

Seeking the Elusive, Exclusive Hornaday

(How to Earn Scouting's Most Prestigious Conservation Award)



Hornaday Awards Program Information - Compiled by Kenneth R. Zabel

The Hornaday Awards Program emphasis is designed to incorporate an awareness and understanding of conservation as wise and intelligent management of natural resources throughout Boy Scouts of America programs and activities. The BSA National Council describes the Hornaday Award as being “equivalent to an Olympic medal bestowed by the earth.”

The development of good citizens is one of Scouting's aims, and citizens need to practice sound environmental living and conservation of natural resources. This is an extended program that encourages young people to:

- Look at the entire process of resource use
- Analyze how actions and judgments often create problems
- Understand decision-making processes related to the environment
- Seek out commonsense methods that can be applied at home, in the community, state, and in the nation
- Help improve the quality of life

This emphasis is directed toward making those active in Scouting - youth, adult members, and their families - aware of their responsibility for the future. There is an increasing awareness that Scouting members and other individuals are an integral part of their environment and that their action or inaction affects the quality of life throughout this nation and the world.

Personal experience teaches the most lasting lessons. The conservation program emphasis has been developed to create a positive commitment to improving the environment and conserving natural resources through firsthand experiences and “learning by doing.”

Because Scouting's youth generally have an active interest in the outdoors, they possess a ready curiosity that can be expanded. These young people can find their own answers, learn how to make sound judgments, and find social and environmental significance in actions that they undertake.

As William T. Hornaday himself once said, “Unusual prizes are to be won only by unusual services.”

This conservation awards program was initiated in 1914 by Dr. William T. Hornaday (December 1, 1854-March 6, 1937), then director of the New York Zoological Park, in an effort to reward anyone service to conservation. It then developed into a partnership with the BSA, but was not totally incorporated into Scouting until after Hornaday's death. For 20 years the program was funded through Hornaday's Permanent Wildlife Protection Fund. Upon his death, the program was sponsored for 35 years by the New York Zoological Society and named in Hornaday's honor. The award is the oldest conservation award given in America.

Dr. Hornaday was an active and outspoken champion of natural resource conservation, and is considered to be one of this country's first advocates for wildlife. His efforts resulted in the recovery of several species and educated countless numbers of people about the importance of environmental awareness. He played a critical role in the establishment of our current zoological system and is personally credited with saving the American Bison from extinction. Dr. Hornaday helped pass the Federal Migratory Bird Law, the 1911 Fur Seal Treaty, helped to found the Campfire Clubs of America, and was a long time supporter of the Boy Scouts of America. **Dr. Hornaday believed strongly in the power of youth, that a single individual could make a difference. He also believed that "almost any reform is possible" and his motto was "open wide to youth all gateways to nature."** After his death in 1937, the award was renamed in Dr. Hornaday's honor and became an award of the Boy Scouts of America. In the 1970s, the present awards program was broadened to include sound conservation and environmental improvement and awareness that will benefit the local community, the region, or the nation.



Forms of the William T. Hornaday Award:

The **Unit Award** and **Hornaday Badge** are awarded by the local council's conservation committee. Application is made through the local council. Councils may obtain unit certificates and youth badges by sending approved award applications to the Boy Scout Conservation Service at the national office.

The **Hornaday Bronze Medal** is awarded by the National Council upon recommendation of the local council. A qualified Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer must apply through and be recommended by his or her local council. Final selection is made by a national William T. Hornaday Award selection committee, and presentation is made by the local council.

The **Hornaday Silver Medal** is handled in the same way as the bronze medal in regard to recommendation and application. *The award is the highest possible attainment in conservation for a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer.*

The **Hornaday Gold Badge** is awarded by the local council's conservation committee. Scouters who have demonstrated leadership and a significant commitment to conservation and the education of Scouting youth on a council or district level over a sustained period (at least three years) may be nominated for this award. Councils may obtain gold badges by sending approved award applications to the Boy Scout Conservation Service at the national office.

