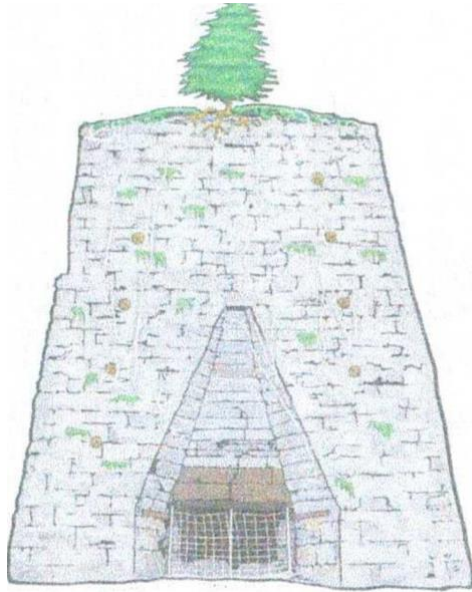


BSA DISTINGUISHED CONSERVATION SERVICE AWARDS GUIDE



For Scouts BSA, Venturers, and Scouters



Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee
December 2020-Eighth Edition

<https://bit.ly/3f0VGNh>



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS COUNCIL
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

Background	The BSA has maintained an active conservation awards program since 1938. The current group of awards seek to reward Scouts and Venturers who complete large, Eagle sized conservation projects and numerous Merit Badges. The BSA Distinguished Conservation Service (DCS) Awards are the highest conservation awards for Scouts and Venturers and the rarest awards in Scouting.
Who	Scouts interested in earning a DCS Award may be currently working on conservation related Merit Badges, an applicable Eagle project, or have time left in Scouting and be looking for a challenging, rewarding, and meaningful conservation experience.
Awards	Scouts and Venturers earn the DCS Award by planning and leading two conservation projects and completing either seven Merit Badges or conservation-related Venturing requirements. One project may be combined with an Eagle project. There is also an adult award and a non-Scouting individual or organizational award.
Projects	A DCS Award project must be a significant and lasting effort in natural resource conservation or environmental improvement. Each project must be chosen from a list of different disciplines of conservation. Only one project may be completed on Scout property; other organizations are usually excited to help Scouts find projects.
Starting	Before starting to work on a DCS Award, Scouts must contact the Council DCS Awards Coordinator to obtain a Conservation Advisor. These individuals will help Scouts decide on appropriate projects and make sure that they are meeting the application requirements.
Time	DCS Awards must be completed before Scouts turn eighteen or Venturers turn twenty-one. The award typically takes a year or more to complete. Adult awards require twenty years of service to conservation.

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Case Study DCS Award Projects available at <https://bit.ly/3f0VGNh>.

Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee

Chairman	
C. Russell McDaniel, PE	Retired Environmental Professional, Hornaday Gold Badge

Council BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards Coordinator	
William O'Brochta	Ph.D. Candidate; Hornaday Silver Medal, Badge, and Gold Badge

Members	
Dan Brown	Laboratory Manager, Trails Specialist, Hornaday Gold Badge
Smith Chaney	Properties Committee
Dr. Shelby Dickerson	Retired Cardiologist, Wilderness Carpenter
David Foster	Trails Specialist, Hornaday Gold Badge
Robert Garst	Retired Forester, Nature Staff Training, Hornaday Gold Badge
Donna Haley	Master Gardner
Cliff Logue	Nature and Ecology Education
Anna Rose Lucas	Nature and Ecology Education
Phyllis Newbill	Nature and Ecology Education
Dr. Jim Parker	Retired Educator, Conservation Experience, Hornaday Gold Badge
Lee Spradlin	Retired Forester, Timber Management, Hornaday Gold Badge
Paul Thomson	Retired Attorney
Eric Blevins	BRSR Caretaker

In memory of Dr. Bill Shiner, Conservation Chairman Emeritus

Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation

Awards Honor Roll

Steve Croy	Bronze Medal	--
Bill Shiner	Gold Medal	1991
Ernst Kastning	Silver Medal	1994
Dan Brown	Gold Badge	2005
Jeff Marion	Gold Badge	2006
	Gold Medal	2007
Susan McKimmy	Gold Badge	2006
Greg Harmon	Gold Badge	2006
Charlie Stultz	Gold Badge	2007
Dave Foster	Gold Badge	2007
William O'Brochta	Badge	2008
	Silver Medal	2010
	Gold Badge	2014
Michael Hancock	Badge	2009
Charles Peterson	Badge	2009
Bob Garst	Gold Badge	2010
Chuck Holscher	Gold Badge	2010
Russ McDaniel	Gold Badge	2010
Graham Simmerman	Gold Badge	2010
Troop 197 (Wytheville)	Unit Award	2010
Mark Alley	Gold Badge	2011
David Hancock	Gold Badge	2011
Jim Parkhurst	Gold Badge	2011
Pack 137 (Troutville)	Unit Award	2011
Blake Hughes	Badge	2012
Troop 83 (Hillsville)	Unit Award	2012
Samuel Hudnall	Badge	2013
Joey Fagan	Gold Badge	2013
Lee Spradlin	Gold Badge	2013
Joe Roudabush	Gold Badge	2014
Jim Parker	Gold Badge	2015
Arthur Sadler	Badge	2016

Acknowledgements

While the name of Scouting's premier conservation award has changed, the most important aspect --- significant, lasting conservation projects --- has remained the same. Interest in and awareness of conservation awards has increased over the last decade, but the introduction of a new award with revised requirements calls for a re-doubling of efforts to inform and educate Scouts and Scouters about these important awards. At its core, the new DCS Awards program continues to recognize Scouts who complete exceptional projects and who demonstrate an unusual commitment to conservation.

With this revised Awards program, the importance of Council leadership and Council Conservation Committees has increased. Council Conservation Committees now provide pre-approval on DCS Award projects and conduct a Board of Review when Scouts submit a DCS Award application. This version of the Guide provides advice for Councils tackling these challenges for the first time.

Note that this Guide is written specifically for the Blue Ridge Mountains Council. If you are a Scout or Scouter in another Council, please contact me so we can work together to determine what policies might exist in your Council.

Councils need to make a special effort to distribute DCS Award information to their Scouts and Scouters so that everyone is aware of this awards program. Because these Awards rely so heavily on Council expertise, please feel free to distribute this Guide as widely as possible. Updates will be provided using the <https://bit.ly/3f0VGNh> link. Please contact me with any DCS Award questions, from reviewing project proposals and ideas to starting new DCS Award programs. I am more than happy to help in any way I can.

Yours in Scouting,



William O'Brochta
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Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee
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December 2020

Introduction

This Guide was created by the Blue Ridge Mountains Council (BRMC) Conservation Committee to help Scouts, Venturers, Sea Scouts, and Scouters understand the methods and practices of natural resource conservation through completing requirements for one of the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service (DCS) Awards. The document is intended to serve as a step-by-step resource for individuals working on the Awards, Conservation Advisors, Unit Leaders, and other Scouters so that all can fully understand the significance and meaning associated with a DCS Award. We recommend that the Guide be used to answer questions and provide insight along the way; the Executive Summary provides an overview for those unfamiliar with the Awards. Additional information can be found on the National website: <https://bit.ly/38QuQ9c>.

This document contains six sections:

- Section One gives an overview of the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards and the relationship between Scouting and Conservation.
- Section Two describes the non-project requirements for Scouts and Venturers.
- Section Three discusses the components and procedures associated with completing a DCS Award project, including the application process.
- Section Four provides guidance on conducting DCS Award Project Proposal approval and DCS Award Boards of Review.
- Section Five contains details on starting a Council program to advise and review DCS Award applications.
- Section Six, the Appendix, contains an Applicant's Checklist, contact information, website links, and application forms.
- Example case study project write-ups can be found on <https://bit.ly/3f0VGNh>.

Mission and Vision

Every Council should have a Scouter familiar with the DCS Awards so that when a Scout decides to try to pursue a DCS Award, he or she will have at least one resource available in his or her Council. A main reason that there are so few DCS Awards earned in the country each year is because there is both a lack of awareness about the Awards and few Councils are qualified to review DCS Award applications. I have identified Councils that have active conservation award programs, and with only a handful of such programs, there is much room to grow. The ultimate goal is to establish a network of DCS Award Advisors and Councils with active Conservation Committees using this Guide to assist Candidates and to promote conservation awards. Having the Guide available on a Council website is a good start toward reducing the knowledge gap that exists between fully functioning Awards programs in a few dozen Councils and non-existent ones in most other Councils. Because Councils are now responsible for providing final approval for DCS Awards, cross-Council collaboration is now more important than ever.

Revisions

First Edition (8-10-11): Guide becomes first comprehensive William T. Hornaday Award education document in Scouting.

Second Edition (8-13-12): New Cub Scout Guide (award now discontinued).

Third Edition (8-5-13): New information on starting Hornaday Committees.

Fourth Edition (8-1-14): Full discussion on establishing a Hornaday program in a Council. Guide is sent out to all Councils, continues marked growth in use.

Fifth Edition (8-1-15): Revised discussion on how to write-up Hornaday projects.

Sixth Edition (8-1-16): Integration of the new Hornaday Workbook.

Seventh Edition (8-1-18): Expanded section on establishing a Hornaday program.

Eighth Edition (12-1-20): Revised to replace Hornaday Awards with DCS Awards.

Hornaday and DCS Awards Comparison

Many Scouts and Scouters are familiar with the requirements for the now replaced William T. Hornaday Awards. This section provides a short overview of the requirements for the new DCS Awards and compares them to the old Hornaday Award requirements.

DCS Award Structure:

- Youth: 1 award available.
 - Earn Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, Forestry, Soil and Water Conservation, Sustainability, and two other conservation-related Merit Badges or complete special Venturing requirements (Ranger Award Ecology and Plants and Wildlife Electives, plus two additional requirements).
 - Complete two major conservation projects.
 - Final approval rests with the Council Conservation Committee.
- Adult: 1 award available. Nominate an adult with 20 or more years of service to conservation at the regional or national level. Final approval rests with the National Conservation Awards Committee.
- Unit: No award.
- Non-BSA Organizations: 1 award available. Nominate an organization to receive recognition. Final approval rests with the National Conservation Awards Committee.

Comparison of Old and New Program Award Requirements:

Audience	Old Hornaday Program	New DCS Program
Youth	Badge	Distinguished Conservation Service Award
	Bronze Medal	
	Silver Medal	
Adults	Gold Badge	None
	Gold Medal	Conservationist
Unit	Unit Award Certificate	None
Non-BSA Organizations	Certificate	Certificate

- Youth:
 - Projects: Youth must complete two (and only two) projects. No options exist for receiving an award for completing any other number of projects. All project requirements remain the same as for Hornaday projects.
 - Project Categories: A project category in Pollinator Management has been added to the existing Hornaday categories.
 - Project Workbook: Use of the Project Workbook is now required. The questions in the Project Workbook remain the same as the Hornaday Workbook.
 - Project Approvals: Pre-approval of the Project Proposal is now required.
 - Other Requirements:
 - For Scouts BSA: Earn Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, Forestry, Soil and Water Conservation, Sustainability, and two other conservation-related Merit Badges. Public Health Merit Badge is no longer considered conservation-related. Sustainability Merit Badge is now required.
 - For Venturers and Sea Scouts: Complete a list of ten requirements, some with several parts. The bulk of these requirements are identical to earning the Ecology and Plants and Wildlife electives to the Venturing Ranger Award. There are two additional requirements: Venturers must complete both of Plants and Wildlife 21e(i) and Plants and Wildlife 21e(ii) (instead of selecting one as required for the Ranger Award). Venturers must also complete DCS Award requirement 10b, which is not part of the Venturing Ranger Award requirements. This requirement asks Venturers to “present your findings [from the investigation you completed in DCS Award requirement 10a or Ecology 12d(i)] to a Unit or another group.”
 - Approval: Final approval for the DCS Award now rests with the Council Conservation Committee and the Scout Executive. National does not approve DCS Award applications. The Council conducts a Board of Review to approve DCS Award applications.
 - Award: Consists of a square knot and certificate; no hanging medal.

- Adult:
 - Conservationist award is the same as the previous Gold Medal with no requirement or application changes. The limit on six awards per year has been dropped. Award consists of a square knot and certificate; no hanging medal.
 - The Council-level adult award previously known as the Gold Badge has been eliminated.

- Unit: All unit awards have been eliminated. This means that this awards program no longer allows for Cub Scout participation.

- Non-BSA Organizations or Individuals: Certificate is the same as the previous Certificate with no requirement or application changes. The limit on six awards per year has been dropped. Award remains a certificate.

Impact:

- The change to final Council Conservation Committee approval for youth DCS Awards means that it will be wholly up to Councils to interpret DCS Award requirements. Councils should work together to share resources and to ensure uniformity in the ways in which requirements are interpreted.
- The elimination of the Badge, Unit Award Certificate, and Gold Badge removes awards that were gateways for youth and adults into the award program. This will likely make it more difficult to reach and educate many potentially interested Scouts and Scouters.

Section One: Background on the Awards

(Intended for all Scouts and Scouters)

Scouting and Conservation

Since the beginning of Scouting, boys (and now young women) have had many opportunities to learn about conservation and to participate actively in projects to further their understanding of the subject. With camping as one of Scouting's core ideals, conservation is an integral part of the advancement curriculum. The Blue Ridge Mountains Council, because of its abundance of natural resources, is in a unique position to positively influence the environment through many conservation programs. Highlights of these programs include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Management | The 16,000 acre Blue Ridge Scout Reservation is managed in accordance with a Conservation Plan prepared by the Conservation Committee. The Reservation's forest, wildlife, soils, and water resources are managed under sustainable ecosystem management principles. The Conservation Committee is responsible for properly managing the Reservation's natural and cultural resources alongside a professional superintendent. The Scout Outdoor Code emphasizes land stewardship and conservation practices. |
| Merit Badges | The Merit Badge program allows Scouts to delve deep into particular fields of study. There are more than twenty conservation related Merit Badges as diverse as energy and plant science. These badges teach Scouts important conservation skills like habitat reconstruction and management, energy experiments, environmental resource campaigns, and Leave No Trace principles. |
| Outdoor Ethics | The Outdoor Ethics/Leave No Trace program was established in the 1970's as an independent organization that has been incorporated into Scouting. LNT's purpose is to educate individuals about proper camping etiquette and the best methods to minimize outdoor impacts and lead to a better environment. The Council holds LNT Trainer and Master classes on a regular basis to teach Scouts and Scouters the principles of LNT so that |

they can implement it in their Units. The BRMC has trained more LNT Master Educators than any other Council in the country.

Awards

The premier conservation awards in Scouting are the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards. The DCS Award requires completion of certain Merit Badges and two conservation projects. A Conservation Good Turn award is available for Units who partner with local conservation organizations to complete a group project. The National Outdoor Award and the World Conservation Awards also emphasize appreciation and implementation of conservation efforts. The Council's own Caretaker of the Wild award synthesizes many of these award programs, and the Trail Conservation Award is for helping with trail work.

Committee

The Council Conservation Committee is a group of experts and professionals in conservation related fields that meet regularly to discuss conservation projects and problems in the region and at the Reservation. The Committee oversees all conservation and environmental efforts for the Council and is the best resource to learn more about how conservation is an integral part of Scouting.

History of the DCS Awards



PWLPF Medal
(1917-37), Hornaday
Medal (1938-50)

Dr. William T. Hornaday conceived of the idea for a conservation award for individuals working to protect wildlife around the world in 1911. Hornaday, born in 1854 in Indiana, was a pioneer in the conservation field. He attended Oskaloosa College and Iowa State College and took many of the few animal science courses available. In 1873, he got a job with Ward's National Science Foundation and began world travel, collecting taxidermy samples in East Asia and present-day Sri Lanka. Hornaday married in 1879 and, a year later, founded the National Society of American Taxidermists. As Chief Taxidermist for the Smithsonian Institution, he pressured the organization to create a live animal exhibit in Washington. Such a National Zoological Garden was established, but Hornaday left the Smithsonian to sell real estate before becoming the first head of the Bronx Zoo. For the next thirty years, Hornaday held this directorship and

made every effort to improve the conditions of the Zoo. Hornaday used the Zoo and some of his museum exhibits to re-create animals living in their natural habitats in order to provide a better understanding of they really live. Hornaday raised significant controversy when he captured Ota Benga, an African native, and put him in an exhibit in the Bronx Zoo. This act was so controversial at the time that it resulted in protests and widespread condemnation.



Hornaday founded the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund (PWLPF) and raised \$100,000 (2020: \$2.75 million) toward this cause in 1911. In 1915, he submitted a proposal to the Boy Scouts of America for an award that

PWLPF Badge (1922-37), honored those who provided distinguished service toward
Hornaday Badge (1938-50) wildlife protection. The Scouts were tasked with choosing recipients, while the PWLPF actually awarded the medal.

Thus, the original award was unaffiliated with the Boy Scouts of America. Three different medals, crafted by H. Newman in New York, were proposed; four medals of one type were ordered in 1917 for \$65 each and were made of gold. The first PWLPF Medal was presented on June 29, 1917 to Margaret Olivia Sage, who created a bird sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico, but, more importantly, was the largest financial backer of the PWLPF program. The second recipient was famed naturalist Aldo Leopold in 1917. Neither of them was affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America.



William T. Hornaday Silver and Gold Medal (1975-2020)

In 1920, Lenhardt Bauer, a boy of nine or ten from Indiana, was awarded the PWLPF Gold Medal for creating 266 private wildlife sanctuaries, though he was not associated with the Scouts because he was too young to join. Finally, in 1922, Scoutmaster Harry Hall of Pennsylvania was awarded the Gold Medal for “Distinguished Service” through twenty years of work with wildlife. A Gold Badge was also minted and was awarded to Scouts and Scouters.

Following Hornaday’s death in 1937, the Boy Scouts collaborated with the New York Zoological Society to found the Hornaday Awards Program. A Pennsylvania Eagle Scout was awarded the first official Hornaday Medal in 1941. Ten years later, the first Unit Award was presented to a Bristol, Virginia Troop.

The program was restructured with assistance from the Dupont Company in the 1970s. These awards had seven levels: three for youth, two for adults, one for units, and one for non-BSA individuals and organizations. The youth awards required completing the same kinds of major conservation projects that are required for the DCS Awards: one for the Hornaday Badge, three for the Bronze Medal, and four or more for the Silver Medal. Adults could earn a Gold Badge for three or more years of service to conservation and a Gold Medal for twenty or more years of service. A Unit Award Certificate was available for Units where 60% of youth participated in a project. It is extremely difficult to determine exactly how many Hornaday or PWLPF awards were granted. Approximately 1,100 Hornaday Awards were presented, with only a handful of Silver Medals earned each year. This made earning a Hornaday Medal at least 15,000 times rarer than earning Eagle.

