

## A WOOD BADGE TESTIMONIAL

Greetings fellow Scouters,

My name is Tim Wyant and I have been a volunteer in Scouting for most of 45-years. Like many of you, I have worn “many hats”, and usually more than one at a time. I currently serve on the Council Camping Committee/Properties, am a member of the Camp Decorah Corps and the Council Wood Badge Committee. It is my experience with Wood Badge that I would most like to share with you.



Wood Badge has been and still remains “the ultimate leadership development program” for adult leaders in the BSA. It was touted as such in my early years of Scouting and I can assure you that it has retained that level of excellence even today. I was about 12-years into my Scouter experience before I was convinced that I should participate, by another Scouter. The available courses were all out of council and eight days long. That meant considerable vacation time had to be used. In retrospect, I wish I had made the decision sooner. My experience with Wood Badge was transforming for me personally as an adult leader in Scouting.

We were immediately exposed to leadership/management skills and then given the opportunity to practice them in a Scout troop setting. Once called Effective Teaching, you may recognize the method as The Teaching EDGE. Most invaluable! I made many new friends that week, especially the six other members of the patrol I was assigned to. Go Good News Bears! Seven complete strangers bonded by a unique 8-day/7-night camping and leadership training experience at Camp Tesomas in northern Wisconsin. We eagerly accepted the challenges and opportunities to practice our newly found Scoutcraft and leadership skills. These six individuals and since then all the other “Wood-Badgers” I know have become an invaluable network of Scouting friends. Sharing experiences, ideas and talents as needed, we work to strengthen the Scouting programs that “Deliver the Promise.”

As if the tools of leadership were not enough, my greatest benefit from the experience was the confidence in myself as a leader. The second phase of Wood

Badge, the application phase, allows us to set goals that may benefit ourselves, our units and/or the council. What a fantastic sense of accomplishment when those goals are met, usually through the cooperation of others in Scouting. There is hardly a greater example of Servant Leadership than the Scouting movement, as we strive to be helpful to others.

Today's Wood Badge has evolved greatly. Abbreviated to five days, the course content draws upon the most current leadership and management models offered by corporate, university and even military organizations. Again, all is presented in a relevant Scouting setting! Although five consecutive day courses may be available, the five day/two weekends course is a better fit for the busy schedules of today's generation of Scouters.

Do not take just my word for all of this, however! If you haven't attended Wood Badge yet, I want you to query other Wood Badgers. They are easy to spot. With a smile, they proudly wear the Wood Badge beads and/or the neckerchief with the MacLaren tartan patch. Ask them about their experience and what they may have gained from attending Wood Badge. Ask them about the beads and the neckerchief. I dare say you will be fascinated by the history and the tradition behind these objects. Maybe, even inspired enough to participate in Wood Badge training yourself!

Yours in Scouting,

Tim Wyant

For more information about Wood Badge and our spring 2024 course update, check-out the Gateway Area Council Wood Badge web page at:

<https://www.gatewayscouting.org/woodbadge>