Boy Scout Merit Badge Courses at the McDowell, Reedy Creek, and Latta Plantation Nature Centers

The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department operates three Nature Centers: McDowell, Reedy Creek, and Latta Plantation. Each of these Nature Centers offer "public" and "private" merit badge programs for individual Boy Scouts and for Troops. All counselors and instructors are registered, BSA Youth Protection qualified, and trained as merit badge counselors.

	Reedy Creek	McDowell	Latta Plantation		Hornaday Award	Hornaday Award
Merit Badges	Nature Center	Nature Center	Nature Center		Conservation Merit Badge	Nature Merit Badge
	704 598 8857	704 588 5224	704 875 1391			
Animal Science	x					
Astronomy		x				
Backpacking		x	x			
Bird Study	x	x	x			x
Camping		x	x			
Canoeing		x	x			
Chemistry		x	x			
Cooking			x			
Environmental Science	x	x	x		x	
First Aid		x	x			
Fish and Wildlife Management	x	x	x		x	
Fishing		x	x			x
Fly Fishing		x	x			x
Forestry	x	x	x		x	
Gardening			x			x
Geocaching			x			
Geology		x				x
Hiking		x	x			
Insect Study	x	x	x			x
Mammal Study		x	x			x
Nature	x	x	x			x
Orienteering		x	x			
Plant Science		x	x			x
Reptile and Amphibian Study	x	x	x			x
Soil and Water Conservation	x	x	x		x	
Weather		x				x
Wilderness Survival		x	x			

See:
http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/ParkandRec/StewardshipServices/Programs/Documents/Merit%20Badges.pdf

The "public" merit badge offerings are posted on the websites for each Nature Center once each quarter, that is, in January, April, July, and October. These websites can be accessed through this page:
http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/ParkandRec/StewardshipServices/Pages/default.aspx
Individual Scouts or patrols or troops can register for these programs. Merit badge courses may require prerequisites to be completed before the class session. Most courses are designed to cover most or all of the requirements in one day but some badges are multi-day badges. Most badge programs are $15 per Scout, last one day, and include lunch. Understanding these details is important before Scouts register for the merit badge course with a Nature Center. Scouts will leave with a workbook and a blue card documenting their participation and requirements completed, whether all of the requirements are fully satisfied or whether some requirements or projects need to be completed through their home troops.

"Private" merit badge offerings can be arranged by individual Scouts, patrols, or troops. The Scout or adult leader must contact the Nature Center to work out details of which merit badge or badges are to be taught, the date(s) and time(s) for the instruction, number of attendees, costs, and expectations for pre-course homework and/or projects. Each course requires two adults from the troop to attend with the Scouts.

Primitive group camping is available for units participating in merit badge programs at McDowell Nature Center and at Latta Plantation Nature Center, if desired. Camping for programs at McDowell Nature Center is available at Copperhead Island or at a primitive group camping site along Lake Wylie. Usual camping fees apply. Here is the link for camping information for McDowell Nature Center:
http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/ParkandRec/Athletics/Outdoors/Pages/Camping.aspx

Camping for programs at Latta Plantation Nature Center is available on a limited basis at Rural Hill Farm at no charge in exchange for 3-4 hours of group service work when Scouts are participating in a badge program at Latta Plantation Nature Center. This service project could qualify for a merit badge project with advance planning with the merit badge instructors. Scout troops must transport Scouts from Latta Plantation Nature Center to Rural Hill Farm for camping.

Wilderness Survival Merit Badge is offered at McDowell Nature Center and at Latta Plantation Nature Center. Requirement # 8 is "Improvise a natural shelter. For the purpose of this demonstration, use techniques that have little negative impact on the environment. Spend a night in your shelter." This requirement is covered during the merit badge course and Scouts will spend one night in their shelters to meet this requirement.

Latta Plantation Nature Center has the following public merit badge programs scheduled for the fall of 2012:
9/23 – First Aid
9/30 – Reptile and Amphibian Study
10/13 – Mammal Study
10/14 – Bird Study
11/17 – Nature Study

Please call Latta Plantation Nature Center at 704 875 1391 to plan and reserve individual and/or Scout unit participation, including any prerequisite requirements that should be completed before the course session.

For more information on merit badge, Eagle Scout, and Hornaday Award projects at Mecklenburg Park and Recreation facilities, including Nature Centers, please see http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/ParkandRec/StewardshipServices/Pages/Scout%20Projects.aspx

For more information on the Hornaday Awards for conservation, see http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards/HornadayAwards.aspx
and
http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards/HornadayAwards/Forms.aspx