

Scouting's Role in Conservation
Boy Scouts of America
Blue Ridge Mountains Council Conservation Committee

Summary Scouting provides many opportunities for boys to learn about conservation and participate actively in projects to further their understanding. With camping as one of Scouting's core ideas, conservation is an integral part of the advancement curriculum. The Blue Ridge Mountains Council is in a unique position to positively influence the environment through many conservation programs.

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.

LNT The Leave No Trace program was established in the 1970's as an independent organization that has been incorporated into the Scouting program. 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 Troops.

Management The 17,000 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.

Awards The premier conservation awards in Scouting are the William T. Hornaday awards (seven levels for Scouts and Scouters up to the silver medal with four major conservation projects). The Hornaday badge requires completion of certain Merit Badges and one large conservation project. Other awards include: LNT Awareness Awards (outdoor ethics training), Trail Conservation Awards (trail crew training), Caretaker of the Wild Award (trail, conservation, and Hornaday programs), Conservation Good Turn (support conservation projects), World Conservation Award (conservation related Scout badges), and Hometown USA Award (merit badges and conservation project).

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.

Additional Information

William O'Brochta, Hornaday Awards Coordinator: william@obrochta.net, 540-343-1883
Dr. Bill Shiner, Conservation Chairman: docshiner@gmail.com, 276-699-0044
BRMC Conservation Committee William T. Hornaday Awards Guide: <http://bit.ly/Hs7DY5>
Council Conservation Committee: www.brmcreservation.org/conservation_committee.html
Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.lnt.org