The **Hornaday Gold Medal** may be considered when a qualified Scouter is recommended by his or her council, by an established conservation organization, or by any recognized conservationist. The nominee must have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to the education of youth on a national or international level for 20 years, reflecting the natural resource conservation/environmental awareness mission of the Boy Scouts of America. Nominations must be approved by the BSA's national conservation committee; No more than six Gold Medals are issued a year. *This is the highest possible attainment in conservation for a Scouter.*

The **Hornaday Gold Certificate** is an award granted to an organization not necessarily affiliated with Scouting. The nominated organization must have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to the education of youth on a national or international level, reflecting the natural resource conservation/environmental awareness mission of the Boy Scouts of America.

Nominations for the medals and gold certificate are considered by the national award committee several times a year. The badge, bronze medal, and silver medal are youth awards. The age limit for Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts is their 18th birthday, and for Venturers, their 21st birthday.

What Qualifies As a Hornaday Project?

First and foremost, the project must be a conservation project - **it must be designed to address a conservation issue or need in the local area, and it must benefit the environment or the creatures that live there.** Making an area more accessible for people is rarely for the benefit of the environment.

Most of the Hornaday awards require the Scout to conduct several significant conservation projects, each covering a different area of conservation. The projects must be based on sound scientific principles, address a conservation problem, and contribute to conservation and environment improvement on a long-term scale. Scouts are required to plan, lead, and carry out these projects and, as Dr. Hornaday stated, actual results count heavily.

There are no guidelines as to what makes a project "significant," but choosing and planning a project could make all the difference. Consider this example of a single project executed two ways. A Boy Scout organizes his unit to plant a few hundred seedlings in a burned-over area. A Venturer researches why the area has not naturally regenerated and what species are common to the area, conducts an inventory, finds a good source for native plants, organizes a tree-planting event, and obtains community assistance in planting by diligently publicizing the efforts. The following year, the Venturer returns to the area to implement a plant maintenance program, document survival, and assess if replanting is necessary. The actual results—planting the seedlings—for these two projects are the same, and some reviewers may consider both significant. However, the results of second project—thorough education of the Scout, the unit, and the community—will stand a better chance of withstanding the rigors of a review.

Guidelines for the Hornaday Award call for the candidate to complete projects in several areas of conservation. **Some projects might fit into several categories depending on local circumstances.** For instance, a single trail-reconstruction project might be categorized as soil and water conservation if it addresses erosion, or categorized as fish and wildlife management if it attempts to erase the impact of human intervention into critical habitat. It would not meet Hornaday qualifications at all if it is attempted only for recreational access.

How big a project should be and how long it should last are commonly asked questions. **Collecting aluminum cans over a weekend along with many other Scouts is a fine public service, but since little learning took place and there was no lasting impact on the community, the project would not qualify for a Hornaday Award. Similarly, a simple, one-time tree planting effort would not qualify.** However, a reforestation project in cooperation with a professional forester or park planner, learning which trees are appropriate to the area, ensuring proper spacing for best growth, following proper planting methods, and caring for the trees after planting might well qualify. **Starting a community-wide recycling project and encouraging people to recycle might also qualify** if an ongoing program was established. Size of the project is not necessarily the important element. Rather, the results, the learning that took place, the applicant's demonstrated leadership, and the significance of the contribution to the community, park, or other lands are what count.

Project Expectations - Applicants are expected to:

1. Describe the origination of the idea.
2. State the project's purpose and identify the conservation issue it addresses.
3. Conduct research, investigation, and study.
4. Develop project plans.
5. Implement and manage the projects.
6. Demonstrate leadership and involve others.
7. Describe how the project influenced the attitudes of others.
8. Record the time and resources devoted to each project.



William T. Hornaday Badge

The Hornaday badge is awarded, upon approval of the local council, to a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer for outstanding service to conservation and environmental improvement. Applicants meeting all requirements receive a certificate, No. 21-111, and the William T. Hornaday badge.

