REQUIREMENTS BY SKILL

Nature, Weather & Environment Requirements by Rank

Plants, animals, weather hazards, and a local environmental issue.

Nature requirements reward troops that get outside often. Tenderfoot covers hazardous plants, Second Class asks for ten wild animals, and First Class asks for ten native plants, plus a solid block of weather knowledge and a local environmental issue. Animal and plant identification can build up over several outings. Encourage scouts to keep a photo list on their phones.

> Requirements are paraphrased for planning, and numbers follow the current Scouts BSA Requirements book. Verify wording at scouting.org before signing off.

How Nature, Weather & Environment Builds Across the Ranks

Tenderfoot

4b Describe common poisonous or hazardous plants, identify any found locally, and explain how to treat exposure.

Sign-off: Point them out in the field when you can. Poison ivy is a good start.

Second Class

4 Identify or show evidence (tracks, signs, or your own photos) of at least ten kinds of wild animals in your local area or camping location.

Sign-off: A photo list built over several outings works well. Animals should be wild and local.

First Class

5a	Identify or show evidence of at least ten kinds of native plants in your local area or campsite, using fallen leaves, a collection, or photos.
5b	Name two ways to get a weather forecast for an upcoming activity and explain why forecasts matter for planning.
5c	Describe at least three natural signs of hazardous weather, the dangers they signal, and how to respond.
5d	Describe extreme weather in your area, how to judge the risk ahead of time, how to plan around it, and how to prepare and respond.
9b	Investigate an environmental issue in your community, share what you learned with your patrol or troop, and suggest what could be done.

After First Class

Environmental Science or Sustainability fills an Eagle-required slot, and First Class 9b is a good warm-up for either. Nature-focused electives like Bird Study, Mammal Study, Weather, and Forestry are often offered at summer camp.

Environmental Science EAGLE — Eagle-required option (or Sustainability).

Sustainability EAGLE — Eagle-required option (or Environmental Science).

Weather — Builds on First Class 5b–5d.

Bird Study — Great for scouts who enjoyed the wild animal list.

Nature — A broad intro to plants and animals.

Can rank work count toward a merit badge? Sometimes. Under the Guide to Advancement (4.2.3.6), one activity can count for both when the two requirements match exactly and have the same purpose, like camping nights for the ranks and the Camping merit badge. For safety skills such as first aid and CPR, the counselor should be satisfied the Scout still remembers what was learned. When requirements only look alike, the Scout still does each one's own work. The unit leader or merit badge counselor makes the call.

Nature Hike with a Weather Check

A trail with varied habitat. About 2 hours, ideally in spring through fall.

1. **Forecast briefing**
   Before leaving, a First Class candidate checks two forecast sources and briefs the group on what to expect and why it matters (FC 5b).

2. **Hazard plants**
   In the first stretch of trail, find and identify poison ivy (or local equivalents) with the Tenderfoots (T 4b).

3. **Photo scavenger hunt**
   Second Class candidates log wild animals or their signs (tracks, scat, nests, burrows) (SC 4). First Class candidates photograph native plants (FC 5a). Add to the lists every outing.

4. **Sky reading**
   At a clearing, discuss natural signs of approaching bad weather and what to do (FC 5c). Connect it to the extreme weather your area actually gets (FC 5d).

5. **Environmental issue**
   Point out a local issue along the trail, such as erosion, invasive plants, or litter. Suggest First Class candidates research it and report back at a future meeting (FC 9b).

Signing It Off

Lists can build up over many outings. There's no need to find all ten animals or plants on one hike.

Plant ID apps are fine as a learning tool, but the scout should be able to name what they found when asked.

For First Class 9b, a short presentation at a patrol meeting is plenty.

Common Mistakes

Counting pets, zoo animals, or landscaping plants.

Skipping the weather requirements because they "seem like classroom stuff." They're safety skills that matter on every campout.