

Q: Will a Hornaday award adviser be required to recertify as an DCSA advisor?

A: We would like you to do that. We think that there are a lot of similarities. The Hornaday advisers have the core training, know the principles, and have the projects down. What constitutes a project really hasn't changed. But if you can take the time for an hour, a little over an hour, and watch the training modules, I think that would be very worthwhile.

Q: The Hornaday projects were considered to be very difficult to complete. Are the DCSA projects intended to be as arduous and of the same caliber?

A: We really didn't change anything about this scale in the scope of the projects. For the most part, the Hornaday project is the DCSA project. The only nuances are that instead of 3 projects for the bronze medal under the Hornaday program or 4 projects for the silver medal, we only require 2 for the DCSA, and the project can be done on a Scout camp property. Everything else in terms of scale and scope are essentially the same. It's meant to be the premier award and a challenging award for scouting youth.

Q: Can you please talk about how a project can potentially be both an Eagle project and an DCSA project?

A: As we know the Eagle project has to be performed for the church, school or community, and the Distinguished Conservation Service Award project can be an Eagle project. Provided that the project meets the standards of both, they are different, and you may be able to take an Eagle scale project that was already completed. The Scout may need to add a bit to the Eagle project if it didn't quite get to the DCSA project standard.

So, for example, building picnic tables in the park, may be a recreational enhancement, but it's not necessarily a conservation project. However, if you do some trail work or some kind of sustainability type project in that campsite or reclamation or restoration Project, it could qualify. So, you might have to take that eagle project and add a little bit to it but if the core part is there it could certainly count.

Q: For a project used both as an Eagle and an DCSA project, are both workbooks required?

A: There's a different workbook for the Distinguished Conservation Service Award. For projects used as both Eagle and DCSA projects, both workbooks are required.

Q: Can projects be performed on BSA property? Eagle projects cannot be.

The Distinguished Conservation Service Award requires 2 projects. If you want to duplicate with your Eagle project, and one of those projects is on BSA property, that means that the conservation project that duplicates with the Eagle would have to be the one that's not on BSA property.

Part of our intent behind this shift was that as you know, we have Scout Council properties everywhere that could really use some tender, loving care, and this is an opportunity for Scouts to do some enhancement to a degraded environmental condition. The land ownership shouldn't really matter. This is a project for the environment.

Q: Is the Conservation Handbook available in a digital form?

A: Currently it is only hard copy.

Q: What was the rationale for not keeping the different levels of awards, and reducing the number of projects for the Distinguished Conservation Service Award versus the Hornaday Award?

A: Well, quite frankly, we averaged about 16 successful youth award recipients annually nationwide. Our hope is that more scouts will be interested and inspired to do good things in conservation.

The thought process was that the award was too daunting. We would much rather have 10,000 Scouts a year doing 2 projects, than what we had with the Hornaday Award, which was 16 Scouts a year doing 4 projects.

We wanted to simplify the award. We wanted to make it something that would be of greater interest to our youth applicants by making the requirements less intimidating.

Q: Can the distinguished conservation service award projects be an education-based project? There was that category for the Hornaday award.

A: They can be educational as long as the project aligns with one of the 9 different categories of conservation issues. It can be a lobbying effort. We've seen projects where Scouts worked with their schools to create some type of an educational effort or lobby representatives at the local level to pass legislation. That's the situation where you would work with the Distinguished Conservation Service Award advisor to ensure that the Scout is successful from the start. The most heartbreaking thing is to see a youth go through this elaborate process, only to find out that at the end of the day the project wasn't a conservation project or it didn't meet the standards of this robust award. So that's why we need those advisors engaging the youth at the onset so that we get them on the right path.

Q: Where can we find the Powerpoint presentation you spoke about?

A: If you go to [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org) and search for "conservation and environment," or just to do an Internet search for "BSA conservation and environment," it will bring you to our page and that Powerpoint presentation is a link under the Conservation Committee toolbox for administering this award.

Q: One thing that is emphasized in the new training is developing a network of contacts and get to know who in one's local area could serve as helpful conservation resources and to get to know some potential topics. Can you please speak to this process a little?

A: A person who's a trained advisor would ideally have a network of contacts. The first thing that comes to mind is Scout camp. We'd want to have a relationship with the camp through the Council Conservation committee, the Camp Ranger and everybody on board, so that the Camp conservation plan is consulted and that sort of thing. If we have an applicant or an interested scout who may need some coaching to get them connected with a suitable project, we want to have some things in the bin. It's not the adult's job to find the projects for the youth. However, we can establish relationships with agency administrators from State, local and Federal land management agencies, and we can establish a set of projects at the scout camp through the Council Conservation Committee, so if an applicant comes along we can guide them toward those things if needed.

Q: Have there been any Distinguished Conservation Service Awards that have been awarded already?

A: The DCSA is awarded by Councils, so we don't have any direct knowledge of how many have been completed until we receive a request for the final certificate. We know that there have been a handful. Typically, they were awarded thus far to Scouts that were already in process with the Hornaday program and transitioned.

Q: If a project is to lobby for a policy and the policy is not passed, will the scout earn the award?

A: Well, of course. When I say "lobby" we're talking about advancing an issue, getting it before decision maker, a legislator, or something like that. That may be a local issue, and the advocacy might be a petition campaign or something like that. We've seen those kind of projects in the past. The applicant would be judged on the things that are within their control. What was the effort, the leadership, the media, what was learned, how they taught others. Those types of things are what would be of interest whether or not they were successful with the political issue.

Q: Is there a preference or recommendation for Distinguished Conservation Service Award advisors and or members of Council conservation committees to advise or consult their district program committees on the topic of conservation and outdoor ethics to include promoting the Distinguished Conservation Service Award?

A: That is absolutely a good idea. Roundtables, going to Council University of Scouting types of venues, all those are opportunities to get the word out. We would encourage our Council conservation committees and train advisors to spread the word to the units and have it trickled down so that we can get Scouts and Venturers and Sea Scouts engaged.

Q: What is the age limit for the Distinguished Conservation Service Award?

A: It's 18 for Scouts, 21 for Venturers, and 21 for Sea Scouts. There are different requirements for the Venturers and Sea Scouts, and different application with different requirements, because they don't earn merit badges.

Q: If there's a youth that's dual registered in Scouts BSA and Venturing or Sea Scouts, once they turn 18, do they need to redo the non-project requirements?

A: If you are over 18, the only way you can achieve the award is by completing the Venturing or Sea Scout requirements. The Scout could use a project completed when they were in Scouts BSA but they would have to earn the award using the Venturer or Sea Scouts requirements. The projects are the same. A qualifying project is a qualifying project.

Q: Does the Distinguished Conservation Service Award Board of Review have to happen before the age limit?

A: Just like Eagle, the date on the application is what counts. We're not going to penalize youth for scheduling with adults. The application must be submitted prior to their birthday.

Q: Does the Distinguished Conservation Service Award come with a square knot?

A: If a youth earns the award, they can wear the square knot. It's one of the few awards that a youth can earn and wear a square knot. Adults who have earned the Distinguished Conservationist award may also wear the square knot. It's the same square knot that anyone who was awarded a bronze, silver, or gold

Hornaday award can wear. Those square knots are going to be made available through National Supply and you can get them at local Scout shops at some point.