In 2020, more than 80 years after the Boy Scouts decided to name the awards for Dr. Hornaday, they were renamed to the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards. The three youth awards were reduced to one and the Gold Badge and Unit Award were eliminated.

DCS Awards Requirements

Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts may earn a BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award. Adults from all these programs may be nominated for BSA Distinguished Conservationist Award. Non-Scouting organizations and individuals may be nominated for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Certificate.

Scouts BSA, Venturers, and Sea Scouts

Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts are able to earn the DCS Award. Cub Scouts, Explorers, participants in Learning for Life, and STEM Scouts are not eligible. There is a Merit Badge requirement for all awards for Scouts, and Scouts **must be First Class rank**. There are no age or rank requirements for Venturers or Sea Scouts.

Merit Badges relate to conservation and environmental management and fall into two groups: required and optional.

Required	Optional (Select Two)
Environmental Science	Bird Study
Fish and Wildlife Management	Energy
Forestry	Fishing
Soil and Water Conservation	Fly-Fishing
Sustainability	Gardening
	Geology
	Insect Study
	Landscape Architecture
	Mammal Study
	Nature
	Nuclear Science
	Plant Science
	Pulp and Paper
	Reptile and Amphibian Study
	Weather

Venturers or Sea Scouts who are dual registered in a Troop and a Crew or Ship may choose to complete either the Merit Badge requirements or the special Venturing requirements until they turn eighteen. Sea Scouts should follow the Venturing requirements.

All Venturers registered only in a Crew and those over eighteen must complete components of the Venturing Ranger Award including the Ecology, Plants and Wildlife, and Conservation electives, with some minor variations discussed below.

Scouts who turn eighteen while completing DCS Award projects may transfer their registration from Scouts BSA to Venturing, but will need to complete Venturing requirements if they apply for a DCS Award through a Venturing Crew. Projects completed in Scouts BSA may transfer over to Venturing, but it is important to remember that Venturers are expected to develop projects with an increased level of complexity that may not have been present when the Scout completed a project.

For all levels of youth awards, individuals are required to carry out a number of large conservation projects, similar to “supersized Eagle projects.” Projects must be chosen from the below list of categories and only one project may come from each category.

Project Categories
Air and Water Pollution Control
Energy Conservation
Fish and Wildlife Management
Forestry and Range Management
Hazardous Materials Disposal and Management
Invasive Species Control
Pollinator Management
Resource Recovery (Recycling)
Soil and Water Conservation

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award: Earn all required Merit Badges and two optional Merit Badges for Scouts or complete components of the Venturing Ranger Award, with minor variations, for Venturers and Sea Scouts. Then plan, lead, and carry out two significant conservation projects, each from a **different** category listed above. An Eagle Scout Service Project may be used to fulfill one project only if the project is planned and conducted in accordance with DCS Award requirements. The DCS Award Workbook must be used; and all Project Proposals must be pre-approved by the Council Conservation Committee. When completed, the Council Conservation Committee conducts a Board of Review and awards the DCS Award.

As an example of one DCS Award project, a fifteen-year-old BRMC Scout met with a group who hosts Scouts and other groups at their campsites. The project involved researching different ways to prevent forest fires by building a safe campsite location. The campsite consisted of re-constructing tent platforms to increase safety, using the research to construct a fire pit that will minimize the impact on the forest, educating the organization about campsite safety and management, and founding a campsite conservation committee to teach the practices of Leave No Trace to campers. The project took 250 hours.

Adult Scouters

BSA Distinguished Conservationist: An adult may be awarded a BSA Distinguished Conservationist award after twenty or more years of significant contributions to conservation at either a regional or national level. The National Conservation Awards Committee recommends that the National Conservation Committee grant the award, and recipients can be nominated to the National Conservation Committee. There has traditionally been a limit of six awards nationally

per year, but the number actually awarded is typically fewer. The award is granted, and the adult does not apply or complete projects. Only about fifty similar recognitions have been awarded in the last one hundred years.

Distinguished Conservationist awards are exceedingly rare and generally require prominence enough that the National Conservation Committee is aware of your efforts. Applications are judged both on the work the Candidate has done in linking conservation and Scouting; any professional conservation work is also evaluated. As an example, this award was granted to a Scouter who ran the conservation area of the National Jamboree five times, authored sections of the BSA *Fieldbook*, and was a long-time professor in the environmental department of a university.

Non- Scouters: Organizations or Individuals

The National Conservation Committee grants the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Certificate to organizations or individuals, generally not affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, who have demonstrated commitment to education of youth relating to natural resource conservation and environmental improvement. The award is granted, and the adult or group does not apply or complete projects.

As an example, the Order of the Arrow was awarded a Certificate for their work at ArrowCorps5 in doing conservation work and learning how to design conservation projects.

Award Statistics

As this award program is new, there are no statistics about its rarity. In general, youth have received about 100 Hornaday awards per year in recent years, with most going to Scouts completing one project and about a half dozen going to Scouts completing three or more projects. The number of adult and non-BSA organization or individual awards has been only one or two per year. By comparison, around 60,000 Eagle Scout ranks are conferred each year.

DCS Awards and Eagle Projects

An Eagle project (or Venturing Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster project) may be combined with a DCS Award project, but only if the Eagle project fits the vision of the DCS Award. There are a few extremely important distinctions to make between projects for both types of awards. The following table should help summarize the differences to keep in mind:

DCS Award Projects	Eagle Scout Service Projects
Conservation Related	Any Topic
Group Leadership Not Required, but Highly Recommended	Must Lead a Group
Much Research Required	Research Not Required
Restricted to Certain Categories	Unrestricted Choices
No Fundraising Required, but May be Necessary	Fundraising Can Show Leadership
Must be Long-Lasting	Need Not Have Tangible Impact
Several Approvals Required	Many People Must Approve
Cannot be a “One Time” Event	No Follow-up Needed
May Be Done Individually, but Best to Involve Others	Group Labor Required
Generally 200-400 Hours, Increases With Age	Generally 100-200 Hours
Council Review Required	District and/or Unit Review Required
More Planning Time, Less Labor	Balance Labor and Planning
Must Utilize Scientific Method	Scientific Method Not Required
Must Educate Others	Education Not Required

DCS Award projects are kind of like “supersized Eagle projects” in a field of conservation. If one is to take an Eagle project and add research on the front end, education throughout the project, and follow-up and monitoring on the back end, it is likely that the Eagle project could be worked into a DCS Award project. It is important to keep these distinctions in mind when planning an Eagle project to fit DCS Award requirements. Before worrying about the DCS Award aspect of the effort, get the Eagle Project Proposal approved. Then add the DCS Award components with the help of your Conservation Advisor and DCS Award Advisor. Since DCS Award projects require much more effort and generally have different requirements when compared to Eagle projects, some Scouts may find it easier to get the Eagle project completed and later return to the same site with a DCS Award project, effectively breaking up the process and effort into two separate projects for

quicker approval and less confusion. One could, for example, complete the manual labor required for a project to earn Eagle and then work on adding additional conservation components as a part of the DCS Award effort.

Note that a single project can count for many things: the Eagle rank, the Sea Scout Quartermaster Rank **or** the Venturing Summit Award, the DCS Award, and the Venturing Ranger Award Conservation elective.

Applying for a DCS Award using the Eagle Workbook is not permitted, and separate write-ups are required for the Eagle project and the DCS Award project.

DCS Award projects can be approved retroactively for Eagle projects. Usually the Council DCS Award Coordinator will review the Eagle Application and advise the Candidate on which elements he or she needs to add to make the project DCS Award worthy. The Candidate can then complete these elements and use this project for one of the two required for a DCS Award with a new write-up including all of the Eagle elements and the new elements of the project. Should the Eagle Scout turn eighteen and wish to use their Eagle Scout project for the DCS Award, he or she will need to apply as a Venturer and to complete those requirements.

As an example of how this works, I combined my Eagle project with a DCS Award project (at age thirteen; age is an important factor to consider when reading into the complexity of any DCS Award project). The Eagle component was initially simply landscaping a bare area in front of my middle school. This project lent itself to the leadership components required for the Eagle rank. Once I learned about the DCS Awards, I changed this project so that it still included the construction portion to fulfill the Eagle leadership component, but I added components to meet the other DCS Award requirements. To do so, I determined that the area around the school had recently been clear-cut to make room for a new subdivision and that small animals were likely displaced. I researched the types of animals displaced and their habitats and selected native plants that would provide shelter for these animals. I then constructed the area that included an educational outdoor classroom like space for middle school kids to be exposed to a wildlife habitat during lunch. Finally, I created a follow-up and monitoring plan that the school continues to follow in order to make sure that the project is kept up.

Section Two: Non-Project Requirements

(Intended for all Scouts and Scouters)

Merit Badges

Scouts wishing to earn a DCS Award are required to complete seven Merit Badges. Below is a listing of each potential Merit Badge and its distinction as required or optional. Scouts can certainly choose to earn more than two optional Merit Badges --- as many of these topics are helpful when working on DCS Award projects --- but only two optional Merit Badges are necessary.

Required	Optional (Select Two)
Environmental Science	Bird Study
Fish and Wildlife Management	Energy
Forestry	Fishing
Soil and Water Conservation	Fly-Fishing
Sustainability	Gardening
	Geology
	Insect Study
	Landscape Architecture
	Mammal Study
	Nature
	Nuclear Science
	Plant Science
	Pulp and Paper
	Reptile and Amphibian Study
	Weather

Venturing and Sea Scout Requirements

Venturers and Sea Scouts have alternate requirements to fulfill instead of completing Merit Badges. These alternatives are listed in items 2 through 11 of the Venturing section of the DCS Award application. However, the table below notes that --- aside from two differences --- these requirements amount to completing the Plants and Wildlife and Ecology Venturing Ranger award electives. Additionally, DCS Award applicants are not required to submit the work that they conducted to fulfill these requirements as a part of the DCS Award application. Therefore, we recommend that Venturers earn the corresponding components of the Venturing Ranger award with a Venturing Ranger award advisor. Then, the DCS Award applicant can provide the Council Conservation Committee with documentation showing that these two electives were completed and append information about the two additional requirements noted below.

DCS Award Requirements	Venturing Ranger Award Requirements
2a	Plants and Wildlife 21e(i) (mandatory)
2b	Plants and Wildlife 21e(ii) (mandatory)
3	Plants and Wildlife 21d
4	Plants and Wildlife 21a
5a	Plants and Wildlife 21b(i)
5b	Plants and Wildlife 21b(ii)
6a	Plants and Wildlife 21c(i)
6b	Plants and Wildlife 21c(ii)
7	Ecology 12a
8	Ecology 12b
9	Ecology 12c
10a	Ecology 12d(i)
10b	None
11	Ecology 12d(ii)

There are two major differences between simply completing the Venturing Ranger Award Ecology and Plants and Wildlife electives and the DCS Award requirements:

1. In the Venturing Ranger Award, Venturers may choose to complete either Plants and Wildlife 21e(i) or 21e(ii). To meet the DCS Award requirements, Venturers must complete **both** Plants and Wildlife 21e(i) **and** 21e(ii). This amounts to both making a tabletop display or presentation about one of your conservation projects **and** submitting an article about your project to local media.

2. Venturers seeking to earn a DCS Award must complete requirement 10b, which is not part of the Venturing Ranger Award requirements. This requirement asks Venturers to “present your findings [from the investigation you completed in 10a or Ecology 12d(i)] to a Unit or another group.”

DCS Award applicants can add a photograph of and the text from the presentations required for items (1) and (2) as well as the submitted article to the end of their DCS Award application, along with signatures from their Venturing Ranger award advisor indicating that the Ecology and Plants and Wildlife electives were completed.

A description of the Venturing Ecology and Plants and Wildlife electives follows, along with a description of the Conservation requirements which a Venturer completes by completing a DCS Award project.



Ecology: This Ranger Award elective requirement involves explaining natural systems and cycles in watersheds, describing environmental study areas, and going on a field trip to the environmental study areas. Then, with professional guidance, complete an inventory of the study areas and teaching others how to do a similar investigation. This inventory should not overlap completely with either of your DCS Award projects.

Plants and Wildlife: First, Venturers will select an area to study wildlife or plants and study these species in different seasons and during different periods of the year. Then, plan a project designed to benefit plants or wildlife and present this project to a group, detailing the awareness raised as a result of this project. Notice that this project is distinct from a DCS Award project because you are required to “carry out a project” instead of “carry out a *significant* conservation project.”

Again, this project should not overlap completely with either of your DCS Award projects. Although the language is vague, the intent is that these two parts of the Ranger Award are meant to count for a number of Merit Badges, so you should plan on putting in significant additional effort beyond just completing your DCS Award projects. However, the site inventory for the Ecology elective or the Plants and Wildlife elective project could be linked to parts of your DCS Award projects. For example, most projects will require some site investigation before beginning planning. You could expand this investigation to a full-on site inventory and exceed even the DCS Award expectations for this part of a DCS Award project. Doing so could set you up to count the site inventory for the Ecology elective and to discuss the inventory in the DCS Award project. Similarly, the project you must conduct for the

Plants and Wildlife elective could be a suggestion for future work that arose from one of your DCS Award projects.

Conservation: This is a core requirement for the Ranger Award. The single requirement is to complete a DCS Award style project and present it to a group of youth. Venturing does not care about double counting projects, so, if the project for the Conservation core requirement qualifies for a DCS Award project, it can be utilized. Frankly, earning the Conservation requirement is redundant if a Venturer is earning a DCS Award.

Section Three: Conducting a Project

(Intended for Scouts working on a DCS Award project)

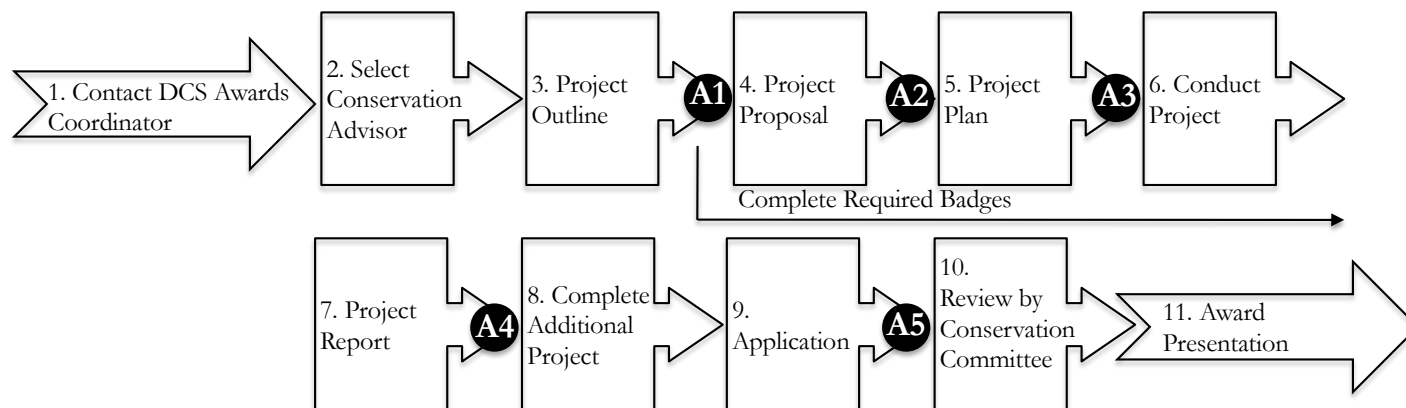
How to Start

This section pertains only to Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts seeking to earn a DCS Award. Recall that Scouters, organizations, and individuals do not need to complete projects, nor do they apply for the award; rather, they are nominated.

Any Scouts interested in earning a DCS Award in the Blue Ridge Mountains Council **must** first contact the Council BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards Coordinator to receive additional information and to get a Conservation Advisor. Scouts are required to be First Class or higher before starting a DCS Award. This is a requirement simply so that Scouts have some Merit Badge and project leadership experience before undertaking one of these significant awards.

It is important to understand the general process for earning a DCS Award before starting. The next page shows a flowchart that will help clarify some of the DCS Award requirements.

Process for Scouts and Venturers Earning a BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award

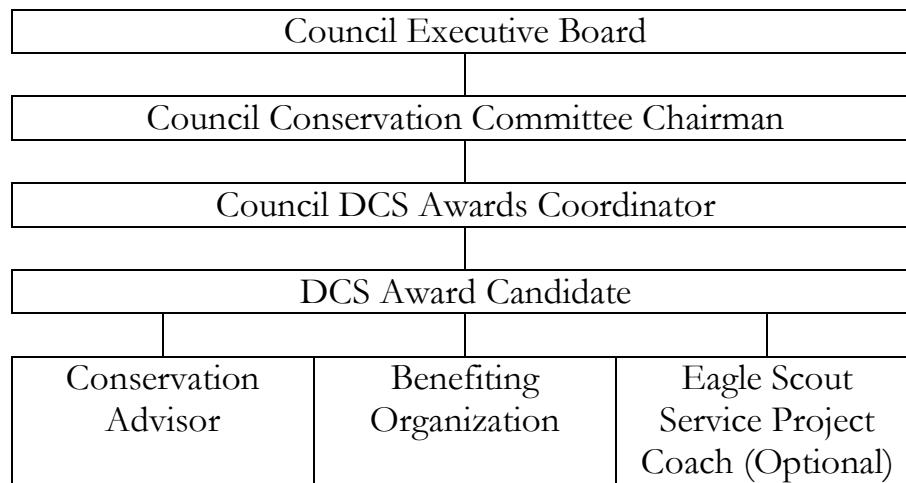


3. Possible Project Categories Air and Water Pollution Control Energy Conservation Fish and Wildlife Management Forestry and Range Management Hazardous Materials Disposal Invasive Species Control Pollinator Management Resource Recovery (Recycling) Soil and Water Conservation	4. Project Benefiting Orgs. Conservancies, Community Agencies, Land Trusts, Religious Organizations, Schools, Service Groups, Local Government, USDA, State Parks, NOAA, VDGIF, VADOE, Scout Reservation (Only 1 Project)	5. Project Plan Organization Design Materials and Budget Leadership and Workers Schedule Benefit Safety Plan
7. Project Report Service Hours by All Involved Maps, Pictures Lessons Learned Communication Plan Publicity Letters of Appreciation Maintenance Plan	9. Application <u>Scouts</u> 5 Required, 2 Optional Merit Badges, 2 Projects <u>Venturers</u> Venturing Ranger Award Ecology and Plants and Wildlife Electives, 2 Projects	Approvals A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 All Approved By Benefiting Organization, Conservation Advisor, and DCS Awards Coordinator, A5 Goes to Council Conservation Committee

DCS Award Project Advisory Group	
Candidate	Develops project ideas
	Plans and researches projects
	Documents project
	Obtains labor and materials
	Records budget information
	Completes DCS Award workbook
	Finds publicity outlets
	Ensures project is long-lasting
	Contacts advisors and professionals
	Integrates Eagle project (if desired)
	Contacts media for publicity
Council BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards Coordinator	First point of contact
	Answers application questions
	Discusses project ideas
	Helps select appropriate project
	Shows how to document project
Conservation Advisor	Delivers application
	Selected by DCS Awards Coordinator
	Answers conservation questions
	Discusses project ideas
	Helps select appropriate project
Benefiting Organization	Introduces Candidate to his/her role in conservation
	Gives location to complete project
Eagle Scout Service Project Coach (optional)	Provides materials or funding for project (if requested)
	If needed, ensures project meets Eagle requirements

The five individuals listed above are the major players in a DCS Award project. Consult this chart to determine who should be responsible for the major tasks of a project.