The Requirements

- Earn First Class rank (Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts only).
- Plan, lead, and carry out at least **one project** from one of the following categories:
 1. **Energy conservation**
 2. **Soil and water conservation**
 3. **Fish and wildlife management**
 4. **Forestry and range management**
 5. **Air and water pollution control**
 6. **Resource recovery (recycling)**
 7. **Hazardous material disposal and management**
 8. **Invasive species control**
- Complete the requirements for any **three merit badges** listed in bold type, plus **any other two listed below**.

MERIT BADGES:

Environmental Science, Energy, Fish & Wildlife Management, Soil & Water Conservation, Forestry, Public Health

Bird Study, Fishing, Fly Fishing, Gardening, Insect Study, Weather, Oceanography, Nuclear Science, Geology, Landscape Architecture, Mammal Study, Nature, Plant Science, Pulp & Paper, Amphibian Study

- **Venturer Scouts** must attach a statement from their Advisor stating that **ecology and plant and wildlife requirements for the Ranger Award** have been satisfied. Instead of merit badges, documentation (relevant research, bibliography, alternates considered, lessons learned) is required for the Venture Scout.

For the BRONZE MEDAL:

- Plan, lead, and carry out **THREE** significant projects in natural resource conservation or environmental improvement, one each from three of the eight project categories.
- Earn the **Environmental Science** merit badge and **THREE others from the primary group (bolded)** plus any **TWO other merit badges** from either group.

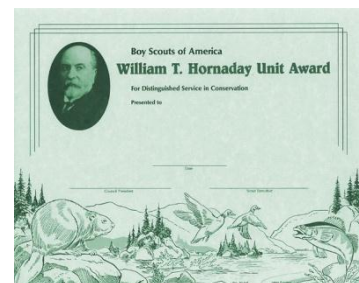
For the SILVER MEDAL:

- Plan, lead, and carry out **FOUR** significant projects in natural resource conservation or environmental improvement, one each from four of the eight project categories.
- Earn **ALL (6) of the merit badges from the primary group (bolded)** above, plus any **THREE merit badges from the Elective group** (non-bolded) above.



The Hornaday Awards encourage and challenge Scouts who want to have a positive impact on the environment. Earning the Silver Medal requires significant projects in at least four different categories of conservation - no easy feat, and one that can take years to complete.

The **Hornaday Unit Award** is awarded by the local council to a den, pack, patrol, team, crew, or group of five or more Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or Venturers for a unique, substantial conservation project. At least 60 percent of the registered unit members must participate. These units may be nominated, or they may apply to their BSA local council for recognition. The Unit Award may be awarded to a unit that is assisting with one of their scout's on an individual Hornaday Project (a separate application will need to be submitted).



The **Hornaday Gold Badge**, which can be awarded to ADULT Scouters who have given significant leadership to conservation at a council or district level, and is also administered on the Council Level. The nominee should have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to the education of youth on a council or district level or significant conservation efforts for a period of at least three years.



The **Gold Medal** is awarded to ADULT Scouters and is administered Nationally. Emphasis will be placed on the national impact of the project(s). The gold medal will be considered only when a qualified Scouter is nominated by his or her council, by an established conservation organization, or by any responsible recognized conservationist. The nominee must have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to the education of youth on a national or international level, reflecting the natural resource conservation/environmental awareness mission of the Boy Scouts of America over their lifetime (at least twenty years). Nominations must be approved by the BSA's national conservation committee. The Hornaday Gold Medal is the highest possible attainment in conservation for a Scouter.



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Start a PROJECT NOTEBOOK and write down EVERYTHING:

- People you talked to and their contact information
- Books and other resources you researched
- Who helped you – what they did, when, and how much time they spent that day. Remember that if 60% of your troop or post helps with the project, they are also eligible for a Hornaday Unit Award.
- All of your time – researching, organizing, leading the project, assessing the results, documenting it

Take PHOTOGRAPHS (and have them taken of you working in the project) – before, during, and after

The best Hornaday Projects are ones where the SCOUT:

- identifies a problem, looks into it
 - researches possible solutions
 - proposes his solution to a recognized environmental professional (in that subject area)
 - creatively obtains the supplies (or funding for the supplies)
 - recruits volunteers
 - plans for and coordinates the volunteers
 - carries out his plan (helping all the way), and then
 - goes back (perhaps with the environmental professional) and assessed the success of the project.
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- Did the problem get resolved?
 - What did he learn?
 - What would he do differently next time?

