

Conservation Advisor Information

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards

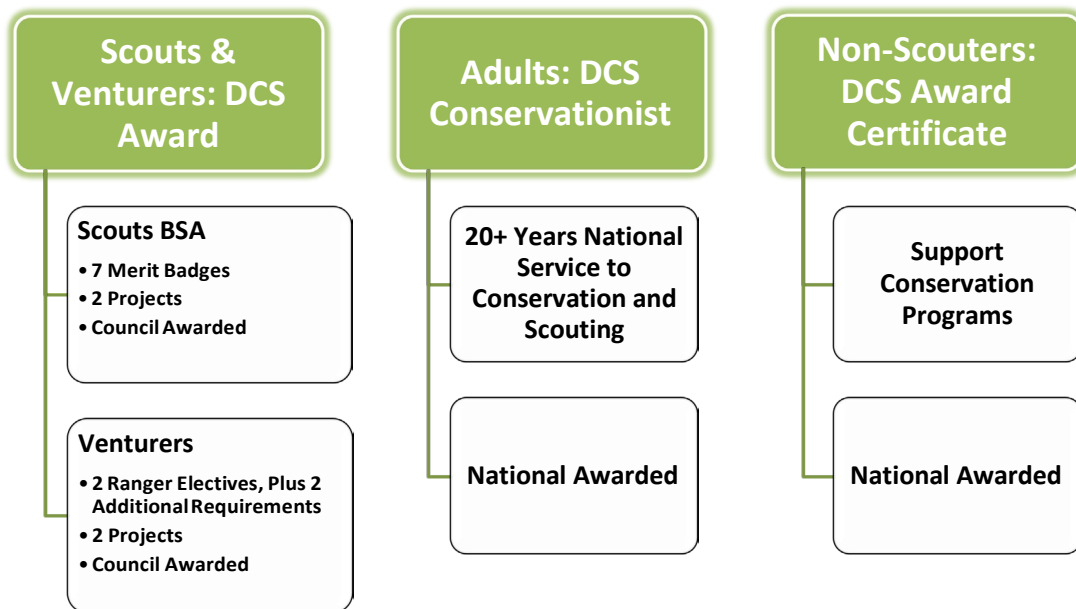
The Spirit of Adventure Council Conservation Committee

Overview: BSA Distinguished Conservation Service (DCS) Awards are the rarest awards in Scouting; historically, fewer than fifty Scouts have earned this award nationally each year. As a Conservation Advisor, you are responsible for helping young men and women conduct large DCS Award conservation projects in a technically sound manner. Scouts are responsible for ensuring that their projects meet strict requirements for a DCS Award; you are responsible for guiding Scouts in conservation practices. You will only advise Scouts who are conducting projects in your area of expertise.

Award History: Dr. William T. Hornaday was a taxidermist who became the first director of the Bronx Zoo. Active in civic and conservation groups, Hornaday did some work with the Boy Scouts, but focused his efforts on his own Permanent Wildlife Protection Fund (PWLPF). The Fund developed an award whose recipients were chosen by the Boy Scouts. The first PWLPF medal was awarded in 1917; the Boy Scouts took over the awards program upon Hornaday's death in 1941.

The awards were revised with the support of the Dupont Company in the 1970s. The award structure was simplified and re-named in 2020.

Award Structure: There are three types of Awards. As a Conservation Advisor, you will only be focused on the youth DCS Awards that require completion of a DCS Award project. Each Award has different requirements, but each project must meet the same criteria, though complexity depends on the age of the Scouts or Venturers involved.



Your Role: You will be advising a Scout or Venturer in the completion of a significant conservation project. This project is much more substantial and technically complex than a typical Eagle project.

Technical: You are expected to be an expert in the conservation science of the project. You should know how to devise a technically accurate project that will benefit conservation efforts, while also being doable for the Scout

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, you should know about general project categories and potential organizations with whom to perform projects. You should work with the Scout to identify the best project for the Scout.

Approval Role: You serve as an approved liaison to the Council Conservation Committee throughout a Scout's planning and completion phases of a DCS Award project. You must approve the Project Outline, Project Proposal, and Project Plan. You should review all documentation associated with the Project Plan, as well as major decisions that occur when executing the project. Finally, you are the pre-approval person for the final DCS Award application before review by the Council Conservation Committee and the Scouts' DCS Award 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.

Role of Others: The below chart describes the role of others in the DCS Award process. Note that the Candidate may be an individual Scout (age 11-17), Venturer (age 13-21), or a group of Scouts (age 7-21). The project and progress toward the Award itself is ultimately always the responsibility of the Candidate.

