

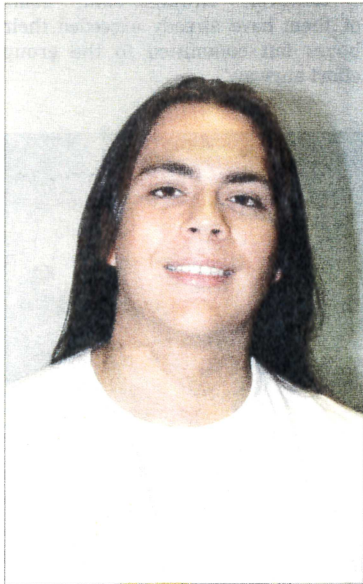
Scout earns Eagle but concert delays ceremony



New Eagle Scout Garcia Warren is shown at work with fellow scouts during his Eagle project.

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Garcia Warren earned his Eagle Scout award this past year like four of his other fellow Scouts, but a high school concert prevented him from



Garcia Warren

attending a final meeting with the Eagle Board, thus making him ineligible to be recognized in a Court of Honor ceremony with his peers in June. That meeting took place a few days after the ceremony, so while Warren is now officially an Eagle Scout, he'll have to wait to be recognized.

"It felt really rewarding," said Warren, who joined Boy Scouts as a Bear Cub. "I put a lot of time into Scouting. I feel pretty proud to be an Eagle Scout. I feel it's a big achievement. I feel very honored to have made it there as almost a thank you to those who helped me along the way. It would have been a disservice to them to be in Scouting for so long and to not have made Eagle.

"It shows the people who helped me through the Scouting process that I was serious about it, that I was committed."

Since he moved to Cornwall in the third grade, Black Rock Forest has been an important part of Warren's life. He attended summer camp there and participated in a program to improve Brook Trout. He also helped remove invasive species through a strike force day conducted by the NY-NJ Trail Conference. When it came time to choose an Eagle Scout project, giving back to the forest community

made the most sense.

Last winter Warren met with forest manager Matt Brady who had a need for invasive species removal. The two visited a site in the White Oak area and the Scout took photos to begin formulating his project including what the work sessions would entail, what tools would be needed, the number of volunteers, and timing. He met with the Eagle Board in June 2023 and started work in September.

The project entailed removing three invasive species about 50 feet into the woods from the road. These included Japanese Barberry, Burning Bush, and Multiflora Rose. Warren said it was important to the project to have specific boundaries – otherwise the task could have gotten out of hand and the Scout wouldn't have done as good a job. The second part of the project required planting Virginia Rose and Dogwood, both native species.

Over the course of four days, on consecutive weekends, 13 volunteers gathered for about six hours each day. On the first day, Warren marked the areas for removal. He explained each species has unique features which made them easily identifiable from other plants in the area.

Burning Bush has a striped stem and

limbs, Multiflora Rose has a thorny stem and a unique leaf shape, and Japanese Barberry comes from a large bulb with stems that shoot up and branch out. They're also covered in thorns and red berries.

Warren faced challenges throughout the project. The terrain was rocky, making it difficult to work. The thorny plants also posed a problem. And on every single work session it was either wet or raining. While that helped soften the ground, making it easier to remove the plants, nobody wanted to work in the rain. Unfortunately, Warren had a tight deadline to get the native plants in the ground before it would be too late in the season.

Taking on a leadership role was familiar territory for Warren, who found things to go fairly smoothly.

As for supplies and tools, Brady provided a majority. Warren only had to bring some tools from home, as well as food for the volunteers.

Warren will be attending college in the fall, but he hopes to remain active with his troop during breaks, continuing his role as an adult leader. His goal is to continue influencing younger scouts by getting involved with a local troop or as a merit badge counselor.