HORNADAY PROJECT IDEAS for each project category (NOT inclusive)

Energy Conservation Work with adults in the chartered organization to conduct an energy audit of the home of a low-income family, preparatory to weatherizing it for energy conservation. Determine the materials needed and their costs. Help organize a workforce and, with the adults, undertake the needed improvements over several weekends. This effort should be part of the chartered organization's community outreach. Record the long-term impact by analyzing utility savings. Promote use of solar energy.

Soil and Water Conservation Work with local park authorities to develop and maintain trails and paths, control stream bank erosion (research best options - including water bars, ripraps, grass shrub planting), conduct a wildlife census, and "adopt" a stream. Repairing erosion damage on park trails where the trail has suffered from soil erosion - placing water bars designed to direct water flow off the trail.

Fish and Wildlife Management With advice and assistance from state conservation department officials, introduce carp and catfish into algae-choked farm ponds to help reduce the algae load. Build nesting boxes and set them out for waterfowl. Plant hundreds of trees for windbreaks in at least 10 fields for wildlife habitat and to help control soil erosion. Plant native grasses for the benefit of quail and prairie chickens. Presentations on fish and wildlife conservation using a portable puppet theater for young children.

Forestry and Range Management Work with a range specialist to collect, analyze, plant, and maintain trees and native grasses suitable to the local environment to control erosion and provide wildlife habitats. Record the short-term and long-term impacts. Restore native grasses to marshlands or fire damaged areas.

Air and Water Pollution Control Work on a legislator's staff to draft legislation and encourage enactment of state laws that require the planting of trees along all state highway rights-of-way to assist in reducing motor-vehicle air pollution, as well as filtering silt and many toxic substances. Label storm drains to educate that material dumped into these drains lead to waterways.

Resource Recovery (Recycling) Design a survey of fellow students to discover recycling and pollution-prevention opportunities in the school. This could include activities such as recycling high-grade paper, reusing some paper products in the classroom, making use of disposable materials from the school cafeteria, and collecting glass and recyclable metal containers. Present the findings of the survey to school administrators and the school board. Achieve, as a result, the launch of an innovative school recycling program that delivers considerable dollar savings to the system with strong student, teacher, and school administrator support. Design and operate a Christmas tree recycling program.

Hazardous Material Disposal and Management Working with local environmental officials design and organize a program in which special plastic bags are distributed by Scouts to homeowners. The homeowners are asked to bag and deposit their used household batteries at special locations operated by city hazardous waste officials for appropriate disposal. Scouts design the informational brochure and run the public-information campaign to explain the environmental problems created by household batteries. The program reduces serious discharge of pollutants by the local waste incinerator.

Invasive Species Control Working with a land managing agency or organization, help control or eliminate exotic plant or animal species that pose a threat to native species. Educate others to recognize invasive species and to conserve and protect our native plant and animal heritage.

Other good ideas for projects may be found in the publications and pamphlets of groups such as the National Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League, National Wildlife Federation, or governmental agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, state natural resource conservation agencies, state cooperative extension service, or your scout camps. The best way to identify a project is to discuss the options with a Hornaday adviser.

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Documentation also refers to a record of the physical project itself. Arrive before the day of the project to take **pictures** from all angles. During the project and after it has been completed, take pictures from the same or similar angles. Then compare the site before and after, using the pictures. You can even create a display board to showcase your project at your Troop. Other forms of documentation include **recognition** given to your project from outside sources. **Letters** are a common form, especially from the sponsoring organization and the local community. If your project is featured in a **newspaper**, obtain a copy and include it with your final report. Both of these items document the impact of your project and the attention it has received from individuals and groups.

