

## **Batz for Betz Project**

Through the William T. Hornaday Award program, I have the opportunity to complete a Scouting service project for one of our amazing council properties, Camp Betz. For this project, I worked to help stabilize native bat populations in southwestern Michigan by installing 10 bat houses all around camp. These bat houses will serve as a home for the Little Brown Bat, a species of bat which is currently on the Endangered Species List in the United States. Each box can hold upwards of 250 bats. A sign is also being installed in Gilwell Field to help Cub Scouts learn more about bats; this will help Webelos to earn their Into The Wild Pin.

Most people are afraid of bats due to their portrayal in media as well as the COVID-19 Pandemic; however, they help us more than we can imagine and now is when they need our help the most. Due to loss of habitat because of human destruction and natural disasters, coupled with a deadly disease called White Nose Syndrome, bat populations have drastically declined over the last decade. Bats serve a vital role in an ecosystem, serving as both predator and prey. One of the biggest benefits of helping bat populations is the natural insect control they provide. In one night, a single bat can eat up to 1,000 insects. Bats also help by pollinating many plants and flowers, including ones that grow your food like bananas and mangos. Bats play a key role in their ecosystems, and it's our duty and responsibility to make sure that future generations will be able to experience the wonders that bats provide.

Tim Reiss

William T Hornaday Award Candidate