This top-down organizational chart may be helpful to show the hierarchy within a DCS Award project:



The DCS Awards Coordinator

The first step in any DCS Award process is to contact the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. This individual is responsible for overseeing all Scouts currently working on DCS Award projects and setting them up with Conservation Advisors. He is in charge of the overall DCS Award effort as well as the technical details of the DCS Award application. The DCS Awards Coordinator presents and provides the final review for each DCS Award application. He is the individual who leads the DCS Award Board of Review with the Council Conservation Committee.

Technical: The DCS Awards Coordinator is an expert in the DCS Awards process and knows what the Council Conservation Committee wants to see in a DCS Awards project and application. He will help review the application and suggest written improvements to the documentation to help improve its chances for approval. He also makes sure all award requirements are met and oversees the Conservation Advisor.

Project Options: The DCS Awards Coordinator will be able to approve or decline project ideas from the Conservation Advisor and Candidate and is the best judge of whether a project is DCS Award “worthy.” Though the DCS Awards Coordinator can get involved in the technical and conservation related details of the project, this is more the job of the Conservation Advisor.

Approval Role: The approval role of the DCS Awards Coordinator is one of the most important. All draft and final applications come to the Coordinator for initial

and final review. The DCS Awards Coordinator presents the final application to the Council Conservation Committee and conducts the Board of Review.

Resources and Contacts: Chief to the DCS Awards Coordinator's job is to provide additional resources and knowledge to the Candidate so that their application can be successful during the Board of Review.

There are many Councils that do not have a DCS Awards Coordinator. One of the goals of this Guide is to have at least one DCS Awards trained individual per Council. There is no national training on advising or approving DCS Awards. Thus, familiarity with this Guide is very important.

A Scout who does not know if there is a DCS Awards Coordinator available in his or her Council should contact the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator for assistance. We will work together to contact the following groups: Council Conservation Committee, Council Camping Committee, Council Advancement Committee, and finally the Scout Executive. If all these individuals indicate that there is no one available in the Council, we recommend that the Scout choose an advisor from his or her Unit that is willing to learn about the Awards and to work in concert with the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator. The BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator is always willing and able to review projects and work with other Councils on DCS Awards applications. See Section Five for information on starting a DCS Awards Program in your Council.

Conservation Advisor

Scouts in the BRMC will be assigned a Conservation Advisor. A Scout may choose his own Conservation Advisor if they wish, but the Council Conservation Committee generally likes to review Advisors to make sure they are qualified. It may be tempting to choose an individual from the Benefitting Organization or from your Unit to serve as your Conservation Advisor. Sometimes these individuals work out well because they reduce the number of additional advisors working on the project. However, combining advisors in this way should only be done if the Benefitting Organization or the Unit has an expert in the specific field of conservation in which you are conducting your project, not just someone who has general conservation experience.

Your Conservation Advisor will have knowledge about appropriate conservation practices specific to your project. You will work with a different Conservation Advisor for each DCS Award project. Your Advisor will assist you with the following items:

Technical: Conservation Advisors are experts in different fields of conservation. They know how to devise a technically accurate project that will benefit conservation, while also being doable for the Scout. Technical designs like architectural plans, structure sketches, or species management plans need to be reviewed by the Advisor in order to ensure that the work completed will maximize the benefit of the project.

Project Options: The Scout is responsible for finding a project to complete. The Scout must actively seek out organizations to work with that have adequate conservation projects to complete. However, a Conservation Advisor will know about general project categories and potential organizations with whom to perform projects.

Approval Role: The Conservation Advisor serves as an approved liaison to the Council Conservation Committee throughout a Scout's planning and completion phases of a DCS Award project. There are five milestones that are important for DCS Award projects. First, the Advisor must approve the Project Outline, Project Proposal, and Project Plan that contains information detailed in the following pages. The Advisor should review all documentation associated with the Project Plan, as well as major decisions that occur when executing the project. Finally, the Conservation Advisor provides their approval for final DCS Award applications before the Council Conservation Committee conducts a Board of Review.

Resources and Contacts: A chief role of the Conservation Advisor is to provide the Scout with DCS Award related resources, professional organizations, conservation guidelines, and general advice that will help throughout the project. The Conservation Advisor is the chief source of help for the Scout during the project.

Many Councils do not have approved Conservation Advisors through the Council Conservation Committee. If this is the case, we recommend that the Scout choose either a member of the Benefiting Organization who is familiar with the conservation science behind the project or a Scouter in his Council who has a professional conservation affiliation related to the project.

Benefiting Organization

The Benefiting Organization is the owner of the space where the project takes place. This organization can be virtually any group. Often, Scouts find that it is easier to do their first project at Scout owned property, although Scout property may not be used for the site of an Eagle project and for only one DCS Award project. Examples of Benefiting Organizations include the Blue Ridge Mountains Council Scout Reservation, Habitat for Humanity, local schools, Virginia Department of Game and

Inland Fisheries, Virginia Department of Forestry, local parks and recreation, religious organizations, service organizations, United States Department of Agriculture, National Parks and Forests, river authorities, caving associations, and many others.

Candidates should choose a Benefiting Organization that does work of interest to them. Many organizations where the Scout works or volunteers will benefit from a conservation project. If this is not an option, try working with a group that has some relation to Scouting in the Candidate's Unit. An established connection with the group will make it easier for the organization to approve Scout suggested projects.

Sometimes, the Scout can find a collaborative opportunity with an organization that lets the Scout work on a portion of current research or implementation. The organization is able to save money and resources by using Scout supplied labor, while also getting meticulously planned and executed work. This qualifies as a DCS Award project if all the criteria described below are met.

Eagle Scout Service Project Coach

The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach is tasked with providing insight and help throughout the Eagle project process and has a role in DCS Award projects only if the Scout seeks to combine his or her Eagle project with a DCS Award project. The Eagle Scout Coach is similar in role to the Conservation Advisor but is responsible for the Eagle part of the DCS Award project. Since the Eagle project requirements are more structured, it is important for the Eagle Scout Coach to make sure that the leadership and group involvement portions are adequately addressed and that the Eagle documentation is properly finished. A similar Coach can be used for Scouts working on the Sea Scout Quartermaster Rank or Venturing Summit Award.

Council Conservation Committee

The Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee serves not only to approve DCS Award Project Proposals and to provide final approval for DCS Award applications, but also acts as a potential resource for excellent DCS Award projects and advisors. Members of the Committee work in and are associated with myriad organizations that can provide suggestions for good Benefiting Organizations and general advice on most all aspects of a DCS Award projects. Many members are specialists in certain aspects of conservation, and they can supplement insights from your Conservation Advisor. All members of the Committee are available to help with DCS Award projects if asked.

Very few Councils in the country have Conservation Committees, but such a Committee is required for approving DCS Award applications. If your Council lacks a Conservation Committee, the DCS Awards Coordinator can be appointed by the Scout Executive as the Chair of a Conservation Committee consisting only of the Coordinator. See Section Five for more details on how this can work.

Choosing a Project

The following criteria *must* be addressed in every DCS Award project. Many excellent conservation projects do not qualify as a DCS Award project because they fail to meet one or more of these criteria.

Interest: Candidates must choose a project of interest in order to put the most effort possible into the workings of their projects.

Conservation Science: Candidates must demonstrate that the project is planned and executed to the highest standards of conservation science. This means that the Candidate must show that the project not only will be beneficial, but that conducting it in the planned manner will provide the maximal benefit given available resources. The project should begin with the Scout identifying a potential problem, justifying that the problem actually exists and should be solved, proposing several solutions, and selecting the best one. This often involves using the scientific method (see below). If someone suggests a project idea to you or a possible solution, you are still responsible for approaching the project by justifying its need and the design you choose.

Lasting Impact: Choose a project that will produce a result for others to enjoy far into the future. This does not limit the project exclusively to construction efforts. For example, an Energy Conservation program with Habitat for Humanity that involves developing a curriculum and providing materials for people to teach a course in Energy Conservation would certainly fit this requirement.

Significant: A DCS Award project is much more than an Eagle project. An Eagle project is typically a short-term effort that requires some pre-planning and minimal after project work. The project may take from 100-200 hours on average. DCS Award projects require extensive pre-planning and a good deal of after project work, taking up to 400-500 hours to complete (sum of all hours Candidate and volunteers spend on the project). Thus, Candidates should choose a project that is not too limited. Planting some trees one day is definitely not sufficient.

Education: The chosen project should teach conservation practices to others. Both those who work on the project and those who interact with the project into the future should learn about the project. Though this can be as easy as speaking about the project to the crew for ten minutes at lunch and placing an educational sign in front of the project, we advise that at least one project should include a major education component. The education part could be the entire project or just a significant component.

Age: The number of hours that one is expected to spend on each project increases with age, as does the complexity of the project. For Candidates thirteen to sixteen years of age, 200-300 hours per project (sum of all hours Candidate and volunteers spend on the project) are recommended. For Candidates sixteen to eighteen, 300-400 hours are recommended. Venturing Candidates (eighteen to twenty-one) should expect to spend 400-500 hours per project. We recommend trying to complete most or all projects within one age range interval as the amount of expected effort for each project jumps when the Candidate turns sixteen and eighteen.

This general hours guide also corresponds with an increasing cone of complexity. Venturing Candidates' projects should be significantly more complex in their design as well as taking more time to complete. For a Scout or Venturer planning on taking more than three or so years to complete his or her projects, he or she should make the first project especially significant so that it will stand the test of time until the project is submitted as part of a DCS Award application.

Scientific Method: The project development process must follow the scientific method. This does not mean that a hypothesis must be proposed and tested, rather, it suggests that the Candidate should identify a problem in the community, complete background research, propose a research question, develop a procedure, complete the procedure, identify the results, discuss the conclusions, identify future impacts, and suggest alternative and additional projects. These parts of the method should be clearly identified in the write-up. Many Candidates fulfill this requirement by testing a number of different site locations or project designs and choosing the best one based on pre-established criteria.

Research: The DCS Award project is expected to be extremely conservation sound. That means that extensive background research should be conducted. Expect to contact and speak with at least ten professionals (many of them in-person or via phone, you cannot only rely on information on the Internet) in the conservation related field of each project. These professionals should help the Candidate plan the project, and the individuals should be consulted regularly throughout the completion

phase of the effort. You are expected to be the expert on your conservation project and the conservation science behind it by the end of the project.

To further understand what makes DCS Award projects different from Eagle projects or other service work, see the below descriptions of example projects.

Meet DCS Award Criteria:

- Public awareness campaign to describe the hazards of laundry detergent phosphates based on original published research to support conclusions.
- Designing and constructing artificial fish habitats for lakebed stabilization and homes for fishes.
- Designing a landscape using native plants to prevent soil and bank erosion.
- Reconstructing a cave habitat for bats and other night animals after extensive research into artificial cave environments.

Inadequate:

- Planting 200 trees (too small an effort, no education involved, little research needed, project may not be necessary).
- Setting up recycling bins at a school (too small an effort, may not be a lasting impact if no follow-up, no research needed).
- Landscaping a garden area (may not address a real conservation problem, education and research components unclear).
- Cutting down dead plants and trees (lasting impact not enough, project may not be significant enough).
- Having a benefit concert for an environmental group (money generally not considered lasting impact).
- Placing mile markers on a nature trail (no conservation benefit, little research or education involved).

Detail on Project Categories

What about the required categories? A sample project that would meet DCS Award criteria from each category is briefly described below. Recall that projects for a DCS Award must come from a *different* category. A Candidate may **not** make a category of his or her own.

Air and Water Pollution Control: Work with the Department of Environmental Quality to determine the benefits of emissions testing for cars. Write a program to

implement these tests statewide or to eliminate them based on research determining the number of cars that exceed these requirements.

Energy Conservation: Work with a local government to develop a program to LEED certify existing buildings. Run the program through one certification and train individuals to continue the program.

Fish and Wildlife Management: Track the movement of deer populations using radio tags. Find where the populations are concentrating in different seasons and work to get high concentration areas designated as conservation land. Selectively plant plants that deer eat in those conserved areas.

Forestry and Range Management: Determine detrimental effects related to human traffic in forests, especially in the form of footpaths. Using this information, plan the least invasive paths for four different trails through the forest. Build these trails using only natural resources found in the forest.

Hazardous Materials Disposal and Management: Examine the ability of tomato plants to remove DDT from the soil. Plant various types of tomatoes on land that has large concentrations of DDT and determine which plant is most effective. Make recommendations to the Department of Environmental Quality as to the most effective removal method.

Invasive Species Control: Use competitive inhibition techniques to selectively place plants to outcompete kudzu. Report on the best inhibitor and the effectiveness of the inhibition. Monitor the lasting impacts of the inhibitor on the rest of the natural environment.

Pollinator Management: Work with a local master gardener program to conduct a pollinator survey. Based on the results, develop an experimental garden that measures the effectiveness of different plants at attracting pollinators. Install several demonstration gardens, and host garden build days to help community members construct their own gardens according to the best practices resulting from the survey and experimental garden.

Resource Recovery (Recycling): Examine the merits and detriments to recycling different kinds of plastic. Find which types will provide the greatest revenue for the local government and help them implement an awareness campaign about the chosen types of material to be recycled. Note that it is often more difficult to plan a sufficiently impactful DCS Award project in this category.

Soil and Water Conservation: Work with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to develop a Hydrilla management plan. Start this program. Record data relating to the effectiveness of Hydrilla control and publish media articles educating the public on the program.

Some projects can fit in multiple categories. The Candidate should choose the category that best fits the project or has not been used for another project. For example, the Hydrilla project in the Soil and Water Conservation category could just as easily fit into the Invasive Species Control category.

Research

The Candidate is expected to be an expert in his own project so that he can educate others about the merits of the work conducted. Research is not only finding out about the technology that you will be using, but also contacting experts and asking for their opinion. Start your information quest with a quick Google Scholar search for relevant articles about the project. Take some of those links and expand the search by looking at governmental organizations and non-profit groups. Even an encyclopedia or science textbook can help somewhat.

With this information in mind, try asking your Conservation Advisor, Unit Leader, or a Conservation Committee member for help. They can refer you to people who do “this” for a living and know all the technical details about the technology being used. Sometimes these individuals have done similar projects before and give advice not available in books or through Internet searches.

Keep track of the people with to whom you speak. You are responsible for logging all time both you and others spend on this project and for properly thanking them when the effort is complete.

Project Outline

The BRMC recommends a four-step process for proposing and planning a DCS Award project. These steps are the Project Outline, Project Proposal, Project Plan, and Project Report. This structure is modeled off of the Eagle Project Workbook. You must use the DCS Award Workbook (2020, 430-815) available on the National Outdoor Programs website. This Workbook will guide you through the Project Proposal, Project Plan, and Project Report phases. In the BRMC, we also strongly encourage those starting DCS Awards to begin with a Project Outline, described below.

In the Project Outline, the Candidate should briefly describe the following basic ideas:

Who: Who is the Benefiting Organization? Who is doing the work? Who is advising you in this project?

What: What is the work? What difference will the project make? What is the origin of the project idea?

When: Estimate the time when the project will begin and end.

Where: Where will all work take place?

Why: Describe why this project is needed. How do you or will you know that the project is necessary and that selected site and design are the best?

How: Give a few sentence description of the project plan describing some basic project milestones. How will the project continue into the future?

Though you cannot conduct the project with only this simple information completed, at this point, both the Conservation Advisor and Benefiting Organization should approve your Outline to make sure you are on the right track. This should be completed in writing, either via e-mail or by signing the Outline.

It may be useful to strengthen the “Why” argument for your project by referencing and citing parts of the Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Plan, which can be obtained from the Council Conservation Committee.

Here is a sample Outline; keep in mind that the planning and formal Project Proposal phase is next; so many details are not given.

This project involves constructing and erecting artificial fish habitats in Claytor Lake to prevent lakebed erosion and provide places for fish to live, as vegetation is sparse and the lakebed is mostly sand. Scouts from Troop 17 will help complete the project for the Blue Ridge Mountains Council Scout Reservation. I will utilize the A-1 portion of the BRMC Conservation Plan to help with project planning. The workday will likely occur in June, with preparation occurring a week earlier. The project plan will be written and submitted before beginning the project. I will be working with Mr. Greg Harmon, Mr. John Copeland, and Mr. Brad Kane on this project.

This project meets the DCS Award criteria in the following ways:

Conservation Science: I will examine fish studies from Claytor Lake to show that the lake's fish population is below normal. I will conduct research to show that artificial fish habitats can solve this problem.

Lasting Impact: I will monitor the project and measure the number of fish living in the lake at set intervals after the project is completed. I will provide a management plan to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Education: I will educate the crew about the project, and I will provide educational materials to Claytor Lake State Park to incorporate into ranger led nature walks.

Scientific Method: I will propose several different fish habitat designs and locations and choose the best ones based on pre-established criteria.

Research: I will conduct research to determine the effectiveness of artificial fish habitats. I will talk to Mr. Copeland to get expert advice and ask him to help me identify other experts in lakebed erosion and fish habitat construction.

You should turn this Project Outline in to your DCS Award and Conservation Advisor. They will provide you with detailed feedback, with the DCS Award Advisor focusing especially carefully on the criteria you say you will meet. Once you work with these advisors and they approve your Project Outline, you should start the actual planning process as described in the DCS Award Project Workbook.

