

# BADGES ≠ PERSONAL PROGRESSION

There are many youth who spend years in the Scouting movement—progressing through the Sections, developing their leadership skills and experiencing things for the first time—but earn very few badges. Does that mean those youth haven't developed as individuals through their time in Scouting? Absolutely not!

For a long time now our members have been focused on earning badges, and using badges as a means of judging personal progression. This is not an ideal approach. What we are really after is to ensure that Scouts are engaged in activities that have them learn by doing. Adventures provide learning opportunities and help youth develop in the SPICES (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Character, Emotional and Spiritual).

One of the goals of The Canadian Path is to disassociate badges from personal progression, as the two have become synonymous over the years. Think of how a 10 year-old has grown since joining Cub Scouts two years earlier. This is the personal journey, the personal progression. By taking part in a number of Adventures, the youth develops skills and acquires knowledge. Scouting is not about earning a collection of badges as a group. Each young person is different and each is on a unique journey. This is what Lord Baden-Powell referred to in *Aids to Scoutmastership* when he spoke of individual training as education. This is the Canadian Path's approach to **personal progression**, and it is an approach advocated by the World Organization of the Scouting Movement.

The Outdoor Adventure Skills are an example of how youth can develop in a skill set of their choosing—which is what The Canadian Path is all about. While some youth will be motivated to progress in the Outdoor Adventure Skills by achieving higher stages, most youth will be motivated by their great Scouting experiences—not the badges. This is particularly true for adolescents.

Scouting is not a catalogue of activities delivered by Scouters, for which a badge is presented for completing each activity. That confuses the purpose of the activity, and also places limits on the activity's potential. True growth and development happens in the activities that our youth plan, do and then review. We *recognize* this growth in skill and knowledge by presenting a cloth emblem we call a badge.



To this end, Scouts Canada has decided not to produce any new badges in support of The Canadian Path until the spring of 2016. We will begin by making the badges available in Group Transition Kits in the spring of 2016. All program materials will be available for sale in Scout

Shops in late summer of 2016, after the Transition Kits have been delivered to Groups.

The decision not to promote Canadian Path badges yet is intended to focus youth and Scouters on conducting a proper review of activities. All too often, Scouters consider a badge presentation ceremony a review of a Scout's experience. But what have the youth learned? How have the youth grown? What was learned on that canoe trip besides paddle strokes? Teamwork? Leadership? Patience? Resiliency? Likely, but true learning comes from reflecting on the experience—not just the experience itself.

Badges have always been an important symbol of achievement within Scouting, but they can also distract from what we're really about. Just as this decision will foster conversations between Scouters about what badges are really for and why some believe them to be so important, take this opportunity to have the same conversation with your youth. The Canadian Path is *their* program. Their answers may just surprise you.

[Canadianpath.ca](http://Canadianpath.ca)



It starts with Scouts.



1. **Will there be new badges for the Canadian Path?**

Yes, almost all of Scouts Canada's badges will be revamped to align them with The Canadian Path. For Cub Scouts and Scouts, many of the current personal achievement badges will still be offered.

2. **When will the new badges be available?**

All new badges will be available through Group Transition Kits in the spring of 2016. In late summer of 2016, badges will be available in Scout Shops.

3. **When will the new books be available?**

New books will begin to be available in the Scout Shops in the fall of 2016, starting with the *Scouter Manual*. A draft version of the *Scouter Manual* will be available electronically beginning later this year, and anyone will be able to provide feedback.

4. **Why aren't the Outdoor Adventure Skill badges available yet?**

One of the goals of The Canadian Path is to disassociate badges from personal progression. To this end, Scouts Canada has decided not to produce Outdoor Adventure Skill badges at this time. Youth and Scouters are encouraged to explore this exciting new aspect of the program and focus on their personal progression.

Scouts Canada will produce Outdoor Adventure Skills collector cards, which will be available in Scout Shops in the fall of 2015. These cards will serve as an interim recognition item for youth, as well as provide tips and tricks for achieving the next stage of each skill.



5. **Does this mean the current books and badges are irrelevant?**

Absolutely not! The Canadian Path will roll out the new Section frameworks in the fall of 2015, for implementation in the Sections throughout 2016. Until new resources and badges are rolled out to support other changes to the Section programs, the current books and badges are critical to their successful delivery.

6. **What resources will be produced for The Canadian Path?**

The Canadian Path will provide resources for youth in each Section. For Scouters, there will be one book that covers all Sections. The Canadian Path aims to consolidate program practices so that all of our Sections work together, which will strengthen our organization and provide a better Scouting experiences to the youth. Due to all the similarities between Sections, Scouters can all use the same handbook with a chapter dedicated to each Section's symbolic framework.

7. **Will program resources (such as Trail Cards) be available in the Scout Shops?**

Yes, there will be a number of program resources available in the Scout Shops beginning in the spring of 2016. Many of these resources are already available electronically at [CanadianPath.ca](http://CanadianPath.ca) for youth and Scouters to explore.

8. **Will there be a resource to help youth and Scouters transition from the current badges to the new ones?**

Yes, a transition chart will be provided to help youth and Scouters make a smooth transition when the new badges are launched next spring.

9. **How can I learn more about personal progression?**

The Canadian Path program is largely informed by the World Organization of the Scout Movement's **Renewed Approach to Programme**. You can read the section on **personal progression** on [CanadianPath.ca](http://CanadianPath.ca).

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