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Wyoming Eagle Scout earns all merit badges

December 29, 2015



LANDER, Wyo. — Just in time for Christmas, a 16-year-old Eagle Scout earned all of the Scouting merit badges that are available.

James Whiting said he has been working on merit badges since he was around 11 years old. Once he reached about 50 merit badges, he made a goal to go for all of them. There are currently 136 merit badges available, according to the [Boy Scouts of America website](#), but Whiting said he earned 142, some of which were centennial badges that have since been discontinued.

The ambitious Scout particularly enjoyed the scuba diving, astronomy and welding merit badges, and found the composite materials and bugling merit badges to be among the more challenging.

Part of the reason Whiting decided to earn all the merit badges was to help others earn theirs. He figured if he could earn all the merit badges, others "could just earn the 21 needed for their Eagle Scout."

Whiting's Scouting experience has taught him a lot, including numerous different skills, career possibilities and an understanding of what to do in possible emergency situations and everyday situations, he said.

While working on his goal, the young Scout faced health concerns with dealing with Crohn's disease, something he called a pretty big challenge. At one point, he was told he may not survive, he said, but he continued working toward his goal.



James Whiting working on his backpacking merit badge. (Photo: James Whiting)

According to his mom, Camille Whiting, his Crohn's disease is now in remission, and he is healthy.

Whiting earned his Eagle Scout after fixing up three rundown softball fields behind a high school. As part of his project, he planted some durable trees, put up a fence around a playground and installed a scoreboard on one of the fields that didn't have one.

In 2013, he was awarded the [Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award](#) for the Central Wyoming Council by the National Eagle Scout Association.

Whiting's merit badge counselor, Dominick Weigel Jr., called Whiting "an amazing young man" and said he was self-motivated. Weigel added that Whiting is a goal setter and a goal achiever. While many can set a goal and never make it, Whiting sets a goal and gets it done, Weigel said.

The feat is so rare that the BSA does not keep a formal record of the number of boys who have earned all the badges, according to [ABC News](#).