DCS Award Project Workbook

You are required to use the DCS Award Project Workbook (2020, 430-815) for both of your projects. However, keep in mind that the space provided to answer each question may or may not be enough. Your overarching objective is to convince the

Council Conservation Committee that you met the requirements for the award, not to answer each question in the Workbook. Thus, you may find that some questions simply do not apply to your type of project. Further, you may need to add sections to the Workbook, such as an Executive Summary section, where you briefly outline how you fulfilled all of the DCS Award criteria with your project. You should also be sure to include discussions of how you meet the DCS Award criteria in detail throughout the Workbook.

Project Proposal

Beginning on page six of the Project Workbook, the Project Proposal should be completed after you share your Project Outline with your DCS Award Advisor and Conservation Advisor. Based on their feedback on your Project Outline, you should be able to complete this Project Proposal and articulate how your project will fulfill all of the DCS Award criteria.

Area Description and Issues: To complete this section, you will want to have visited and photographed the project area. Do not worry about completing any testing on the site; this may be a part of your actual project. Use interviews with the Benefiting Organization to help determine their perceived issues with the area. Visit the area on multiple days at different times to get an understanding of how the area is used. For example, a stream bank with erosion problems can manifest in many forms. The bank may be clear of vegetation, making the problem obvious. Alternately, the vegetation on the bank may be planted in such a way that the water is channeled down the bank, creating a place for erosion to occur. This could only be discovered by examining the site in the rain.

Current Condition or Situation: When describing what you believe has happened to the area, look for ways to incorporate scientific research later in the project. The Benefiting Organization may not have information about inventories or surveys in the area or these data may not be relevant for your particular project, so document how you could help add to existing data with your project. Assessing how the area has changed over time can best be done by looking at photographs of the area from various years. Google Earth or state or city GIS data might be helpful for this task. Additionally, it is critical to interview someone who maintains the area or has been familiar with it for a long period of time so that this individual can describe any changes about which you might not be aware.

The questions about inventories or surveys mean different things depending on the type of project you are conducting. If the project deals with animal life, the survey

would be of the numbers of animal species in a given area over a certain time. For soil and water conservation, the Benefitting Organization may have access to current or past soil tests they can share with you to help inform your planning. If no survey has been conducted, you should consider if you need to incorporate such a survey into your project in order to better understand the current situation in the area. Figuring out ways to find missing information will greatly aid you in demonstrating a commitment to the scientific method and research with professionals.

Project Alternatives: The project alternatives section is an excellent place to demonstrate that you have talked to professionals in your field of conservation and completed research on the area and your proposed solution to your conservation problem. As the text mentions, one of your alternatives should be doing nothing. Do not simply assume that the conservation problem will continue if you do nothing. Evaluating the doing nothing alternative is a good way to make sure the project is really necessary and will have its intended effects. Develop a list of criteria to help you evaluate the doing nothing option against other alternatives. You may have a preferred solution to the problem, but treat the project alternatives section as an honest look at different possible solutions.

Choosing alternatives aside from your proposed solution and doing nothing can be challenging. One good way to approach this problem is to split your project into components and see what effect choosing to complete a different number of components may have on the project or what would happen if one component was significantly changed in some way. For example, suppose you are designing an erosion control landscape to stabilize the side of a creek. Your proposed solution calls for certain types of native plant species, building a retaining wall, educating citizens, and putting down erosion control barriers. An alternative would be to decide not to build the retaining wall; another viable alternative would be to build the wall out of rock instead of wood. Or, you could consider moving the wall location slightly which might have a different impact.

In order to evaluate your alternatives effectively, you will need to develop some criteria that you believe are important to your project. I would split these criteria into two categories: conservation criteria and DCS Award criteria. The former is a list of criteria that impact the conservation effectiveness of the project such as cost, habitat created, erosion mitigated, and other similar factors. The second set of criteria will help you see which projects fulfill DCS Award criteria. Evaluate items such as opportunity for research, use of scientific method, lasting impact, and number of hours spent on the project. If you have a hard time translating your criteria into a proposed project solution, try assigning numbers and weights to the criteria to help.

Criterion	Objective
Erosion Mitigated	More is better, closer to creek is better
Habitat Developed	Want developed area for wildlife habitat
Lasting Impact	Must be a significant part of project
Use of Scientific Method	Must be a part of project
Hours Worked	At least 300

	Alternative A	Alternative B
Erosion Mitigated	30'x60' on the upper bank of the creek	25'x70' on the lower bank of the creek
Habitat Developed	Lots of plants planted, no trees planted, some shrubs	Some plants planted, some trees planted, no shrubs
Lasting Impact	Educational sign	Community group formed
Use of Scientific Method	To determine types of plants and erosion barrier	To determine types of plants and erosion barrier
Hours Worked	400	350

Here I choose to evaluate the projects on a five-point scale with different weights indicating the importance of each criterion. You should choose a system that works for you and your project.

	Weight	Alternative A	Alternative B
Erosion Mitigated	0.4	4	5
Habitat Developed	0.25	3	3
Lasting Impact	0.15	3	4
Use of Scientific Method	0.15	3	3
Hours Worked	0.05	5	4
	TOTAL	3.5	3.6

Our analysis here shows that, though the two alternatives we evaluated were very close in the end, Alternative B is preferable. Of course, you will want to complete this analysis including many more criteria and alternatives.

Proposed Project Description and Benefits: Now that you have selected an alternative, you can easily complete this section by describing the results of your project alternatives analysis. Be sure to include pictures of the proposed project area and any conceptual plans that you might have already developed for your project. Use this space to reinforce the fact that the site and design maximize the impact of the

project. Projects typically take about six months to complete from initial design to finished paperwork, so keep that in mind when you make your time estimates.

Providing Leadership, People: Remember to discuss the leadership you intend to provide before the actual project “workday.” For example, you will likely speak to a number of conservation professionals and use their advice to make decisions about the best ways to conduct your project. Organizing a working group of conservation professionals for your project is one way of demonstrating leadership.

Materials, Supplies, Tools, and Other Needs: Once you have developed a basic conception of your project, *roughly* estimate costs for the project. You will fully detail these costs in your Final Plan, so this section wants to know if the plants you are planning on purchasing cost hundreds or thousands of dollars.

Permits and Permissions: Remember that if you are coordinating a Scout group to drive in a caravan to your project location, you will need obtain permission from parents and complete a safety review similar to a Tour Plan (though Tour Plans are not formally approved). You will likely need to research laws where the project is being conducted to figure out if you need a digging or building permit. The Benefiting Organization traditionally would request these permits, but it is your responsibility to determine whether they are needed and to make sure the Benefiting Organization requests them. Call Virginia 811 before you begin any project involving digging.

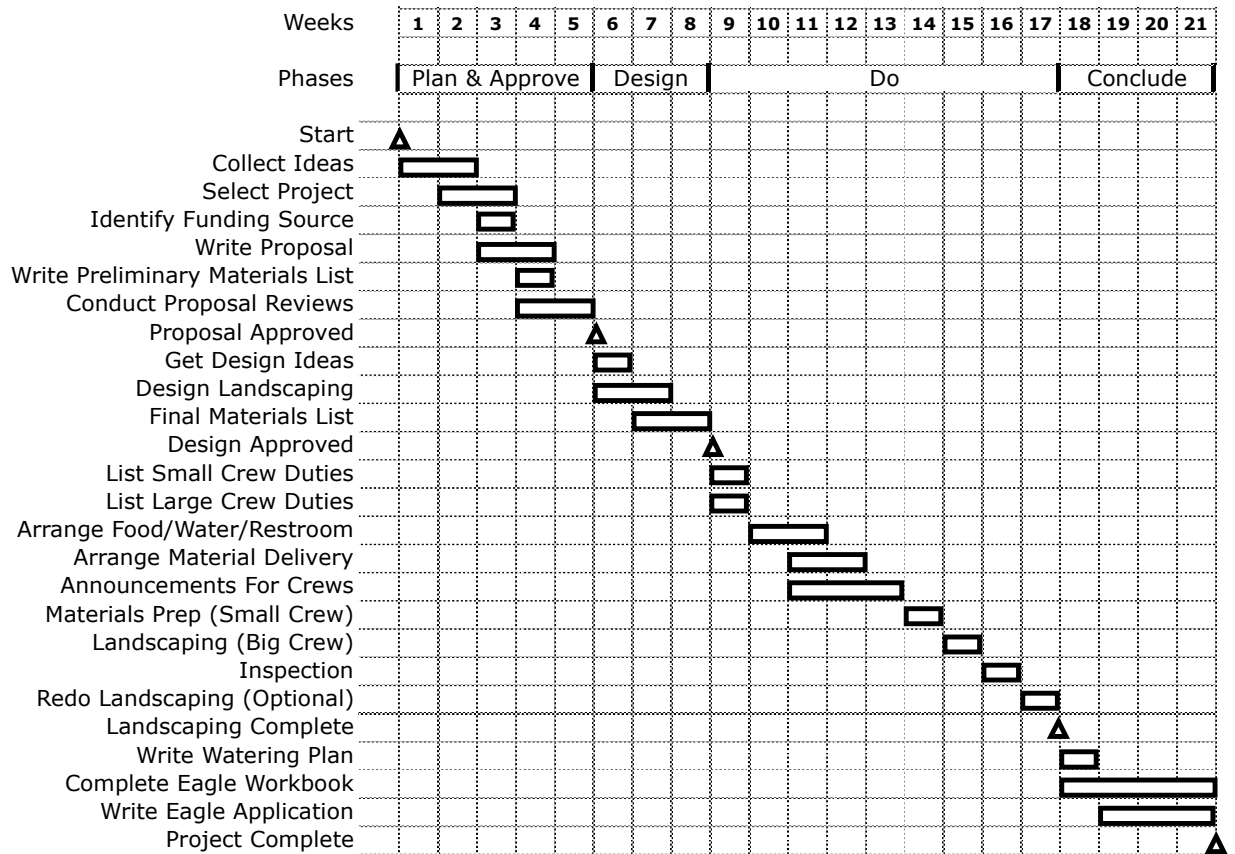
Preliminary Cost Estimate: Simply total your cost estimates from the above sections and demonstrate that you have a plan to obtain money to pay for the project. Often supplies and tools can be donated by the Benefiting Organization. You will complete this section in much greater detail in the project Final Plan. Recall that DCS Award projects are not made any stronger if they include a fundraising component, so do not feel obligated to fundraise unless the need arises.

Project Phases: You will have the opportunity to develop another project phase list in the project Final Plan, but we believe that the earlier you can plan out the project, the better. Thus, in contrast with the materials and cost estimates, which we recommend finalizing in the Final Plan, complete the project phases list as soon as possible.

You can use the simple list that is provided in the Workbook, but we often find it more effective to use a Gantt chart which more professionally presents your project phases and assigns a timeline from the beginning to end of the project. Below is such a Gantt chart, used for a DCS Award project that also was an Eagle Scout Service

Project. Expect to spend at least six months from the initial discussion about project ideas until the completion of the project.

Eagle Timeline



Logistics and Safety Issues: Provide a simple list of how transportation will work as well as basic safety issues you foresee. You will complete a more detailed analysis of safety issues in the project Final Plan.

Review: DCS Award projects **must** be reviewed by the Benefitting Organization, your Conservation Advisor, Council DCS Awards Coordinator, and the Council Conservation Committee when the Project Proposal is completed, **but before any work starts on the Project Final Plan.**

Projects that the BRMC Council DCS Awards Coordinator is not made aware of until after they are completed cannot be approved. Preapproval is required, though it is not a guarantee that the final DCS Award project will be approved by these signatories nor that the DCS Award application will be approved by the Council Conservation Committee. You should obtain approval from the Benefitting Organization and your Conservation Advisor before submitting your Project Proposal to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. He will coordinate approval with the Council Conservation Committee.

Project Final Plan

Overview: Complete your Final Plan by expanding as much as possible on the information provided in the Project Proposal. You will notice that almost all of the sections in the Final Plan are the same as in the Project Proposal, but the DCS Award Workbook encourages you to actually write down and plan everything you will do during the project and everything you will need.

Comments and Changes: Include how your project Final Plan has changed from your Project Proposal. Also, plan for changes to occur as you conduct your project. In writing, state parts of the plan that are subject to change and how these changes will affect the project result.

Project Phases and Work Phases: You can simply revise or add to the Gantt chart that you made earlier to create the work phases for your project. Also plan the actual workdays. Publish a flyer like the one below that lists the work that will be completed and schedule for the applicable workdays. It may be helpful to use technology like Facebook or Unit e-mail lists to publicize the project. Consider finding ways to involve the community and Benefitting Organization in project workdays.

Troop 17 Conservation Volunteer Trip

June 6-7, 2009

Respond by June 1st

Respond To: William O'Brochta

DESCRIPTION: Weekend of volunteer effort to create and sink artificial fish habitats to provide a cleaner lake and better fishing conditions that compliment the new Claytor Lake Boy Scout Aquatics Base. We will create artificial plant structures using cinderblocks, polyethylene pipe, and cement. We will submerge these structures into the lake. We will camp in new cabins and be part of a project that will benefit thousands of Scouts each year. This volunteer trip is being conducted as part of William O'Brochta's Distinguished Conservation Service Award project. Note that Distinguished Conservation Service Award projects are similar to Eagle projects and are focused on conservation.

COST: No cost.

PREREQUISITES: None. This trip is suitable for all Scouts interested in service hours.

FOOD/EQUIPMENT/CLOTHES:

Food: Saturday snack/dinner, Sunday breakfast.

Equipment: Scout book, sleeping bag, cup/bowl/fork/spoon, cooking stove/fuel/pots.

Clothes: Work clothes to get dirty including gloves, and camping clothes for late spring weather conditions.

Optional Equipment: Bring a tent if you wish to earn a night of camping.

Items Provided By Troop: Water, Saturday/Sunday lunch, work tools and supplies.

ADVANCEMENT: During the trip the Scouts will have the opportunity to work on advancement.

ADULTS: A couple of adults are needed to drive and participate.

TROOP CONTACTS:

Trip Scout Leader: William O'Brochta

Adult Leader: Mike O'Brochta

SCHEDULE:

Saturday June 6:

8:00 am: depart from Dr. Ramsey's office on 3501 Franklin Road

9:00 am: arrive at Claytor Lake Boy Scout Aquatics Base

9:30 am: receive safety briefing and work assignments

12:30 pm: lunch

4:00 pm: stop work

6:00 pm: cook dinner

Sunday June 7:

8:00 am: cook breakfast

9:00 am: begin work

11:00 pm: lunch

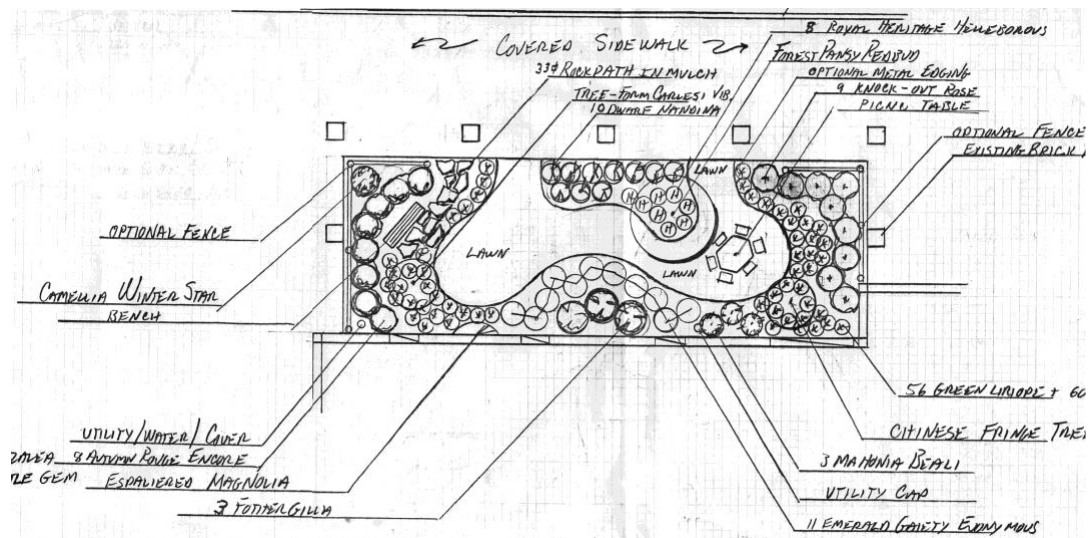
12:30 pm: depart from Claytor Lake

1:30 pm: return to Dr. Ramsey's office

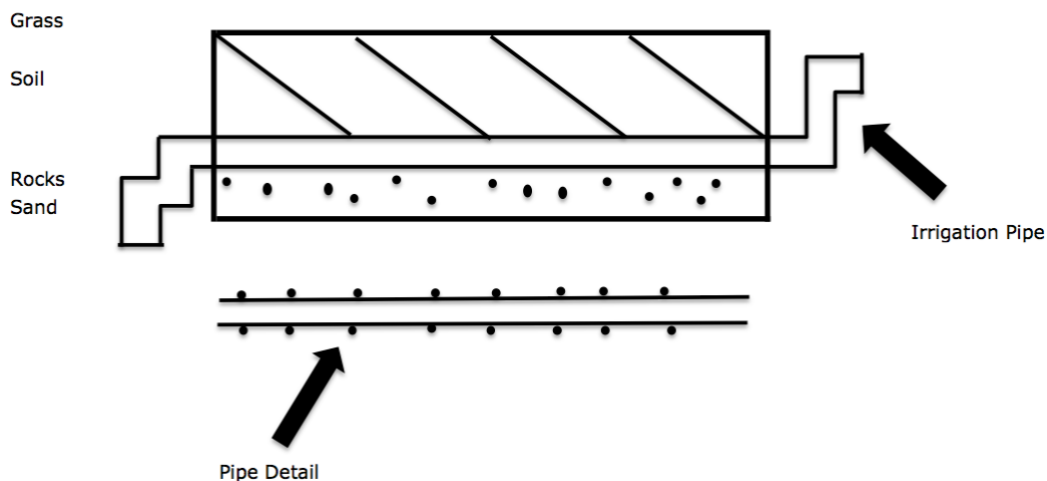
(times are approximate)



Attachments and Technical Design: Create a design diagram, architectural drawing, landscaping plan, or some sort of depiction of the project. This will not only help on the DCS Award application, but it will also make it easier for Scouts and participants in the project to understand exactly what you are doing. Below are examples of technical designs.