The old adage, “**The job is not done until the paperwork is complete,**” applies for the Hornaday Awards as well. For many applicants this will be the hardest part of the entire process. As a professional you are well aware of the need to produce good documentation of your process and findings. A good guide for how the Boy Scouts of America approach documenting a project is the “Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook.” (Part no. 18-927A) Scouts are required to use this workbook as they work on their Eagle Scout rank, so it should be readily available to you. This workbook helps the applicant by dividing the project write up into separate sections that are easier to address. Another good source is the official Hornaday Award web site maintained by the Boy Scouts. (<http://www.scouting.org/awards/hornaday>) This web site includes a section that describes the elements of the project that the National Hornaday Awards Committee is looking to be addressed in the write up (“**How Applications Are Judged**”). It is also important to note that the project descriptions are all that the committee has to review during its deliberations. It has been suggested that for medal applications you may wish to complete an extra project in case one is determined not to stand up to the high standards expected for the Hornaday awards.

HORNADAY REPORT HEADINGS:

- Project Hornaday Category
- Project Title and Project Description. What was done?
- Who did it (names, number of hours)?
- When was it done? How was it done?
- How did you come up with the idea?
- Why did you undertake this project?
- How was the project planned? How was the project designed?
- How long did it take you to do the project?
- Where was the project carried out?
- What was the environmental issue or problem?
- What was the resulting environmental improvement? What did you learn?
- How did the project involve and influence others? (What did they learn?)
- How did you give leadership to the project?
- What help did you receive from others—individuals and organizations?

SUPPORTING MATERIALS - “a must”:

- Photographs – before, during, after
- Sketches
- Letters of appreciation / thanks
- News articles

Additional written supporting material relating to the applicant's conservation work (newspaper articles, letters of commendation, and photographs of completed projects) is considered by the judges. Evidence of leadership in researching, planning, leading, and carrying out the projects, and of how this influenced other people, must be clearly documented.

A quality report is well-organized, correct and complete, and looks good - neatness counts - Single binder presentation. The job's not done until the paperwork is complete. An applicant should be advised that his or her application form, with supporting evidence of work accomplished, is the only information the national award committee has for selecting winners. Applicants are expected to show evidence of planning, to give leadership to others performing projects that demonstrate creativity and initiative, and to educate others through conservation endeavors. Thus, applications should be filled out neatly, and the list of activities should be as complete and descriptive as possible. Adequate supporting materials must accompany the application. Materials such as letters, snapshots, videotapes, project descriptions, drawings, planning papers, news clippings, talks given, etc., should be well-organized, neatly mounted in a notebook or scrapbook, and labeled.

Additional Information on the Hornaday Program

Additional information on the Hornaday Program can be found on the web sites listed below. Scouts should always obtain parental permission before visiting any Internet web site.

- National Boy Scouts of America Site: <http://www.scouting.org/Awards/HornadayAwards/awards.aspx>
- Venture Scout Information: http://crventuring.org/Awards/William_T_Hornaday_Awards
- *Boy's Life* Article on the Hornaday Awards: "Go Green," March 2008. *Boy's Life Magazine*. Boy Scouts of America. Available Online: <http://www.boyslife.org/gogreenserious/3965/william-t-hornaday-awards/>
- *Scouting Magazine* Article on Hornaday: Daniel, Douglass K. "A Place to Thrive," October 2007. *Scouting Magazine*. Boy Scouts of America. Available Online: <http://www.scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0710/index.html>
- Biography of William T. Hornaday: *William Temple Hornaday*. University of Iowa, 2000. <http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist/Site/explorers%20and%20expeditions/hornadaystory.html>
- Interesting Facts about the Awards: Eby, David L. *Hornaday Facts and Inaccuracies*. <http://www.usscouts.org/history/hornadayawardfacts.asp>
- Capitol Area Council Hornaday Weekend Site: <http://www.hornadaybsa.org>
- Sam Houston Area Council Site: <http://www.conservationbsa.com>
- Merit Badge Requirements: www.meritbadge.com
- LinkedIn Discussion Group: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Hornaday-Awards-BSA-3821007>

