



“Southern Illinois Explorer” – GSSI Junior Council’s Own Badge

It’s the southernmost region of the state of Illinois and known as the hills of Little Egypt. The area is hilly and rocky and more closely resembles the Ozarks of Missouri than the vast flat land of Illinois. This beautiful and rugged area is home to the great Shawnee National Forest which covers seven wilderness areas and other National Natural Landmarks. The past and present will become one as you walk the Trail of Tears, visit historical monuments and enjoy the beauty of an untouched forest. Take a trip on the wild side and become a “Southern Illinois Explorer” on your path to earning this one of a kind badge.

Special thanks to Junior Troops # 8552 & 8553, Jaime Watkins, troop leader, for creating this badge.

Steps

- 1. Visit a National Natural Landmark**
- 2. Discover a Symbol of Peace**
- 3. Walk the Trail of Tears**
- 4. Historical Connections**
- 5. Up, Up & Away**

Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll have traveled to new destinations past and present and shared my experiences with others.

Step 1 Visit a National Natural Landmark

Southern Illinois has eight National Natural Landmarks. Learn where these landmarks are located. Then choose from one of the landmarks below and plan a hike. Be sure to read and follow the safety check points for hiking.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- **Check out the Little Grand Canyon.** While on your hike take a group photo overlooking the Shawnee National Forest. Discover why this area is so aptly called the “Little” Grand Canyon.
- **Take a hike at Heron Pond.** After your hike be sure and visit the Barkhausen Center to learn why this area is a National Natural Landmark.
- **Research the many trails at Giant City Ecological Area/Park.** Pick a trail and hike through this glacier molded natural landmark.

More to Explore – Write a page in your journal about all the interesting things you see on your hike. Look for trees or plants you have never seen before. Did you see any animals on your hike? How are the surroundings different from where you live?

Step 2 Discover a Symbol of Peace

Bald Knob Cross of Peace in Alto Pass, IL is North America's largest Christian Monument. Choose one of the three items below to complete.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- **Research the monument.** Which two people came up with the idea of building the cross and why? When was it built? What is the name of the mountain range it is located in? How much did the first investors pay to help with this project? What holiday is observed every year at the cross?
- **Organize a “give back day.”** With your troop plan a special project in memory of all those who gave their money and time to this project. Pick a community group, church, or facility that needs help of some sort, (with the help of your troop leader) and give back or help in some way. For example - help stock a local food pantry.
- **Take a trip to the Cross of Peace.** While there either attend a ceremony or hold a ceremony of your own.

For More Fun - Try to get a picture of you or your group in front of the cross. Don't stand too close or you will never get the whole cross in the picture. See how far away you have to stand in order to get the whole cross in the picture.

Step 3 Walk the Trail of Tears

The “Trail of Tears” National Historic Trail goes through Pope, Johnson, and Union Counties in Southern Illinois. The Cherokee Indians made several stops in these counties on their dreadful journey. Learn what the Trail of Tears was, why it was so tragic, and complete one of the tasks below.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- **Research the Silkwood Inn.** Find out what role it played in the Trail of Tears journey. Also learn about two other points of interest in Southern Illinois on the Trail of Tears.
- **Visit one of only three ferry boats in Illinois at Cave in Rock.** The Cherokee Indians crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky to Illinois in Golconda by the Lusk Creek ferry boat. While you are there visit the “Cave” in the Cave in Rock State Park. You can see it when you cross the Ohio River on the ferry.

- **Visit the Trail of Tears State Forest in Jonesboro.** Before going check out Native American names online. Pick a name or design one that speaks to YOU! Your style, color or dream. For instance, a few famous Native Americans are “Crazy Horse”, “Red Cloud”, “Black Hawk”, and “Sitting Bull”. While there have a picnic along with a ceremony that reveals everyone’s Native American name.

More to Explore – Make a Native American craft. How about a dream catcher? Native Americans believe that the night air is filled with dreams both good and bad. The dream catcher when hung over or near your bed swinging freely in the air, catches the dreams as they flow by. The good dreams know how to pass through the dream catcher, slipping through the outer holes and slide down the soft feathers so gently that many times the sleeper does not know that they are dreaming. The bad dreams not knowing the way get tangled in the dream catcher and perish with the first light of the new day.



Step 4 Historical Connections

Southern Illinois has several sites with great historical references, some of which you may not be familiar with. Pick one of the three listed below to learn about.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- **Visit Magnolia Manor in Cairo, Illinois.** While there take a tour of the furnishings from the Civil War Era. What U.S. President held a party there after his two terms as President?
- **“Walk Where Lincoln Walked.”** Start at the Jonesboro square and follow the footprints to the Lincoln Memorial Park in Jonesboro, the site of the third of seven debates between Abraham Lincoln and Steven A. Douglas for the 1858 Illinois U.S. Senate seat. Don’t forget to take a picture with the Lincoln Statue. Optional: Plan a troop picnic at the park.
- **Research General John A. Logan.** Learn what holiday he established as a national holiday. As a troop, talk about what you can do to honor and observe this national holiday. Optional: Visit the John A. Logan Museum in Murphysboro, IL his home town.

More to Explore – Games and sports in the Civil War era were very basic. They didn't have all the electronics kids play with today. Choose an old fashioned game or two and play them as a troop. Some examples are Duck, Duck, Goose; Hide and Seek; and Blind Man's Bluff.

Step 5 Up, Up, and Away

Massac County is the home of Metropolis, Illinois, the official home of Superman and much more. Choose one of the following to learn more about Massac County and what it has to offer Southern Illinois.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- **Visit Metropolis.** Check out the huge Superman statue and statue of Lois Lane. You may even want to tour the Superman Museum (optional). Before you go, have a movie night with your troop and watch the original 1978 movie "Superman."
- **Fort Massac visit.** Metropolis is home to Fort Massac State Park, the first state park in Illinois. You will enjoy the breathtaking views of the Ohio River and take a walk back in time by visiting the 1802 replica of the fort that once served to protect French, British and American troops.
- **Check out the historical, archeological site of Kincaid Mounds in Massac County.** It is the only nationally registered historical landmark in Southern Illinois. This site dates back over 1000 years ago. Visit <http://www.kincaidmounds.com/> to learn more about the history and to see photos of the mounds.

More to Explore –What kind of superhero would you be? Design what you would wear, what would your name be, list your super power, and how you would use your power for the "good" of the community.

Add the Badge to Your Journey – Get your TEAM together and plan a ceremony that recognizes the importance of the contributions of volunteers and service people in your community past and present. Celebrate how their actions and contributions made them an **AGENT of CHANGE**.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Organizing a road trip to an area of historical interest with my family to enjoy new sites together.
- Teaching Brownies the importance of volunteer service in the community by helping them to organize a "Give Back Day."
- Volunteering at the local historical society to help preserve my communities or counties history.