Irrigation System



Materials: Make a detailed materials list including all the required items, prices of those items to be purchased, and the location of items that are donated. Overestimate the amount of a given material needed to ensure that the project does not stop simply because you ran out of materials.

Supplies, Tools, and Other Needs: Do not assume that the Benefiting Organization has or has the means to obtain the machinery or specific equipment for

the project. Frequently, the organization will have some basic equipment, but not specific items like augers, tillers, or fertilizer spreaders. Arrange to get this equipment to the site and make sure to over allocate these resources so that workers are kept busy.

Expenses: Use the materials list to create a budget for the project. Keep in mind that money will be needed for lunch or food for the workers. Also, include a ten or fifteen percent contingency fund for unplanned materials. In the budget, you can indicate fundraised or donated money or supplies. You need not budget for pieces of equipment like shovels, gloves, and saws if participants will bring these items. However, anything that is rented should be included in the budget, and donated items should be verified far in advance.

Item Name	Number	Cost
Sod Removal	800	600.00
Soil Additive	8	120.00
Granite Bench	1	799.00
Autumn Rouge	8	199.92
Camellia	1	24.99
Fringe Tree	1	59.99
Emerald Gaiety	11	219.89
Fothergilla	3	59.97
Magnolia	1	149.99
Mahonia	3	59.97
Harbor Belle	10	249.90
Helleborous	8	95.92
Liropie	56	447.44
Pansy Red	1	99.99
Knockout	9	224.91
Tree Form Vib	1	49.99
Leafgro	7	244.93
Mulch	8	159.92
Colonial Stone	1	249.99
Sign	1	44.10
Fence Material	1	168.94
Lunch	1	321.63
Watering Supplies	1	145.54
Discount on Plants		-453.13
Total		4,263.83

You need not fundraise. Raising money will not help your DCS Award application, nor is it a requirement. It is up to the Candidate to see that the project has the money required to succeed, but he does not need to go and raise the money. First, speak with the Benefiting Organization about funding the project. Frequently, they will be able to donate some or most of the money for the project. Check with members of your Unit to see if they can provide materials or know companies that can help. The Blue Ridge Scout Reservation has many materials that can be checked out. The Reservation

should be able to fund a project occurring on their property. Some Councils provide additional funding for DCS Award projects.

If there still is a budget shortfall, look into getting a grant from a governmental organization. However, keep in mind that these grants are usually competitive, little money, and require months of advance planning. Thus, it is best to choose a project that can get a stable source of funding; either the Benefiting Organization promises to donate the money or donations can be easily obtained.

Providing Leadership: DCS Award projects have no specifics pertaining to who must complete the actual labor in the project. Thus, the Candidate can choose whether to do the work alone or with a group. The group effort will correlate with Eagle project requirements and also demonstrate the education component of a DCS Award project. Scouts, Scouters, adults, and others may participate in the project. Base the timeline for work on the number of individuals expected to help on the project. Recruit early and remember that only adults should operate most power tools (see *BSA Guide to Safe Scouting*).

Sources of workers can be your Unit, the Order of the Arrow, Venturing Crews, school service groups, and other clubs. Choose several members to serve as crew leaders as you split up the work that will be completed.

Remember that your job as a DCS Award Candidate is not to physically do the labor involved in each project, rather you are to supervise and act as the expert in all parts of the work. Organize the group of volunteers into different crews based on the types of work they will complete. Assign a crew leader to each crew and train him to know all the responsibilities of his crew. This forms “two deep” leadership (shown in the diagram below), where the volunteers report to the crew leaders and they report to you. Such a practice cuts down on unnecessary questions and allows the Candidate to supervise and monitor process instead of being stuck with only one group.

One incentive for participation in your projects is that they count toward service hours required for rank advancement. Be sure to make mention of this fact in your announcement and report the hours earned after the project is completed.

DCS Award Candidate			
Crew Leader	Crew Leader	Adult Crew Leader	
Volunteers	Volunteers	Adult Volunteers	

Safety: Assess safety needs including people designated to provide first aid and how help will be contacted if needed.

The first point of Leave No Trace is “Plan ahead and prepare.” In your project, planning for potential problems is essential. Consider two major themes: weather related issues and help related issues. For weather problems, plan something for volunteers to do inside or in the shade. At a minimum, have a weather safe location to stay. Also, plan for low attendance and high attendance. Make sure that there are jobs to perform if a larger number of individuals attend. Compartmentalize the work so that fewer people can perform part of the project if attendance is very low.

Manage safety risks carefully by having equipment on hand and personnel to deal with emergency situations. A Tour Plan is no longer required for any trip; however, you should still document drivers and emergency contacts as well as obtain permission forms for Scout participants. Visit the work site and plan safety equipment that needs to be worn and an evacuation plan to the nearest hospital. Bring extra safety goggles and gloves for those who forget. Make sure that there are people on hand that know CPR and have some extra food and water for people who feel sick or need extra food.

Prepare a safety briefing that you will conduct with volunteers before the start of each workday reviewing potential hazards and how to avoid harm as well as providing a clear overview of the work and tasks assigned to each volunteer.

Hazard Analysis, Recognition, and Control: Refer to the *BSA Service Project Guidelines* (680-027), *BSA Program Hazard Analysis* (680-009), *BSA Guide to Safe Scouting* (34416), and *Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations* (680-028) to complete a hazard analysis including work hazards, weather hazards, tool use hazards, emergency preparation, and preventative measures you will take to help reduce the risk of hazards.

Publicity: Plan to document the project well so that you can send pictures and information to local newspapers or media. They will be most responsive if you combined a DCS Award project with an Eagle project, but it does not hurt to send

material from each project. Briefly describe the purpose and results of the project as well as the importance of the DCS Award. This will raise awareness about the awards and give you publicity for your hard work.

Continuation: This is one factor that differentiates DCS Award projects from other projects. Put simply, it is not a DCS Award project if everything stops at the end of the last workday. Planting one hundred trees simply is not sufficient, for there is no follow-up or continuation. This continuation is difficult to plan out and sometimes is abstract. A habitat reconstruction project could, for example, be continued through an agreement with a landscaper to keep the area maintained and to provide periodic photographic updates. What about a publicity project? These are much more difficult to continue. You could choose to educate an employee of Habitat for Humanity about your Energy Conservation program so that they can continue to teach the material after your project is complete. Think about ways in which you can help the Benefitting Organization maintain the project. Maintenance plans, educational programs, and suggestions for future work based off your research determining how effective the project are all important ways to show the lasting impact of your project.

Announcements: The project is a success only if Scouts and individuals come to help you. Thus, a well-written announcement paper containing a brief description of your project. Distribute this announcement at least three weeks in advance. Also follow-up by making phone calls or sending e-mails and try to have a list of participants a couple of days before the work day.

Project Report

This section states that the Project Report “is the only documentation the national committee will reference to review your project.” Final approval for the DCS Award is at the Council, not the National level. Additionally, the BRMC requests both of your DCS Award Workbooks with attachments (your entire project write-up) when turning in a DCS Award application. Unlike Eagle Project Reports, a DCS Award Project Report should tie the entire project together. Review all the DCS Award criteria and really sell the project as having a lasting and significant impact on conservation and demonstrate that you are a newfound expert in the relevant fields of conservation.

Project Description: Provide a description of the completed project and the impact it will have.

Observations: What was successful during the project? What was challenging?

Changes: What changes were made from the Project Proposal? Justify why these changes were made and the impact you believe they had on the quality of the conservation work completed.

Leadership: Describe how you demonstrated leadership during the project and the most rewarding part about being a leader.

Service Project Data: List all individuals that worked on the project and the number of hours worked by each individual. Remember to try to meet the age and hour guidelines presented earlier. If your project does not meet these guidelines, consider additional ways to add hours and significance to your project. Could you develop a committee in the Benefitting Organization to oversee the project? Could you train others on how the project works and help them suggest ideas for new projects?

Fundraising: Was fundraising completed? If so, how were donors thanked and how will leftover money be used?

Photos and Other Documentation: Attach photographs and other relevant materials. Almost all material that you develop for your project should be included. Space is not at a premium, and extreme detail is valued. Plans, documentation, drawings, suggestions from others, and even proposals for alternative project solutions that were not adopted should all be included.

Monitoring: How will you monitor the project? What follow-up activities can be completed by the Benefitting Organization to maintain the project? Every project should have a follow-up and monitoring plan that you deliver to the Benefitting Organization. This way you can end the project without having to conduct extensive monitoring years after the project has ended, but you can also be sure that such plans are in place.

Learning: How did the project help people, especially community members, learn? What educational materials did you provide to the work crew? How did you educate the community and those who interact with the project?

Community Impact: What impact did the project have on the community? Did you invite community groups to participate in planning and executing the project? Have organizations that may be interested in using the project been alerted?

Media Coverage: Provide copies of any media coverage of the project. Remember that you should plan for media exposure, so this is an easy item to complete.

Benefitting Organization Acceptance: DCS Award applications require a letter from the Benefitting Organization thanking the Applicant for his or her work on the project. The BRMC also recommends attaching letters from any other person or group that was integral to the success of the project. Your Conservation Advisor and DCS Award Advisor should review your Project Report, but their signatures are not required on the Project Report.

DCS Award Forms

The application forms for all DCS Awards are available at the end of this Guide (in the Appendix). In contrast with the DCS Award Workbook, the application requires very little information, relying on the Candidate's own Workbooks to guide the application. There is one Merit Badge and two Venturing Elective pages and one page to list the project categories and titles.

Application Presentation

Include the Project Outline, Project Proposal, Project Plan, and Project Report for each project and your application; everything should be professionally and neatly presented. This goes a long way to convince the Council Conservation Committee that you are serious about your conservation work. Though you can choose to submit a hardcopy of your application, we recommend submitting a single PDF document via e-mail to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. Use labels and title pages and have dividers between project sections. Computer draw all designs and print everything in color. Include videos, letters, newspaper articles or other publicity that distinguishes your application from that of others. Remember, detail is key, as it indicates careful planning and preparation.

Application Approvals

The Applicant should get his or her application approved and reviewed by as many individuals as possible. Though not required, a thorough review by an English teacher will only help to prevent careless errors and unclear language.

Show your application in draft form to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator and have him make suggestions. If possible, also arrange for your Conservation Advisor to read over the application for secondary review. Both of these individuals will likely provide you with detailed suggestions for additional material in the application.

Although you may tire of revising the application myriad times, conducting these reviews and incorporating suggestions dramatically increases the probability of your application being accepted.

When the draft form of the application is complete, show the finished application to your Unit leader and get approval for the Merit Badges or Electives completed before proceeding with the more technical approvals. Then get final approval from your Conservation Advisor. You may have two Conservation Advisors --- one for each of your projects. If this is the case, ask both Conservation Advisors to review the application and to sign in the Conservation Advisor space on page two of the DCS Award application.

At this point, you are ready to submit your DCS Award application to the Council Conservation Committee and to conduct your DCS Award Board of Review. To do so, submit all of your application materials to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will coordinate your Board of Review.

Board of Review

You will hear from the Council DCS Awards Coordinator shortly after your application is submitted in order to schedule your Board of Review. Before scheduling the Board of Review, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will review your application and identify any unforeseen issues that may result in the application being rejected. If any such issues arise during this initial review, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will communicate them with you and provide you with the opportunity to revise your application before proceeding further.

The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will then invite the applicant to attend an upcoming Council Conservation Committee meeting to participate in a Board of Review. The Council Conservation Committee meets every month or two and will coordinate special extra meetings if needed so that review of DCS Award applications is not delayed. Prior to the Board of Review, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will conduct a thorough review of the application and prepare a report for the Council Conservation Committee regarding whether each of the projects meets the DCS Award criteria and making a recommendation to the Committee about whether the application should be approved, returned, or declined. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will also distribute all of the application materials to Committee members in advance of the meeting, so that they can be prepared to ask questions or to seek clarification.

The Board of Review may take place in person, via telephone, or via videoconference software depending on what works best for all participants. DCS Award applicants are welcome to invite their Unit Leader to the Board of Review for support, but the Unit Leader may not participate in the proceedings. Parents should not attend Boards of Review.

The DCS Award applicant should prepare for the Board of Review by considering potential questions that the Board may ask. Though the structure of the Board of Review may be formal, and DCS Award applicants should appear in fully Class A uniform, the questions asked during the Board of Review are not meant to trick the applicant or to be stressful. If the Scout has worked with and diligently followed the advice of the Council DCS Awards Coordinator and their Conservation Advisors throughout the entire process, the DCS Award applicant should be fairly well prepared for the Board of Review and have a very high probability of their application being approved.

The applicant may wish to think about and be prepared to provide answers to questions of the following nature:

- What do you think is the impact of your projects?
- What is the biggest thing you have learned while working on a DCS Award?
- What are your career goals? How might you use what you learned working on a DCS Award in the future?
- What inspired you to start working on a DCS Award?

The Board of Review should last about thirty minutes. At the start of the Board of Review, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will introduce the applicant and outline the procedures for the Board of Review. Members of the Board will then ask questions to the applicant in a round robin manner. Following questions from the Board, the applicant and the Unit Leader (if applicable) will be asked to leave the room so that the Board can discuss the application. During this discussion, the Board will consider the merits of the application and any written comments from Council Conservation Committee members who reviewed the application, but who could not attend the Board of Review in person.

Each member of the Council Conservation Committee, 18 years of age or older (for Scouts BSA applications) or 21 years of age or older (for Venturing applications), who attends the Board of Review is eligible to vote on approval of the DCS Award application. Eligible Committee members who are not able to attend the Board of Review may submit written comments for consideration by the Board, but they cannot vote on the outcome of the application. The Council DCS Awards

Coordinator will then conduct a vote on the outcome of the application, with two thirds of the eligible votes needed to make a decision.

The Board will issue one of three decisions to the DCS Award applicant both at the conclusion of the Board and in writing:

1. **Approved:** The DCS Award application meets or exceeds the DCS Award requirements. The Conservation Committee Chairman will sign the application and recommend that the Scout Executive provide final approval.
2. **Returned:** The DCS Award application substantially meets the DCS Award requirements, but needs some relatively minor improvements in order to fully meet the requirements. The Board is fully confident that these relatively minor improvements can be made within a reasonably short time period. If the DCS Award applicant makes all of the requested changes, the Board is fully confident that the DCS Award application will then be approved. Applications may be returned when one of the two DCS Award projects is sufficient, but some additional work remains on the second project. Applications may also be returned when the Board needs more information about one or more DCS Award projects.
3. **Declined:** The DCS Award application does not fully or substantially meet the DCS Award requirements and cannot be improved to fully meet the requirements within a reasonably short time period. Applications may be declined when both DCS Award projects require additional work.

If an application is approved, then the Council Conservation Committee Chairman will sign the application and forward it to the Scout Executive with a recommendation to approve the application. Following this, the application will be submitted to National for processing. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will let the applicant know when the award has arrived and arrange for a suitable presentation. The BRMC strongly encourages DCS Award recipients to earn the DCS Award only once and to help to support the DCS Award by mentoring applicants and supporting conservation through other avenues once they have earned a DCS Award.

If an application is returned, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will provide the applicant with a letter outlining the reasons for this decision and a specific list of actions that the applicant must take in order to re-apply for the DCS Award along with a deadline for these changes to be made. Applicants whose applications are returned and who turn eighteen (for Scouts) or twenty-one (for Venturers) after the application is submitted may still be eligible to receive the DCS Award depending on the revisions required. The applicant will work with the Council DCS Awards Coordinator to revise his or her application and resubmit it to the Council Conservation Committee. The resubmitted application will then be reviewed and

either approved or declined. Applications can only be returned once. A Board of Review is not required for resubmitted applications.

If an application is declined, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will provide the applicant with a letter outlining the reasons for this decision. The Council Conservation Committee may elect to award the applicant with another award, such as the BRMC Caretaker of the Wild Award, in recognition of significant conservation efforts that do not quite merit a DCS Award. The applicant may apply again for the DCS Award, but he or she may not use either of the projects that were included in a declined application.

DCS Award applicants whose applications are declined have the right to appeal the decision within one month of the application being declined. To appeal a decision, submit a letter to the Council Vice President of Programs. The Council Vice President of Programs will then form an independent committee to review the application and to render a final decision. Since the DCS Award is approved at the Council-level, further appeals are not possible.

DCS Award Presentation

After approval, the Council Conservation Committee will receive your award. Since earning a DCS Award is so rare, it will most likely be presented at a Council-wide event like the Eagle Recognition Dinner or Volunteer Recognition Dinner. An additional presentation may be done at the Unit level, if desired. The items sent by the National Conservation Committee for each award are listed below.

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award: A certificate and a square knot.

BSA Distinguished Conservationist: A certificate and a square knot.

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Certificate: A certificate.

Follow-Up

Now what? You have earned a DCS Award. You should check on the progress of your DCS Award projects to see that they are still successful and continuing. Though there is no follow-up requirement after you receive the award, as a conservationist, it is your duty to see that the work you put in is still benefiting others.

The biggest help you can provide, however, is to tell others about the DCS Awards. I found out about these awards while browsing the Scouting website and no one I spoke to knew anything about them. While the Council Conservation Committee is

working hard to change this, you can help by answering questions about DCS Award projects and encouraging prospective Eagle Scouts to work on a DCS Award project at the same time. This little bit of additional work as a DCS Award representative or supporter will really help the Committee spread the DCS Award message.

Section Four: Council Conservation

Committee DCS Award Approvals

(Intended for Scouters)

Introduction

The Council Conservation Committee is responsible for approving DCS Award Project Proposals and conducting a Board of Review for all DCS Award applications. Though the Council Scout Executive provides final approval for all applications, in reality, the Council Conservation Committee's Board of Review provides the information that the Scout Executive needs to be able to sign an application. Council's may choose to conduct a DCS Award Project Proposal review and a Board of Review under whatever parameters they so choose. This section outlines the BRMC Project Proposal and Board of Review processes. Both the Project Proposal and Board of Review processes largely follow the Eagle Project Proposal and Board of Review processes outlined in the *BSA Guide to Advancement*. We recommend modeling the DCS Award process off of the Eagle process because it should be familiar to most of the participants.