Through 2010:	Eagle Scout Awards	2,099,551
	William T. Hornaday Awards (<i>since 1914</i>)	3,799
For historical record, between 1920 and 1950, there was never more than one medal awarded within the BSA in any given year; many years (21 of them) saw none awarded.		
In 2010:	Eagle Scout Awards	56,176
	William T. Hornaday Silver Medals	6

These awards represent a substantial commitment of time and energy by individuals who have learned the meaning of a conservation/environmental ethic. Any Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer willing to devote the time and energy to work on a project based on sound scientific principles and guided by a conservation professional or a well-versed layperson can qualify for one of the Hornaday Awards.



Eagle Service Projects may be used to satisfy project requirements for a Hornaday award "provided that the project meets the criteria in the Hornaday awards application, and the write-up and documentation for the project follows the format for the Hornaday Award" (David R. Bates, Director of Boy Scout Camping and Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, April 11, 1996).

APPLICATION FORMS: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards/HornadayAwards/Forms.aspx>

SIGNATURES (before submitting): Applicant, Hornaday and/or Conservation Adviser, Unit Leader

Forms for the William T. Hornaday Awards may be downloaded from this Web page, along with instructions for completing and submitting applications. For more detailed instructions, consult the adviser guidelines, BSA Supply No. 21-379.

An applicant should be advised that his or her application form, with supporting evidence of work accomplished, is the only information the national award committee has for selecting winners. Applicants are expected to show evidence of planning, to give leadership to others performing projects that demonstrate creativity and initiative, and to educate others through conservation endeavors. Thus, applications should be filled out neatly, and the list of activities should be as complete and descriptive as possible. Adequate supporting materials must accompany the application. Materials such as letters, snapshots, videotapes, project descriptions, drawings, planning papers, news clippings, talks given, etc., should be well-organized, neatly mounted in a notebook or scrapbook, and labeled.

Completed applications for the unit certificate and badge must be submitted to the council, which will decide whether they are worthy of consideration for the Hornaday Award. Qualified applicants may be interviewed by a council committee. The committee determines whether the applicant is qualified for the Hornaday badge (or certificate, for units). Each council has authority to award the unit certificate and the bronze and gold badges.

The local council may present the William T. Hornaday unit certificate for a conservation project by a pack, troop, team, or crew. The council may award the Hornaday badge to individual Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers for outstanding service in conservation. The council may award the Hornaday gold badge to adult Scouters who have given significant leadership to conservation at a council or district level. All other Hornaday Awards are conferred by the National Council: Scouts and Venturers may apply for the bronze and silver medals. Adult Scouters may be nominated for the gold medal. Organizations unaffiliated with Scouting may be nominated for the gold certificate.

AWARDS PRESENTATION

The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America supplies certificates, medals, and badges at no charge to local councils. Certificates are printed with the recipient's name.

Information packages containing a history of the award and pictures of Dr. Hornaday are available from the national office upon request. Councils are encouraged to maximize press coverage on the occasion of the award presentation - this distinguished honor reflects favorably on the Scouting program.

You will most likely be working with a local environmentalist (such as a park ranger, city/county engineer, Sierra Club Member) to help you assess the problem, research possible solutions, answer questions, and review your projects success. If they have not worked with the Hornaday Awards Program before, I would also suggest that you work with a Hornaday Advisor – from the beginning of your project to the end; this person does not need to be local.

Would you like me to be your Hornaday Advisor? Send me an e-mail and tell me about your ideas.

Ken Zabel, Hornaday Advisor

Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 319 (Greater Cleveland Council), Venture Crew Advisor, Eagle Scout Merit Badge Counselor: Environmental Science, Soil & Water Conservation, Public Health, Fishing

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