



First 550 Scouts earn World Scout Environment Badge!

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During the first few months of 2008, fourteen local Scout Groups and Scout Centres from nine countries around the world were given the special task of testing the curriculum content and programme activities for the World Scout Environment Badge. These 550 Scouts from Algeria, Australia, Bolivia, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, Palestinian Authority, South Africa and the United Kingdom gave valuable feedback that proved the environment is an important global issue and something that young people, wherever they are in the world, are concerned about and want to help make a difference.

The Scouts participated in a wide range of activities that included exploring their local environment, looking at the local air quality and water quality, analysing environmental issues in their country then engaging in debates and discussions, learning about natural disasters that could happen to their

community, creating natural art pieces, tree planting, clean up activities, looking at their own carbon footprint and much more.

The World Scout Environment Badge, as part of the wider World Scout Environment Programme, was adopted by the 38th World Scout Conference in Korea, July 2008. In order for the Scouts to earn the World Scout Environment Badge, they participate in activities based on five aims: air and water, habitats and native species, harmful substances, environmental practices, environmental hazards and natural disasters. They then take action with a project, based on their experiences, which contributes to the local and global environment. Programme activity resources that can be used by local Scout Groups have been developed to help focus on these aims, targeted at different age groups.

When providing the World Scout Environment Badges and certificates to the Scouts, Luc Panissod, Acting Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, offered his praise to the Scouts for their commitment and enthusiasm in the testing period, recommending, "We hope that you will look upon this not as the conclusion of your interest in the environment, but as a starting point in a lifelong journey."



Along with the many Scouts and leaders involved in developing the World Scout Environment Programme, several partner organisations were very supportive. The Alcoa Foundation provided a two-year \$US205,000 grant to support environment education in Scouting. Rudi Huber, President Alcoa European Region said, "Over the past two years we've witnessed and contributed to the development of this extremely valuable programme. It's great to see that the Scouts are now taking the next step, integrating environmental education even further in the Scouting curriculum and using the Environment Badge as a sign of being aware of what's important now and for the future".

The World Organization of the Scout Movement is the world's largest youth movement, with 28 million members, girls and boys, women and men, in 215 countries and territories. National Scout Organizations are now looking at how the World Scout Environment Programme can be applied within their country.

For more information on the World Scout Environment Programme, including quotes and photographs from Scouts that participated in testing the World Scout Environment Badge, please see: www.scout.org/environment Rod Abson
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Click on the image above or in the right-hand column to see quotes and photographs from Scout Groups involved in testing the World Scout Environment Badge.