I see a bluebird, I have a new understanding of how it came to be.