Composition of the Project Proposal Review or Board of Review

In the BRMC, we have decided to utilize the expertise of the members of our Council Conservation Committee as the members of the Project Proposal review and Board of Review. All Council Conservation Committee members listed on a roster maintained by the Council Conservation Committee Chairman are eligible to serve on the Board of Review. Members of the Council Conservation Committee who are younger than 18 (for Scouts BSA applications) or 21 (for Venturing applications) are eligible to sit in on the Project Proposal review or Board of Review, but they cannot participate or vote. At least three Council Conservation Committee members eligible to vote on the DCS Award application must attend the Project Proposal review or Board of Review. In cases where there are an insufficient number of eligible Council Conservation Committee members to conduct a Project Proposal review or Board of Review, the Council Vice President of Programs will appoint two individuals to serve on the Project Proposal review or Board of Review alongside the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. It is recommended that these appointed individuals have a working knowledge of conservation science and the DCS Awards program. Eligible Committee members who are not able to attend the Project Proposal review or Board

of Review may submit written comments for consideration, but they cannot vote on the outcome of the application.

Council Conservation Committee members should assess whether they have major conflicts of interest that prevent them from serving as impartial members of the Project Proposal review or Board of Review. Parents of DCS Award applicants are not allowed to participate in the Project Proposal review or Board of Review. Unit Leaders of DCS Award applicants may attend the Board of Review, but they cannot participate or vote.

Project Proposal Approval

Both the Council DCS Awards Coordinator and the Council Conservation Committee are responsible for approving DCS Award Project Proposals. Scouts should submit DCS Award Project Proposals to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator having already obtained approval from the Benefitting Organization and their Conservation Advisor. Upon receiving a completed Project Proposal, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should prepare a detailed, written review of the Project Proposal, outlining whether and how the Project Proposal meets DCS Award criteria. This review should also contain a recommendation for the Council Conservation Committee regarding whether the Project Proposal should be approved and what changes the Committee should recommend to the applicant to help ensure that his or her project will meet DCS Award criteria.

The Council DCS Awards Coordinator should distribute the Project Proposal and the written review to the Council Conservation Committee at least one week prior to a Council Conservation Committee meeting. If no Committee meeting is scheduled within one or two months, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator and Council Conservation Committee Chairman can elect to conduct the Project Proposal approval via e-mail with Council Conservation Committee members.

The DCS Award applicant need not appear at the Project Proposal review. Instead, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will present the Project Proposal to the Council Conservation Committee along with his recommendation about approval and any proposed changes.

The Council Conservation Committee approves Project Proposals by acclamation, meaning that all members at the Project Proposal review must agree that the project, if completed taking into account all suggestions provided to the applicant as a result of the Project Proposal review, can meet the DCS Award criteria. Upon approval, the

Council DCS Awards Coordinator and Council Conservation Committee Chairman sign the Project Proposal approval section in the DCS Award Workbook. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator then prepares a letter to send to the applicant with the approved Project Proposal and a list of the changes discussed in the Project Proposal review in order to ensure that the final project will meet DCS Award criteria.

DCS Award applicants must receive approval from both the Council DCS Awards Coordinator and the Council Conservation Committee before beginning the Final Plan of their project.

Board of Review Submission Process and Review

The DCS Award candidate submits his or her completed application for a DCS Award to the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator. Before scheduling the Board of Review, the DCS Awards Coordinator reads through the application to identify any major issues that might impact the timely approval of the application. These issues may include:

- Application signatures missing or workbooks not attached.
- Applicant turned 18 for Scouts BSA or 21 for Venturers before the application was submitted to the Council. The application is considered valid if it was submitted to the Council Office, Council Professional Staff, the Council Conservation Committee Chairman, or the Council DCS Awards Coordinator by these dates. The application should be forwarded to the Council DCS Awards Coordinator without delay.
- Too little information for the Board of Review to evaluate the application. The Scout has completed the required work, but someone unfamiliar with the projects cannot fully understand how the DCS Award criteria are met.
- Application contains projects that were not pre-approved by the Council Conservation Committee.
- Projects are missing key DCS Award components. For example, many projects do not fully meet the education or lasting impact criteria.
- Merit Badge or Venturing requirements are not met or proper paperwork to show that the requirements have been met is not included.

Should the application not have any major issues, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator then reviews the application carefully and prepares a thorough description of the application for the Council Conservation Committee. This description should be prepared so that individuals unfamiliar with the DCS Awards criteria can understand whether the application meets these criteria or not. If, during this process, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator uncovers major issues with the

application, he should reach out to the applicant and resolve them before moving forward. The goal is that all major application issues are addressed before the applicant goes for a Board of Review. This ensures that the Board of Review experience is a positive one for the applicant. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator should also make and justify a recommendation to the Council Conservation Committee about whether to approve, return, or decline the application. This recommendation is meant to provide guidance from an expert in the DCS Awards process and not to be final, as the applicant may be able to provide missing information during the Board of Review.

Once the Council DCS Awards Coordinator has reviewed the application and written up a description, he should proceed to schedule a Board of Review with the applicant. In general, the Board of Review should be scheduled within one month of receiving the application. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will first invite the applicant to a Board of Review scheduled during a Council Conservation Committee meeting. Having a Board of Review during this time provides the applicant with an opportunity to see the issues discussed during the meeting and ensures high attendance of Committee members. If the applicant cannot attend a regular Committee meeting, the Committee should first attempt to move its Committee meeting day and time to one where the applicant can attend, scheduling a standalone Board of Review as a final option. Once a suitable time is found, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should inform the applicant in writing of what to expect during the Board of Review including proper attire, the Board of Review format, the fact that the Scout's Unit Leader can attend, and a description of potential Board of Review questions. The Board of Review can take place in person, via telephone, via videoconference or using a combination of these formats.

At least one week prior to the Board of Review, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should distribute the Scout's application to all members of the Conservation Committee. If the Scout submitted only a hardcopy application, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should find a way to ensure that each Committee member has sufficient time to review the application prior to the Board of Review. This may involve scanning and e-mailing the application to Committee members or making copies of the application available for review prior to the meeting. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator should also distribute a guide for how the Board of Review will be conducted, basic information about the DCS Awards, and the application description that he prepared.

Conducting the Board of Review

The Board of Review should be scheduled as the first item on the Conservation Committee meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, the Conservation Committee Chairman should ask the applicant and his or her Unit Leader to leave the room so that the Committee can prepare for the Board of Review. During this time, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will discuss the application with members of the Board and answer any questions about the format of the Board.

The applicant and his or her Unit Leader will then be invited back into the room, and the Board of Review will begin. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator should introduce the applicant and outline the format of the Board. The Board members should then introduce themselves. During this time, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should also note that the applicant or the Unit Leader can ask for the Board to take a break at any time.

Members of the Board of Review will then ask questions in a round robin format for about thirty minutes. Questions can be wide-ranging, but should focus on the applicant's ability to fulfill the DCS Award criteria.

Once all Board members have had the opportunity to ask questions and after no more than about thirty minutes, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator should ask the applicant and the Unit Leader to step out of the room so that the Board can discuss and vote on the outcome of the application. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator should guide the discussion of the application and incorporate the comments of non-attending Committee members. Usually a quick consensus is formed. Board members will decide on one of the following options:

1. Approved: The DCS Award application meets or exceeds the DCS Award requirements. The Conservation Committee Chairman will sign the application and recommend that the Scout Executive provide final approval.
2. Returned: The DCS Award application substantially meets the DCS Award requirements, but needs some relatively minor improvements in order to fully meet the requirements. The Board is fully confident that these relatively minor improvements can be made within a reasonably short time period. If the DCS Award applicant makes all of the requested changes, the Board is fully confident that the DCS Award application will then be approved. Applications may be returned when one of the two DCS Award projects is sufficient, but some additional work remains on the second project. Applications may also be

returned when the Board needs more information about one or more DCS Award projects.

3. Declined: The DCS Award application does not fully or substantially meet the DCS Award requirements and cannot be improved to fully meet the requirements within a reasonably short time period. Applications may be declined when both DCS Award projects require additional work.

All Board members will vote on the outcome of the application; a two-thirds majority of Board members is required in order to agree on an application outcome. The Council Conservation Committee Chairman will then announce the outcome of the application to the applicant and invite the applicant to stay for the rest of the Conservation Committee meeting.

After the Board of Review

If an application is approved, then the Council Conservation Committee Chairman will sign the application and forward it to the Scout Executive with a recommendation to approve the application. The Council Conservation Committee Chairman may need to follow-up with or to educate the Scout Executive about the DCS Award or the application in order to ensure that he is comfortable with signing the application. Following this, the Scout Executive will submit the application to National for processing. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will let the applicant know when the award has arrived and arrange for a suitable presentation.

If an application is returned, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will provide the applicant with a letter outlining the reasons for this decision and a specific list of actions that the applicant must take in order to re-apply for the DCS Award along with a deadline for these changes to be made. The contents of this letter should be reviewed by all members of the Board of Review to ensure that, should the applicant resubmit the application, the Board of Review will approve it. Applicants whose applications are returned and who turn eighteen (for Scouts) or twenty-one (for Venturers) after the application is submitted may still be eligible to receive the DCS Award depending on the revisions required. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator will work with the applicant to revise his or her application and resubmit it to the Council Conservation Committee.

The resubmitted application will then be reviewed and either approved or declined. Applications can only be returned once. A Board of Review is not required for resubmitted applications. Instead, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will review the resubmitted application and prepare a report comparing the resubmitted

application with the list of required improvements found in the decision letter issued by the Council Conservation Committee. He will then send the report, along with the initial application, resubmitted application, and decision letter to all members on the original Board of Review. These members will meet to consider the resubmitted application. Decisions to accept or decline resubmitted applications will be based only on the contents of the decision letter; if the Scout satisfactorily addressed all items in the decision letter, then the application should be accepted. A two-third majority of the members of the Board is required to make a final decision to either accept or decline the resubmitted application. Resubmitted applications cannot be returned a second time.

If an application is declined, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator will provide the applicant with a letter outlining the reasons for this decision. This letter should be reviewed by the members of the Board of Review and the Council Conservation Committee Chairman before it is sent to the applicant. The contents of the letter should describe in detail the ways in which the DCS Award application does not meet the DCS Award criteria so that it is clear why the application was declined.

The letter should also outline any next steps for the applicant. For example, the Board of Review may elect to award the applicant with another award, such as the BRMC Caretaker of the Wild Award, in recognition of significant conservation efforts that do not quite merit a DCS Award. In some cases, the applicant may need to complete additional requirements to qualify for such an award. The applicant may apply again for the DCS Award, but he or she may not use either of the projects that were included in a declined application.

Handling Appeals

DCS Award applicants whose applications are declined have the right to appeal the decision within one month of the application being declined. To appeal a decision, the DCS Award applicant should submit a letter to the Council Vice President of Programs. The Council Vice President of Programs will then form an independent committee to review the application and to render a final decision. An appeal is not another Board of Review. As such, the appeal committee will review all existing documentation and may choose to collect additional information from the Council DCS Awards Coordinator. We recommend that the appeal committee be comprised of the following people: a Scouter, a conservation professional, and a DCS Awards Advisor from another Council. The Council DCS Awards Coordinator and the Council Conservation Chairman can help recommend individuals who are qualified to

serve on the appeals committee. Members of the appeals committee should not have served on the original Board of Review.

The appeals committee will vote to either approve or decline the application, and a majority vote is needed to make a final decision. The final decision and the rationale for making it should be contained in a letter sent to the applicant, the Council Conservation Committee Chairman, the Council Vice President of Programs, and the Scout Executive. Appeals committee decisions are final.

Section Five: Starting a Council DCS Awards Program

(Intended for interested Scouters)

Introduction

Section Three discussed a formal organizational structure for DCS Awards within the BRMC. This structure is not common in other Councils in the country.

- From Internet research, there are about three dozen Councils with well-established and functioning Council Conservation Committees to assist Scouts seeking to earn DCS Awards.
- About 150 additional Councils have some experience with the DCS Awards (a new or relatively inactive Conservation Committee, a single DCS Award Advisor, a recent DCS Award recipient), but have not developed a more robust program. The Scouts in these Councils could benefit from additional support from National or other Councils with established and well-functioning Council Conservation Committees.
- The remaining Councils include little or no information about DCS Awards on their websites or in any publications. The Scouts in these Councils could benefit from learning about the DCS Awards.

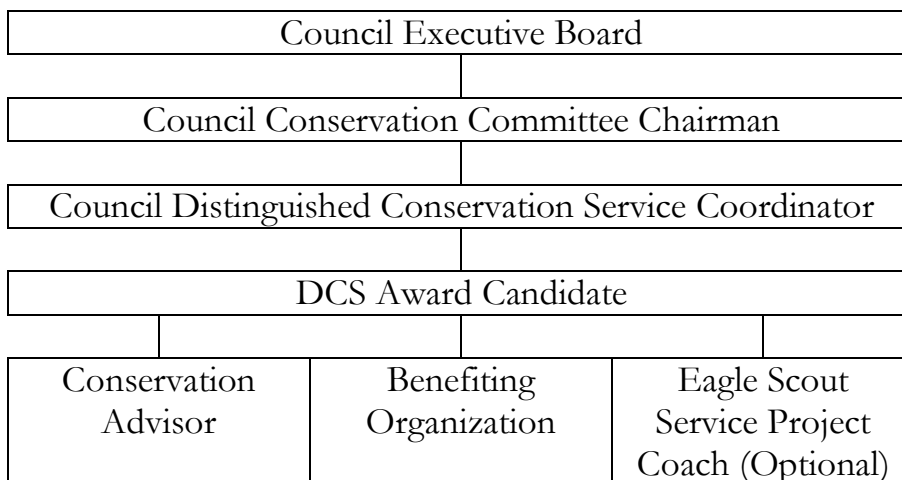
For these reasons, this Section will explore how to create the ideal Council DCS Award structure, how to get by with existing resources, and how to educate a Council about the DCS Awards.

Case Study Aspect

It is important to note that, naturally, all Councils are different and the structure that works in the BRMC may not work elsewhere. The BRMC Conservation Committee has experience working with many Councils to set-up Conservation Committees, so we are familiar with the challenges of establishing a Conservation Committee in Councils large and small.

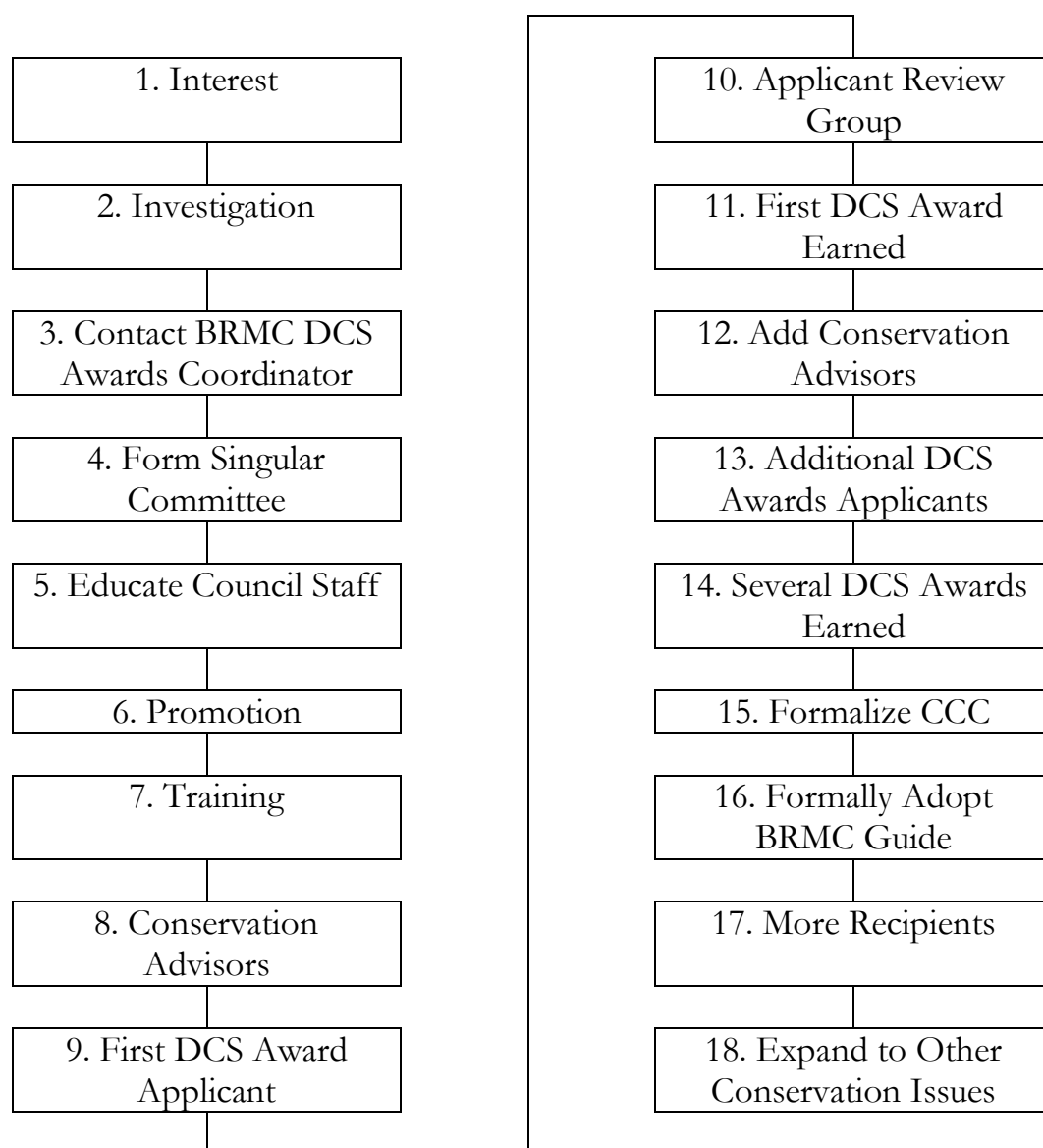
“Ideal” Structure

This structure is described in Section Three as the current structure of the BRMC Conservation Committee, and it represents an end goal for Councils just introducing the DCS Awards.



Suggested Process

This flowchart represents a typical progression used to establish a DCS Awards Program. Each item is subsequently detailed:



1. Interest: Your interest in the DCS Awards Program is not quite enough to fully justify starting a DCS Awards program in your Council. It is true that “if you start it, they will come,” but, in order to develop a solid case as to why the Council should invest time, money, and effort into DCS Awards promotion, it is extremely beneficial to find one or two Scouts who express a good level of interest in earning or participating in a DCS Award. Many Scouters become involved in the DCS Awards program because an individual Scout expresses interest in earning a DCS Award (the

Scout may be reading this Guide and be unable to find a Scouter knowledgeable about DCS Awards). Having these interested Scouts will help to justify the need to create a position to oversee the DCS Awards.

