



# Merit Badge Counselor Orientation

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Boy Scouts of America  
Sam Houston Area Council  
Tall Timbers District

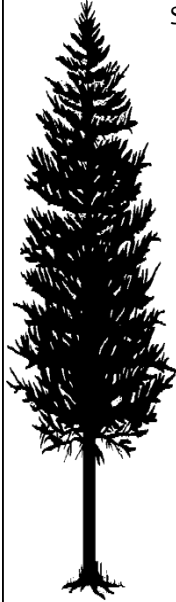


## Objectives

- Provide the information required to allow a Scouter to be an effective Merit Badge Counselor through knowledge and understanding of:
  - The Aims and Methods of Scouting
  - The 4 Steps of Advancement
  - The Purpose of Merit Badge Program
  - Counselor Qualifications
  - The Scout Buddy System
  - The Merit Badge Process
  - The Role of The Counselor
  - Counseling Techniques



## Aims of Scouting

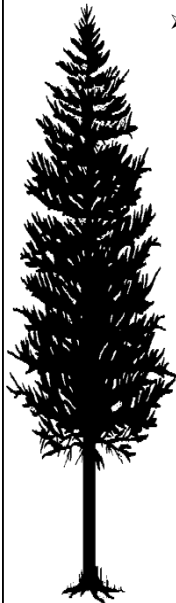


Scouting attempts to create better citizens through a series of aims. Those aims are

- Growth in moral strength and character
- Participating Citizenship
- Development of Physical, Mental, and Emotional Fitness



## Methods of Scouting

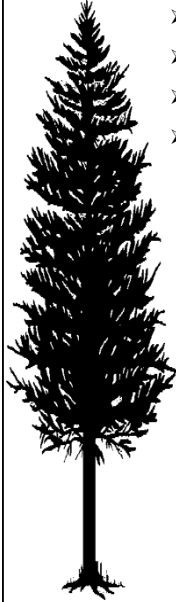


➤ The Aims of Scouting are accomplished via the Methods of Scouting

- Ideals of Scouting
- Patrol Method
- Outdoors Program
- Association with Adults
- Personal Growth
- Leadership Development
- Uniform
- **Advancement**



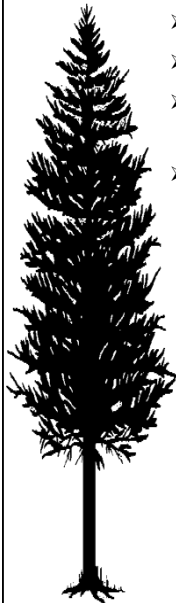
## 4 Steps of Advancement



- Step 1 – Scout Learns
- Step 2 – Scout is Tested
- Step 3 – Scout is Reviewed
- Step 4 – Scout is Recognized



## Purpose of Merit Badge Program



- Basic character-developing tools
- Scouts learn career skills
- Scouts develop physical fitness and hobbies that give a lifetime of healthful recreation
- Contact with adults with whom they might not be acquainted



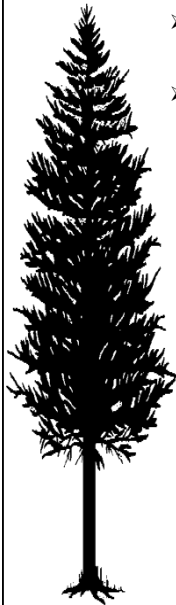
## Counselor Qualifications



- Registered as a Merit Badge Counselor
  - Registered adults are not automatically Merit Badge counselors
- Good Character
- 18 Years Old or Older
- Proficient in Merit Badge subject matter by vocation or avocation, or special interest
- Able to work with Scout-aged boys
- Approved by the District Council Advancement Committee



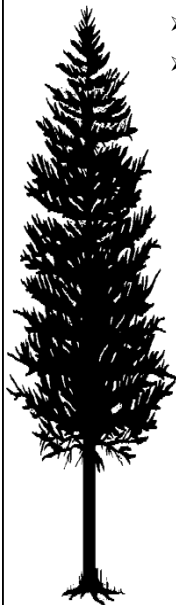
## Scout Buddy System



- A Scout must always have a buddy with him at each and every meeting!
- Buddies can be:
  - Another Scout
  - A Friend
  - A close, responsible relative



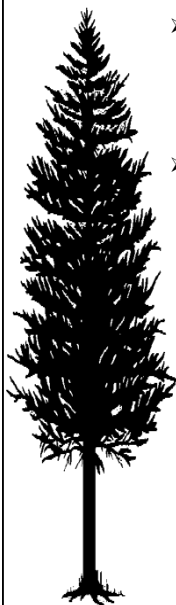
## Merit Badge Process



- Scout selects merit badge
- Scout indicates interest to Scoutmaster who gives him:
  - A signed application for the merit badge (i.e. "Blue Card")
  - Name, number, and address of a district-approved Merit Badge Counselor
  - The Scout is Encouraged to wear his official uniform
    - Certain Merit Badges involve activities that are more suited of the activity uniform
  - The Scout is instructed that he is required to use the Buddy System
  - Scout must get the most recent version of the Merit Badge pamphlet
  - Scout contacts Counselor
  - Counselor sets date, time, place, and encourages Scout to:
    - Bring a Buddy
    - Wear the Uniform
    - Bring Blue Card & other materials relating to the MB



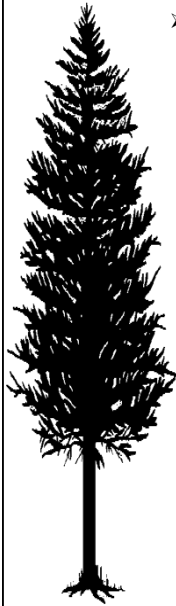
## Merit Badge Process



- Counselor and Scout decide upon:
  - Projects
  - Goals
  - Future meetings
- Examination
  - Scouts tested individually
  - Nothing Added – Nothing Deleted !
    - No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to or subtract from the published advancement requirements
    - Policies for Scouts with special needs are established and evaluated by the Council Division for Special Needs Scouting under the direction of the National Council and are not to be interpreted and enacted by districts or units without the approval and direction of these division.