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
Benefiting Organization	Delivers application
	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

Projects: 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. Candidates must go “above and beyond” to truly distinguish themselves. Projects should be held to the standards of that of a college educated conservation professional.

Conservation Science: Candidates must demonstrate that the project is planned and executed to the highest standards of conservation science. The Candidate must show and justify that the project is maximally beneficial given available resources. Each step of the project design must be sound and justified in writing. The Scout is expected to become an expert in the chosen field of conservation.

Lasting Impact: Candidates must show how the project will have a lasting, positive impact. Project maintenance, repair, and future improvements must be outlined. It is advisable to create a maintenance team at the benefitting organization to monitor the project. The Candidate should provide this team with a full evaluation of the project and suggestions for future projects.

Significance: A DCS Award project can be thought of as three Eagle projects back-to-back. Candidates must engage in substantial pre-planning and a good deal of after project work in addition to executing the proposed project. Expectations for Scouts increase as they get older. Projects typically take between 200 and 400 hours (including time spent by the Candidate and volunteers).

Education: The project must educate the volunteers helping execute the project on the conservation science behind the effort. It must also educate all individuals who interact with the completed project, typically through interpretative signs, pamphlets, and community meetings/site walks.

Scientific Method: Candidates must justify the need for the project by demonstrating the problem they identify and showing that the proposed site of the project is most in need of a solution. Cost- benefit analysis should be conducted to identify the best possible solution. After implementation, monitoring should identify issues with implementation and show the effectiveness of the project.

Project Categories: Each project a Scout undertakes must be in a different one of the following categories. Most projects can plausibly fit into several categories; one category should be chosen, and the project should be tailored to emphasize conservation in this category.

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

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).

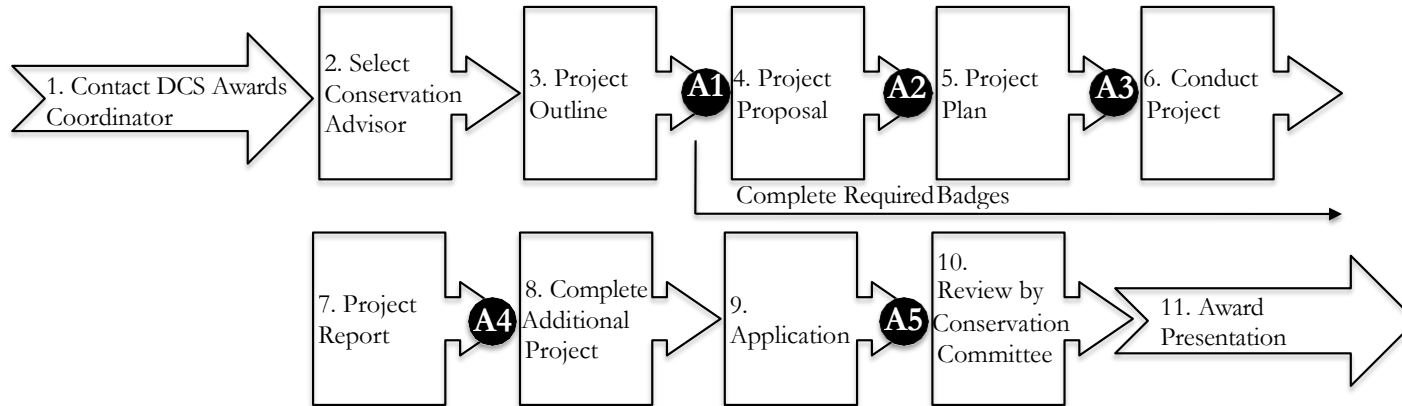
Comparing DCS Award and Eagle Projects:

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

For Assistance: If you are currently working with a Scout on a DCS Award project, that Scout is your first point of contact for any questions you may have. Otherwise, contact your Boy Scout Council's BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Awards Coordinator for assistance. If you do not know who this is or have further questions you may always contact: Jack Terrill - the SOA Conservation Committee Chair -

[Email](#)

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



<p>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</p>	<p>4. Project Benefiting Orgs. Conservancies, Community Agencies, Land Trusts, Religious Organizations, Schools, Service Groups, Local Government, USDA, State Parks, NOAA, VDGIF, VADOF, Scout Reservation (Only 1 Project)</p>	<p>5. Project Plan Organization Design Materials and Budget Leadership and Workers Schedule Benefit Safety Plan</p>
<p>7. Project Report Service Hours by All Involved Maps, Pictures Lessons Learned Communication Plan Publicity Letters of Appreciation Maintenance Plan</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Approvals A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 All Approved By Benefiting Organization, Conservation Advisor, and DCS Awards Coordinator, A5 Goes to Council Conservation Committee</p>