2. Investigation: Many times, I have found that Councils have had a DCS Award recipient “sometime in the past” or someone in the Council has at least heard of the DCS Awards program. It is vitally important to find and talk with these individuals in order to be able to start or restart a DCS Awards program. If someone has earned a DCS Award, they may have tried to mentor other Scouts to foster interest in the program. Often these efforts fail because of lack of Council support. Identifying these issues early on will help develop a successful program. The Council Office should maintain records of DCS Award recipients, but if these are missing, contact the National Office. Online newspaper searches and talking with experienced Scouters who have served in the Council for a long time will help supplement this official list with names of Scouts or Units who may have been interested in the DCS Awards, but never completed one.

Your next task is to determine if the Council has anyone currently serving as a DCS Awards Advisor. If you as the Scouter have never heard of such an individual, it really is no indication he or she does not exist. Frequently, such information is frustratingly difficult to locate. Talk to your Council Conservation Committee (if one exists), Council Advancement Committee, District Executive, and Scout Executive to try to identify if there is a DCS Awards Advisor or anyone else in the Council who has been active in DCS Awards advising. If such a person is found, you, the interested Scouter, can likely help publicize the existence of a DCS Awards Advisor and might be able to assist this person.

If this fails, the next step is to try to determine existing structures within the Council that may have oversight of the DCS Awards (whether they know it or not). If a Council Conservation Committee exists, oversight likely falls to them. If no such Committee exists, try the Council Camping Committee. Council Camping Committees usually have purview over Scout Camp related issues, but they often have oversight over conservation and the DCS Awards. Should the Council Camping Committee not have oversight, it probably falls to the Council Advancement Committee under the “awards and recognition” banner. The final stop should be with the Scout Executive.

Finally, take a look at the *Council Conservation Committee Guidebook* (430-022). This document will ultimately be what you follow in order to turn your DCS Awards program into a full-fledged Council Conservation Committee.

3. Contact BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator: To gain additional insight about what goes into forming a DCS Awards Program, we recommend that you speak with the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator before proceeding further. I will listen to the historical information you have found and suggest paths forward. I can connect you to resources and individuals in the small community of Scouters advising DCS Award projects.

4. Form Singular Committee: This step and the next steps are to be followed if your Council does not have an established and functioning DCS Awards Program within the Council Conservation Committee. I write these steps as if there is absolutely no DCS Awards program within the Council; these steps are easily modified if some semblance of a program already exists.

By “singular committee,” I am referring to a committee of one individual — you — who will be responsible for DCS Awards throughout your Council. You may be apprehensive about this because you have not worked at the Council-level before or because you have never guided a Scout through the process. Just remember that no one is there to guide Scouts at this point, so any accurate knowledge that you bring will only improve Scouts’ success. Scouts often get discouraged because no one has even surface level familiarity with the Awards. You can be the person to support the Scout and to find the answers to all of his or her questions. The Scout should be worried about completing an excellent project; supportive volunteers are there to help the Scout understand the requirements and how to achieve them.

To form such a committee, you should approach your Scout Executive saying that you are interested in promoting the DCS Awards and that you have identified several Scouts who are interested in working on an Award. Be sure to have a brief summary of the program ready. Most Scout Executives have no problem allowing you to take on an unfilled role in the Council. They may wish that you attach yourself to an already existing Committee such as Advancement or Camping. Since the ultimate goal is to form a separate Conservation Committee with a sub-Committee of individuals working on DCS Awards, I recommend that you establish a relationship with the Camping and Advancement Committees. You can join these groups as long as everyone understands that you will learn about and be the expert on DCS Awards and that the Committees’ role is to support your efforts, not become experts themselves.

5. Educate Council Staff: In your Council-level position, you will work to spread awareness about the DCS Awards Program and to educate as many Scouts in the Council as possible about them. This starts by educating the Council Staff. There are several reasons for this.

First, the Scout Executive will be the one with ultimate Council-level approval over DCS Awards applications. If he or she is unfamiliar with the Awards when you bring the first DCS Award application, it will take longer to get the application approved and the Scout Executive may feel blindsided by not being kept informed. Also, having the Scout Executive on board with your cause will help if any issues arise working with other Council Staff.

Second, the District Executives can help you disseminate information to their respective Districts, identify DCS Award Merit Badge Counselors, and identify Scouts who may be interested in earning a DCS Award or Scouters who are active in conservation. Despite your best efforts at publicizing the Awards, Scouters usually ask for help from their District Executive before reaching out to Council-level volunteers.

Finally, the rest of the Council Staff may be able to help promote the DCS Awards at events such as an annual Eagle Recognition Dinner or to produce special marketing and education materials.

The Council Staff does not need to read the DCS Awards Guide or to have any deep understanding of the DCS Awards. I recommend distributing the Executive Summary in this Guide and discussing the program with them in person.

6. Promotion: My next step in forming the BRMC DCS Awards program was to develop and market the *BRMC DCS Awards Guide*. Fortunately, there is no reason to re-invent the wheel for your Council. I highly recommend simply adopting the *BRMC DCS Awards Guide* and associated materials as your Council's DCS Awards documentation. Such adoption can certainly be permanent. Step sixteen allows for permanent adoption of the Guide or the option to add something directly relating to your Council. There is no reason to develop such documentation now because the structure of your Council's DCS Awards program will likely change several times before it becomes firmly established.

Promote the existence of a DCS Awards program within the Council by distributing a short announcement about the DCS Awards program and the BRMC Guide within all Council and District publications. Here is an example paragraph for publication:

Are you (or do you know) a Scout interested in conservation? Has that Scout considered adding a little to his Eagle project to earn the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award, a conservation award granted to only about thirty Scouts in the country each year? Good news: William O'Brochta (insert your information here) has recently become a DCS Awards Advisor in the Blue Ridge Mountains Council. All Scouts and Scouters interested in learning more about Scouting's conservation awards should contact William and review the comprehensive and step-by-step *BRMC DCS Awards Guide*. The DCS is the highest conservation honor in Scouting, earned by only a few dozen Scouts in the country each year. Be a part of the conservation and environmental movement and receive the rarest honor in Scouting.

The goal of promotion at this point is to get the word out to all Unit Leaders so that they can contact you if they know a Scout working on a DCS Award. It is critical to identify these Scouts early on because otherwise they will apply for the Award without your guidance. These applications will be rejected because they require preapproval before projects are completed. DCS Award criteria are complex, and good advising is key.

You do not have the capacity at this point in the program to actively recruit new Scouts to begin earning the Awards. You should focus your efforts on Scouts who were previously working on them without guidance and the Scouts you identified in step one as highly motivated. Actively recruiting at this point will overwhelm your limited resources. Your goal is to get one Scout to complete a DCS Award project and eventually earn a DCS Award. Doing so will establish the program in the Council more effectively than working with a large group of only partially committed Scouts.

7. Training: The best way to make sure that both Scouts and Scouters truly understand what is involved in earning a DCS Award is by conducting frequent training sessions; you should plan on holding many sessions throughout the Council mostly geared toward Scouters, but some special programs for Scouts.

For Scouters, target each District at their Roundtable meetings and present a program to each one. Feel free to use the resources on the BRMC DCS Awards website. These presentations should focus on helping Scouters understand the size and scope of DCS

Award projects and the types of Scouts who might want to consider earning a DCS Award. Use the Basic Information Guide as a handout and reference this Guide as a resource.

Usually, the best DCS Award applicants earn or are working on Eagle at ages thirteen to fifteen. Any Scout with an Eagle project related to conservation and interested in the DCS Awards should expand that Eagle project in order for it to qualify for a DCS Award project. Have the Scouters in attendance help with referrals: any young Scout currently working on a conservation related Eagle project is a candidate for a DCS Award.

Other good venues for DCS Award education for Scouters are: University of Scouting, Wood Badge (as a patrol presentation), Leave No Trace courses, and trail maintenance programs.

You could consider doing presentations at larger District or Council events in front of Scouts, but these usually have little to no yield unless the Scouts are already interested in conservation in some way. Simply targeting Scouts who will “do it all” for an award and have no passion for conservation may increase your number of DCS Award recipients, but the quality of projects and passion for the DCS Awards may suffer as a result. So, work to identify Units that have a specific conservation focus and present directly to these Scouts. Usually the first thing that comes to mind is Venturing Crews focused on conservation, but Troops who do a lot of conservation projects, trail maintenance, litter pick-up, and even those Units with a very large focus on outdoor events are other good candidates.

Most successful will be small group discussions with Scouts who find you on their own accord (thus showing initiative) or who are identified by Scouters as being particularly good candidates. Thus, for Scouts, making sure your name is widely available on your Council website and in District information will be extremely important in their attempts to contact you. Consider sending an e-mail to every Unit Leader in the Council with your contact information since the Scout is likely to go to his or her Unit Leader looking for help with the DCS Awards before contacting anyone else.

8. Conservation Advisors: One goal of all the training for Scouters should be to generate enough interest that some Scouters want to help mentor and advise DCS Award Candidates. With such a small program at the beginning, you probably do not need to get more DCS Award Advisors onboard, rather the goal should be to split interested Scouters into two groups: Conservation Advisors and members of the Applicant Review Group (who become important in step ten).

Conservation Advisors help with the technical conservation details of a particular conservation project and need not know anything about the requirements for the DCS Awards. It is helpful, however, if the Conservation Advisors are Scouters or are familiar with the Scouts. Hopefully, some Conservation Advisors will materialize out of the training sessions you conduct. If this does not happen, consider contacting your local extension service, state department of forestry, and bureau of land management. Many DCS Award projects involve these agencies anyway, so getting some point of contact who knows about each organization and is qualified enough in conservation science to serve as a Conservation Advisor should suffice for the first couple of DCS Award projects that your Council completes. Only two or three Conservation Advisors will be needed until the DCS Awards program grows significantly.

You should send a letter to each Conservation Advisor officially appointing them and referring them to the DCS Awards Guide for more information. Below is a letter similar to the one we send to Conservation Advisors when they are first appointed and when they agree to work with a specific Scout:

Dear Zach:

Dr. Jim Parker has notified me that you have agreed to assist Scout Michael as his Conservation Advisor for the DCS Awards. Many thanks for accepting the responsibilities associated with this position. Michael intends to tie this Award with his Eagle project.

The enclosed information [[link to the DCS Awards Guide](#)] outlines the responsibilities of a Conservation Advisor as well as describes the DCS Awards Program. If you have any questions regarding the program, please feel free to contact me, Dr. Parker, or our DCS Awards Coordinator, William O'Brochta.

9. First DCS Award Applicant: The first eight steps have established a structure good enough to handle your first DCS Award applicant. Now you simply have to wait for your training and education efforts to pay off with a Scout interested in earning a DCS Award. I will briefly outline the process I use to work with DCS Award Candidates. Of course, much of this is up to you, but it might be instructive for your first Candidate.

Identifying Interest:

When I first receive a referral to a Scout interested in a DCS Award, I will give the Scout a phone call and talk directly to him or her about why they are interested in

pursuing a DCS Award. Be sure to speak directly with the Scout and another adult, not just with the Scout's parents. In coaching Eagle projects, we often talk about the importance of informing the parent while communicating directly with the Scout. Think of a DCS Awards project as an even bigger Eagle project, and it soon becomes clear that communicating directly with the Scout is even more important. For better or for worse, the parents are unlikely to know anything about the DCS Awards program. In talking with the Scout, make sure to quickly explain the scope of DCS Award projects and the time commitment involved as fully as possible. From the educating and training you have already done, you have probably gotten a number of people interested in the Awards who do not totally understand that the typical DCS Award effort takes at least a year. So, make sure to explain this upfront and follow-up with a copy of the DCS Awards Guide. End the conversation by having the Scout think about possible projects and review the Merit Badges or Ranger Award requirements that he or she has completed.

During this first meeting, you need to figure out whether the Scout is truly interested in working on conservation projects or if the Scout just wants to earn the rarest award in Scouting. There are two types of the latter case. In one, the Scout actually is really motivated to earn "cool" awards. These Scouts sometimes are successful at completing DCS Awards, but you should ask them about their other interests and thoughts about a career. If the Scout is more interested in careers and fields more conducive to another rare award program such as the Nova awards, provide the Scout with resources and contacts so that they can learn more information. The Scout may come back to you later having decided to work on a DCS Award, but they will do so having explored other prestigious and rare awards, meaning that they find a DCS Award intriguing for some reason other than its rarity.

A common occurrence is for Scouts to be interested in earning DCS Awards because their parents or Unit Leaders are pushing them to do so. This could be because the adults see that the Scout needs something productive to do or because they want to be able to talk about how their Scout earned a rare award. In any case, talking to the Scout along with the parent and then along with the Unit Leader can help detect whether the Scout is being unwillingly pushed by either of these individuals. If this is the case, intervene. Contact the District Executive and the Unit Commissioner if the Unit Leaders are the source of pressure; contact the Unit Leader if the parent is the source. Even if the Scout is interested now, be sure to check-in throughout the process to make sure the Scout wants to continue.

Project Outline:

At the next meeting, you should discuss the Scout's progress on thinking up a project and the other requirements. If he or she is completing the DCS Award as a Scout,

make sure to offer assistance locating Merit Badge Counselors for the DCS Award related Merit Badges. With such a limited network of DCS Award supporters in your Council at this time, lining up counselors for some Merit Badges may not be possible, but set an end goal of having at least one Merit Badge Counselor for each DCS Award Merit Badge listed in the Council. Many of these Merit Badges are among the rarer Merit Badges, so lining up Counselors might be difficult, but you want to be ready in case a Scout is really interested in a particular rare conservation Merit Badge. For Venturers, offer the assistance of some of your Conservation Advisors to help the Venturer complete the Plants and Wildlife and Ecology electives of the Ranger Award, if needed. Many Crews do not work on awards and Crew Advisors may have never worked with a Venturer completing the Ranger requirements.

The Scout should present a Project Outline for their first DCS Award project during this meeting. Help flesh out this Outline using the DCS Awards Guide. Although the outline process is not formally part of the DCS Award write-up, it is vital to good communication and having a successful project. After this meeting, the Scout should contact the Benefitting Organization with the Outline and see if they are interested in working with the Scout on the project. Some Benefitting Organizations may not want to undertake the liability, resources, or time required to help mentor a Scout conducting a project on their property. This is important to find out early, but not before the Scout has an Outline prepared. Scouts who approach Benefitting Organizations with just a vague idea of a possible project often fail to obtain the Benefitting Organization's approval to start planning the project because they seem unprepared.

Often Scouts will show up to a Project Outline meeting with nothing written or with an Eagle project type idea. This happens despite the fact that you have explained the DCS Award criteria to them during the first meeting. If this happens, discuss the Outline with the Scout and determine if the Scout is interested in continuing the project. If so, provide detailed comments about the Outline and suggest that the Scout re-work the Outline for review.

Identifying a Conservation Advisor:

Agree to work to set the Scout up with a Conservation Advisor before the next meeting. Pick a Conservation Advisor from your list (consisting of those people you lined up earlier) who best matches the location of the Scout and the technical aspects of the project. If none of your already lined up Conservation Advisors fits well, find someone at the Benefitting Organization (especially if it is a government agency) to serve as Conservation Advisor for this project.

Project Proposal and Final Plan:

On the third meeting, review the Project Proposal and make sure the Scout has formally met with his Conservation Advisor. You will then need to approve the Project Proposal and to facilitate Council Conservation Committee approval to formally authorize the Scout to begin working on the DCS Award project. Your review of the Project Proposal is a critical opportunity to make sure that the Scout is meeting the DCS Award criteria. As such, your review should be extremely detailed. Go through each of the DCS Award criteria in detail and review how the Scout did or did not fulfill them. If a criterion is unfulfilled, provide explicit suggestions for how to improve the project. After you have completed your review, provide a recommendation to the Council Conservation Committee about whether the Project Proposal should be approved or denied, following the procedures outlined in Section Four.

If the Scout presents an excellent Project Proposal, then the Final Plan should be easy for the Scout to complete and for you to approve. If there are significant problems with the Project Proposal --- especially those that result in the Project Proposal not being approved the first time it is submitted, review the Final Plan in a similar level of detail.

Then, let the Scout loose. This is a major difference from the Eagle program. An Eagle Project Coach may conduct weekly or bi-weekly follow-up with the Scout to check on progress. As the DCS Award is given for distinguished service, it is up to the Scout to complete the entire project and present a final write-up. Your job is to educate the Scout about the DCS Award criteria and to evaluate the project with your professional opinion. You are not responsible for approving the Final Plan or to prevent a Scout who chooses to ignore your suggestions from implementing the project. I generally send a couple of e-mails during the implementation process to make sure the Scout is working well with his Conservation Advisor and that there are no lingering questions, but no other action is really needed, even for your first applicant.

Project Report and Completion:

Once the Scout finishes one project, have him or her write everything up in the Project Report. Review everything, line-by-line, to help prepare the Scout for working on their second project. Comment on everything as well; my comments run pages long comparing the expectations for DCS Award projects laid out in the Guide to what the Scout has actually completed. Nothing is too small and insignificant to be ignored. Appearance, word choice, citations, writing style, and typography are all important signals that the Scout is serious about earning a DCS Award.

Usually the result is that the Scout needs to work on the write-up to highlight some parts of the project that they did, but did not explain in great detail in the write-up. Additionally, the Scout usually has some component of the project to do a little extra work on: more education, research, or follow-up. Have the Scout revise the write-up and complete the extra work before reviewing the final application. You may have to go back and forth with the Scout several times before you believe the project workbook is the best it can be. At any time, the Scout may tell you that they are done working on the project workbook. If this happens, it is your responsibility to respect the Scout's wishes and move on to the next step. You will repeat this process for the Scout's second DCS Award project.

10. Applicant Review Group: In the BRMC, the Council DCS Awards Coordinator reviews the applications and then presents a written recommendation to the Council Conservation Committee before the Board of Review. In your case, you will act as the DCS Awards Coordinator and the one member on the Council Conservation Committee in order to approve the application. So, before presenting the application to the Scout Executive, you have two options:

The first is to seek advice from no one else and to conduct the Board of Review and approve the application as the Council Conservation Committee of one person. This is risky because you could have missed some parts of the write-up that could have been improved.

A better approach is to form a full Board of Review consisting of members outside of the Conservation Committee, to review the project write-up. The Group can consist of the Conservation Advisors you identified earlier, anyone from your training sessions particularly keen on helping promote the DCS Awards, and even the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator. Having a small team in place will help improve the final write-up, provide a thorough Board of Review process for the Scout, and give credibility to your approval of the application. As the head of the Board of Review and the Council Conservation Committee, you will then sign the application in the space marked for the Chairman of the Council Conservation Committee, if the application is approved.

