



Senior Eco Explorer

Pillar: Outdoors

Purpose: When you've earned this badge, you'll have researched different environmental issues and taken at least one trip to see how an area is impacted.



Girl Scout Seniors will earn their badge by:

1) Meet an Eco Explorer. (Discover)

- Learn about Cassie DePecol by watching this [Ted Talk](#). Then research to find out how she off-set her carbon footprint by planting trees and why she collected water samples from all over the world.
- Learn about Mollie Beatie by starting [here](#) and [here](#). Expand your research by learning about how managing whole ecosystems is the key to preserving individual species of plants and animals and by learning about the importance of the reintroduction of the grey wolf into Yellowstone. Find out what Mollie's pack us up to today.
- Get to know Anne Bancroft in this [video](#) and this [video](#). Expand your knowledge about the effects of global warming on the polar ice caps. Look up what is happening to the animals who call these places home.

2) Explore biodiversity. (Discover)

- Begin your research [here](#) to find out what biodiversity is and its importance in our world.
- Choose a biologically diverse ecosystem and learn about the plants, animals, and insects that play their part in creating and sustaining it. What happens when one is removed? Learn about their interconnectedness to each other and then trace how it interacts with you.
- Go on a hike and study a small section of land. Create a field journal out of a notebook or journal. Use your field journal to record what you discover on your hike. Observe and record plants, insects, fungi, and as many other things as you see, smell, hear and feel in your area. Take pictures and/or video to help you as you go back over your findings. Upon your return learn about each thing you found. What plants did you find, what do they do, who might they feed, how much sunlight do they require, etc. Do the same with insects, animals, fungi, etc. Apply your field research and learn about your immediate environment.

3) Investigate a global ecosystem issue. (Connect)

- Find out major causes that decrease biodiversity in our world. Choose a topic and find out more about it globally and locally. Examples may include but are not limited to deforestation, invasive species, global warming, pollution. Visit this [encyclopedia site](#) and this [Save Earth site](#) to get started.
- What are small changes we could make in our daily lives that could help? Experiment! Pick one change and try it for a week, then two weeks. Can you sustain it for a month? Use your field journal and make daily entries about what you are doing, what benefits you are finding and what challenges you face. Be honest about how well you do or don't do! Is your family on board? What is the cost and convenience factor? Many small changes seem easy but are harder than we think when we put them into practice for long periods of time. Read this [article](#) and watch this [video](#) about how these ladies try to live without creating trash! It is an interesting study!

4) Plan a trip to explore and work on an issue. (Connect and Take Action)

- Visit a museum near you with a natural history exhibit or do an online museum visit! [Natural History Museum](#) and [American Museum of Natural History](#).
- Visit a wildlife refuge near you or reach out to a local parks service and interview them about what they do, what issues they face and how you can help.



- c) Know the 7 principals of [Leave no Trace](#) and apply them to your trip. Plan to take the most eco friendly trip you can!

5) Share what you have learned. (Take Action)

- a) You've done the research, you've done the field study and you've identified issues, now tell your story and inspire others! Create a blog and use your field journal as inspiration, create a series of social media posts, or make a video diary of what you are doing and how others can help. Whatever you choose to do, have fun and be creative! Look for ways to track who you inspire and what they are doing based on your information!

When you're finished: Congratulations, you have earned your badge! You can purchase online at <https://www.girlscoutshop.com/Senior-Eco-Explorer-Badge>

You can purchase your Virtual patch and bars at <https://www.gsksmo.org/orderpatches>