Evaluating Applications:

Scouts who have worked with you throughout their DCS Award project and have heeded your guidance will inevitably pass this review. Scouts who choose not to incorporate all your suggestions may not be successful. For all applications you receive, you should provide a detailed evaluation of the DCS Award criteria and how the Scout did or did not meet these standards. The Scout must meet all the DCS Award criteria. However, there is significant variation in the degree to which one

particular criterion can be met. Education, for example, can range from a short discussion with crew members to a public relations campaign contracted with an advertising agency that reaches millions of people. Projects submitted by older Scouts and Venturers that meet the bare minimum of a criterion can and should be rejected for not being age appropriate, regardless of the hours worked. Your ultimate benchmark is that the project should meet the criteria and represent “distinguished service to conservation.” An important goal early in any Council’s DCS Awards program is to establish a reputation for fairly evaluating projects to very high standards. Thus, do not compromise your standards just to allow the first Scout you work with to earn a DCS Award. Doing so will attract applicants who believe that DCS Award projects are just conservation related Eagle projects. Once this reputation is established, it is very difficult to counteract.

You will deliver any approved applications directly to the Scout Executive. I recommend meeting in person with the Scout Executive to review the application. This keeps the Scout Executive in the loop and ensures approval.

11. First DCS Award Earned: Once the Scout Executive approves the DCS Award application, the applicant has earned his or her award! Make sure to promote this event because it is quite significant.

12. Add Conservation Advisors: After your first DCS Award applicant, continue to add Conservation Advisors.

13. Additional DCS Awards Applicants: After your first successful DCS Award application, you can begin to recruit other Scouts and to start to promote the DCS Awards. The speed at which you decide to take on new Scouts working on the DCS Award should be based on the number of Conservation Advisors you have available and your ability to monitor the progress of all Scouts.

14. Additional DCS Awards Earned: After several successful DCS Award applications, hopefully knowledge of the Award will begin to spread throughout Units and the Council. At this point, you may wish to start formalizing the Council Conservation Committee.

15. Formalize CCC: The reason that formalizing the Council Conservation Committee was not done earlier was because of a limited number of individuals interested or familiar with the DCS Awards. You, as DCS Awards Coordinator, were acting as a Council Conservation Committee with only yourself as a member and used an ad-hoc Board of Review to help approve applications. Now, however, you should

have at least several Conservation Advisors and a few DCS Award recipients. Invite all of these individuals to be part of the new Council Conservation Committee.

Review the *Council Conservation Committee Guidebook* (430-022) for more detailed information on the appropriate makeup of a Council Conservation Committee. Remember that the structure explained in the Guidebook is an end goal: there is no need for the Committee to deal with anything other than DCS Awards at this time. Get the Council Conservation Committee recognized as an official Council-level Committee, either as part of the Council Camping or Advancement Committees or on its own. The ad-hoc Board of Review members can now simply be integrated into the CCC.

16. Formally Adopt BRMC Guide: One of the first steps of the new Council Conservation Committee should be to adopt or develop documentation pertaining to the DCS Awards. As you have been using the BRMC Guide since step six, it is easy to formally adopt this Guide as a part of Council documentation and to add a separate document with specific Council-level procedures if needed. As there is no Guide developed by the National Conservation Awards Committee, the BRMC Guide is the most comprehensive resource to use. Feel free to contact the BRMC DCS Awards Coordinator for more information about citing the BRMC Guide or using parts of it.

17. More Recipients: With promotion in full swing and awareness increasing, run several more Scouts through the new Council Conservation Committee DCS Awards program. Consider finding a way to recognize Scouters involved with promoting DCS Awards or working as a Conservation Advisor for the Committee with a special Council-level recognition.

18. Expand to Other Conservation Issues: Ultimately, the Council Conservation Committee should embody more than just an outlet for DCS Awards approval. If nothing else, the other conservation awards should be run through this Committee. You will probably find that, after having invited all your Conservation Advisors and many DCS Award recipients to join the Committee, there is enough expertise to branch out into other areas in which the Council Conservation Committee can be responsible including summer camp programming, Scout Reservation conservation projects, and resource management. Make these additions as quickly or slowly as you like, realizing that the Committee can continue to grow and be self-sustaining simply by involving those who earn and advise DCS Awards as Committee members.

Once a Conservation Committee is established, many Councils choose to broaden their DCS Award promotion efforts to more actively recruit Scouts. Most such recruitment campaigns focus on educating Scouts and Scouters using e-mail,

established meetings, or visits to Units. Another increasingly used and successful option is to develop an event devoted to teaching Scouts about the DCS Awards. Typically called “DCS Award Weekends,” these events introduce Scouts to DCS Award Merit Badges and help them think about a possible DCS Award project. Importantly, DCS Award Weekends can only help the Scout understand the DCS Award criteria. The Scout will not attend the weekend and come home with a Project Outline. Instead, instructors can set-up staged projects at the Weekend and have Scouts identify the characteristics that make these projects DCS Award worthy or not.

An expanded approach is to develop a summer camp program related to the DCS Awards. A weeklong program can highlight all the stages of a DCS Award by showing already completed DCS Award projects on Scout Reservation property. There is also time during this program to develop a DCS Award project idea with each participant and to help them conduct initial research and meet with experts so that a lot of the difficult initial planning for a DCS Award project the Scout selects is already finished by the time the week ends.

Section Six: Appendices

Important Contact Information

C. Russell McDaniel	Conservation Chairman	540-529-1009	scouterruss@msn.com
Bob Drury	Council Field Director	540-904-2796	bob.drury@scouting.org

Useful Links

National DCS Awards Website with Editable Application Forms:

<https://bit.ly/38QuQ9c>

Blue Ridge Mountains Council DCS Awards Resources: <https://bit.ly/3f0VGNh>

DCS Award Applicant's Checklist

- ☐ 1. Has the Candidate planned, led, and carried out two significant projects from separate project categories?
 - ☐ a. Air and Water Pollution Control
 - ☐ b. Energy Conservation
 - ☐ c. Fish and Wildlife Management
 - ☐ d. Forestry and Range Management
 - ☐ e. Hazardous Materials Disposal and Management
 - ☐ f. Invasive Species Control
 - ☐ g. Pollinator Management
 - ☐ h. Resource Recovery (Recycling)
 - ☐ i. Invasive Species Control
- ☐ 2. Has the Candidate performed research for all projects?
 - ☐ a. The Candidate has shown documentation that research related to the project was performed.
 - ☐ b. The Candidate has shown that alternatives were investigated.
 - ☐ c. The project includes documentation related to other similar cases.
 - ☐ d. The Candidate should have a sound explanation for the best practice that has been chosen for the project.
- ☐ 3. Were the project requirements clearly stated in the documentation?
- ☐ 4. Were the project success criteria clearly stated in the documentation?
- ☐ 5. How much has the Candidate contributed to the improvement or better management of natural resources and the environment?
- ☐ 6. Has the Candidate shown leadership during the project?
- ☐ 7. To what extent has the Candidate encouraged other people to plan, understand, appreciate, and practice sound conservation and environmental protection methods.
- ☐ 8. Have there been any public relations as part of the project?
- ☐ 9. Are thank-you letters documented as part of the project?
- ☐ 10. Is there a list of lessons learned as part of the project?
- ☐ 11. Is there a project plan listing the planned and actual tasks, times, and resources used on the project?
- ☐ 12. Is there an appropriate level of budgeting and records for this project?
- ☐ 13. Are there an appropriate number of photographs and diagrams in the documentation to show the conditions before, during, and after the project?
- ☐ 14. Did the project meet the success criteria? Did it have an impact to the community and the environment? Did it have an impact?
- ☐ 15. Is there an ongoing piece of this project that continues into the future?
- ☐ 16. Has the Scout presented the project in a professional manner?

Conservation Related Scouting Awards
 Boy Scouts of America
 Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee



Environmental
Science



Fish and
Wildlife Management



Forestry



Soil and Water
Conservation



Sustainability



Bird Study



Energy



Fishing



Fly Fishing



Gardening



Geology



Insect Study



Landscape
Architecture



Mammal
Study



Nature
Study



Nuclear
Science



Oceanography



Plant
Science



Pulp and
Paper



Reptile and
Amphibian Study



Weather



Outdoor
Ethics Awards



Conservation
Good Turn



National
Outdoor Awards



World Conservation Awards



Hometown
U.S.A.

BSA Distinguished
Conservation Service
Awards



Trail
Conservation



Caretaker of the Wild



Application for the

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award

Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Applicant's email: _____

Applicant's address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Current Registration. Check one and indicate unit number:

☐ Scouts BSA Troop No. _____ ☐ Venturing Crew No. _____

☐ Sea Scout Ship No. _____

Scouts BSA:

Rank at time of application: _____ Became a First Class Scout on: _____
(DATE)

Venturing or Sea Scouts:

Check the awards that you have earned in an older Scout program:

☐ Summit Award

☐ Quartermaster Award

☐ Ranger Award

☐ Other: _____

Council: _____ District: _____

Council No. _____

Statement of Applicant

I have thoroughly read the requirements for this award. I have worked closely with my conservation adviser in the design and execution of each project. The work summarized in this application and the accompanying workbooks are of my design. I request consideration for receiving the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award.

Applicant's signature _____ Date: _____

This application and all project workbooks must be completed and signed by applicant and submitted to council before applicant's 18th birthday as a Scouts BSA member or 21st birthday as a Venturer or Sea Scout.



Endorsements and Actions for the

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award

Applicant's name: _____

Conservation Adviser's and Unit Leader's Approval

I have worked closely with the applicant named above in the design and execution of the required projects. I have reviewed this application and recommend that the applicant receive the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award.

Adviser's signature: _____ Date: _____

Unit leader's signature: _____ Date: _____

Council Conservation Committee's Approval

The council conservation committee has reviewed this application, interviewed the applicant, and determined that the applicant demonstrated leadership in the design and execution of the projects described. The applicant has met all requirements for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award and has this committee's approval and endorsement.

Chair's signature: _____ Date: _____

Scout Executive's Approval

On behalf of the council and upon the approval of the board of review process this applicant is approved for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award.

Scout Executive's signature: _____ Date: _____



Requirements for the

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award

Scouts BSA:

1. Be a First Class Scout.
2. Earn the Environmental Science, Fish & Wildlife Management, Forestry, Soil & Water Conservation, and Sustainability merit badges, plus at least two additional badges below.

MERIT BADGE	DATE COMPLETED	MERIT BADGE	DATE COMPLETED
Environmental Science		Insect Study	
Fish & Wildlife Management		Landscape Architecture	
Forestry		Mammal Study	
Soil & Water Conservation		Nature	
Sustainability		Nuclear Science	
Bird Study		Oceanography	
Energy		Plant Science	
Fishing		Pulp and Paper	
Fly-Fishing		Reptile and Amphibian Study	
Gardening		Weather	
Geology			

3. Plan, lead, and carry out two conservation projects from two different categories (Categories include Air and Water Pollution Control, Energy Conservation, Fish & Wildlife Management, Forestry & Range Management, Hazardous Materials Disposal and Management, Invasive Species Control, Pollinator Management, Resource Recovery, or Soil & Water Conservation). The projects must be developed under the guidance and pre-approval of the Scout's Unit Leader, a BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Adviser, and the Council Conservation Committee. One of the projects may include the Scout's Eagle Scout project (if applicable). All projects must contribute to environment improvement on a long-term scale.
4. Successfully pass a board of review conducted by the local Council Conservation Committee.



Requirements for Venturing and Sea Scouts:

1. Plan, lead, and carry out **two** conservation projects from two different categories (Categories include Air and Water Pollution Control, Energy Conservation, Fish & Wildlife Management, Forestry & Range Management, Hazardous Materials Disposal and Management, Invasive Species Control, Pollinator Management, Resource Recovery, or Soil & Water Conservation). The projects must be developed under the guidance of and pre-approval by the applicant's Unit Leader, a BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Adviser, and the Council Conservation Committee. One of the projects may include the Scout's Eagle Scout project (if applicable). All projects must contribute to environment improvement on a long-term scale.
2. Do 2 (a) and (b).
 - (a) Make a tabletop display or presentation on one of your conservation projects for a crew, ship, post, a Cub Scout or Scouts BSA group, or another group.
 - (b) Submit an article about your project to a local newspaper, radio station, your school newspaper, internet publication, or TV station.
3. Lead a Cub Scout or Scouts BSA group in carrying out an age-appropriate conservation project from a BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award project category (see list in requirement 1 above).
4. Write a paper or make a presentation on a plant or wildlife species. Include its value as seen from various perspectives, some of the problems various species face, and how we might be able to help.
5. Do 5 (a) and (b).
 - (a) Select an area approved by your BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Adviser that contains several species of wildlife or plants. Observe this area thoroughly in various conditions and seasons of the year. Study the history of this area, paying attention to how it has changed over time, ownership, land use patterns, and landform and climate changes.
 - (b) Make a presentation on interaction between species; the reaction of various species to changes in conditions or outside influences; the degree to which this area provides food, shelter, materials, and protection for each species; population trends; your predictions on the future of these species; suggested actions to protect or enhance the populations; and the investigation methods that you used.
6. Do 6 (a) and (b).
 - (a) Study a specific plant or wildlife species approved by your adviser that can be found in several different areas. Observe this species thoroughly in various areas and seasons of the year. Study the history of this species, paying attention to how it has adapted over time.
 - (b) Make a presentation on this species; any reactions to changes in conditions or outside influences; this species' needs for food, soil, shelter, materials, protection, assistance with propagation, etc.; population trends; your prediction for the future of this species; suggested actions to protect or enhance the population; and the investigation methods you used.
7. Explain the basic natural systems, cycles, and changes over time and how they are evidenced in a watershed near to where you live. Include the four basic elements, land use patterns, and at least six different species in your analysis and how they have changed over time. Discuss both biological and physical components.
8. Describe at least four environmental study areas near where you live. Include the reasons for selecting these areas, their boundaries, user groups, past inventories, any outside forces that interact with them, and a list of what things could be studied at each of them.

Continued



Requirements for Venturing and Sea Scouts (continued):

9. Plan a field trip to each of the areas in requirement 8, including detailed plans for consolidating various investigations. Follow all the requirements, such as landowner permissions and/or needed permits, safety plans, transportation plans, equipment needs, etc.
10. Do 10 (a) and (b).
 - (a) Under the guidance of a natural resource professional, carry out an investigation of an ecological subject approved by your BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Adviser in one of the areas selected above. Inventory and map the area. Conduct a detailed investigation providing specific data for a specific topic.
 - (b) Document and present your findings to a crew, ship, post, pack, troop, or another group.
11. Teach others in a crew, ship, post, pack, troop, or another group how to carry out an ecological investigation. Use steps 9 and 10 above with the group so that they may also learn by doing.
12. Successfully pass a board of review conducted by the local Council Conservation Committee.

Applicant:

I have completed the (check one): ☐ Scouts BSA ☐ Venturing or Sea Scouts requirements listed on the previous pages, and I am applying for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award.

Applicant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Unit Leader:

I have reviewed this application and the requirements for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award. The above requirements have been met, and the dates indicated accurately reflect our unit's advancement records.

Unit leader's signature: _____ Date: _____



Project Descriptions for the

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award

For each project, attach an executive summary, the completed BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Project Workbook (No. 430-815), and any supporting materials to this application. Be sure to identify the conservation issue or problem that each of your projects was designed to address, as well as any relationship that your projects may have to each other. Individual work items cannot be counted in more than one project.

A least two projects are required for the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award. You may use your Eagle Scout service project or a project used for the additional requirements for a Venturer or Sea Scout, listed above as a Conservation project if it meets the aims and objectives of the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards program. For a list of approved categories and additional information, please see the official BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award website at:

<https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/conservation-and-environment/conservation-awards-and-recognitions/bsa-distinguished-conservation-service-award/>

Project One

Project category: _____ Project title: _____

Principal adviser to this project if other than the conservation adviser: _____

Name: _____ Preferred phone(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email address: _____

Conservation organization affiliation: _____

Date project completed: _____

Project Two

Project category: _____ Project title: _____

Principal adviser to this project if other than the conservation adviser: _____

Name: _____ Preferred phone(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email address: _____

Conservation organization affiliation: _____

Date project completed: _____



Nomination for the

BSA Distinguished Conservationist

This award is by nomination only and is for an adult Scouter who has rendered distinguished and unusual service to natural resource conservation and environmental improvement over a sustained period (at least 20 years). Nominations are accepted from any recognized conservation/environmental protection organization. The nominee's accomplishments must be at a regional, national, or international level.

In an attached letter of nomination, indicate the contributions made by the nominee and whether the accomplishments cited were part of the nominee's paid professional responsibilities. Central to the selection process is the influence the nominee has had on youth and educational programs emphasizing sound stewardship of our nation's natural resources and environmental improvement.

Nominee: _____

Nominee's email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Council: _____ Council No.: _____

Nominee's affiliation with Scouting: _____

Suggested citation for reading at the time of presentation: _____

Nominator: _____

Nominator's email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Phone No.: _____

Attach letters of nomination and endorsement.

Completed application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the National Conservation Awards Committee by emailing to conservation@scouting.org or by mail to: **Director of Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, PO Box 152079, Irving TX 75015-2079**

This application is submitted to the National BSA Director of Conservation and will be reviewed by the National Conservation Awards Committee. If awarded, the certificate and square knot will be mailed to the council for presentation.



Nomination for the

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Certificate

This conservation award is granted to organizations or individuals by the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Nominations are accepted from any recognized conservation or environmental protection organization. The organization or individual should have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to the education of youth on a regional, national, or international level reflecting the natural resource conservation and environmental improvement mission of the BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards program.

A letter of nomination should be addressed to the BSA Director of Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, PO Box 152079, Irving TX 75015-2079. Letters of endorsement are encouraged..

Nominee: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Council: _____ Council No.: _____

Suggested citation for reading at the time of presentation:

Nominator: _____

Nominator's email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Phone No.: _____

Attach letters of nomination and endorsement.

This application is submitted to the National BSA Director of Conservation and will be reviewed by the National Conservation Awards Committee. If awarded, the certificate will be mailed to the nominator for presentation.

Completed application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the National Conservation Awards Committee by emailing to conservation@scouting.org or by mail to: **Director of Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, PO Box 152079, Irving TX 75015-2079**



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS COUNCIL
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

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