# Merit Badge Process

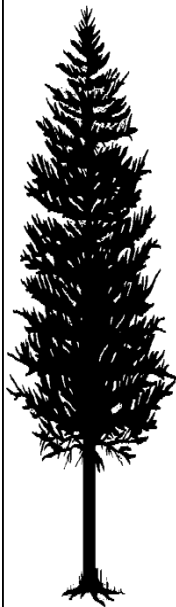


➤ Certification

- Use “blue cards” to record completion and progress
- Scout, Counselor, and Unit get copies for their records
- Scoutmaster should sign Scout’s copy



# Merit Badge “Blue Cards”



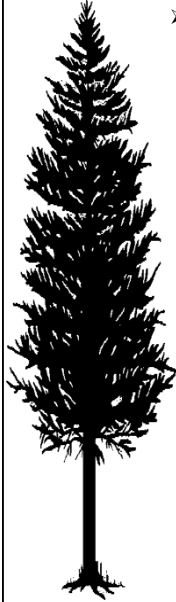
Information for Applicant		Information for Counselor																									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.</li> <li>You must have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.</li> <li>Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.</li> <li>The Scout must have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.</li> <li>You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counselor's more interesting and valuable.</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Merit badge</td><td>Counselor</td></tr> <tr><td>Approved</td><td>Initial</td></tr> <tr><td>Date of approval</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Merit badge</td><td>Counselor</td></tr> <tr><td>Approved</td><td>Initial</td></tr> <tr><td>Date of approval</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Merit badge</td><td>Counselor</td></tr> <tr><td>Approved</td><td>Initial</td></tr> <tr><td>Date of approval</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Merit badge</td><td>Counselor</td></tr> <tr><td>Approved</td><td>Initial</td></tr> <tr><td>Date of approval</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Merit badge	Counselor	Approved	Initial	Date of approval		Merit badge	Counselor	Approved	Initial	Date of approval		Merit badge	Counselor	Approved	Initial	Date of approval		Merit badge	Counselor	Approved	Initial	Date of approval		<p><b>APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____</p> <p>is a registered  <input type="checkbox"/> Boy Scout   <input type="checkbox"/> Varsity Scout   <input type="checkbox"/> Venturer</p> <p>of _____ Troop, team, crew, ship No. _____</p> <p>District _____</p> <p>Council _____</p> <p>and is qualified to begin working for merit badge noted on the reverse side.</p> <p>Date _____ Signature of unit leader _____</p> <p><b>BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA</b></p> <p>S4124A                  2003 Boy Scouts of America</p>
Merit badge	Counselor																										
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APPLICANT'S RECORD	COUNSELOR'S RECORD
<p>The applicant has personally appeared before me and demonstrated to my satisfaction that he has met all requirements for the (please print):</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Name of counselor _____</p> <p>Address of counselor _____</p> <p>City _____ Zip code _____</p> <p>Telephone number of counselor _____</p> <p>Signature of counselor _____ Date _____</p> <p>Checked and recorded: _____</p> <p>Date _____ Initials _____</p> <p>Certificate and badge presented: _____ Date _____</p> <p>Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader for record posting.</p>	<p>Applicant _____</p> <p>has given me his completed application for the _____</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Completed on _____/_____/____ by _____</p> <p>Signature of counselor _____</p> <p>Signature of unit leader _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop   <input type="checkbox"/> Team   Unit number _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Crew</p> <p>Merit badge _____</p> <p>Date completed: _____/_____/_____</p> <p>Remarks: _____</p> <p>It is suggested that the counselor keep this record for at least 1 year in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.</p>

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VENTURER: Retain this copy for your permanent records.



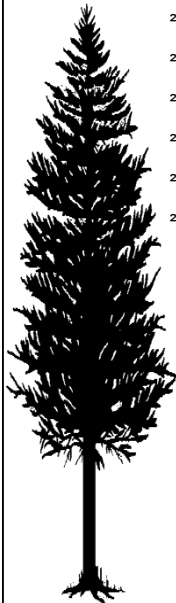
## Merit Badge “Blue Cards”



- The “Blue Card” system make the Merit Badge process easy on Troops, Leaders, and Counselors
  - Its an established system that is well tested in all environments
  - Compatible with one-on-one or group based instruction
  - Has a similar functionality with some record keeping systems like TroopMaster
  - Teaches the Scouts responsibility by having them keep up with their own records



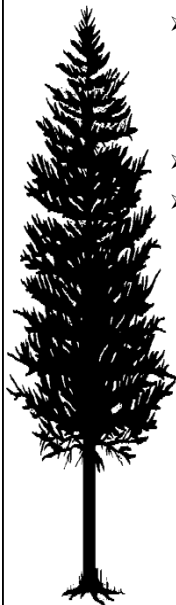
## Counseling Techniques



- ² Put the Scout at ease
- ² Review each requirement
- ² Offer assistance when reviewing requirements
- ² Have clear understanding of requirements
- ² Scout may do more than required
- ² Practice while learning



## Group Instruction



- Group Instruction is encouraged because of:
  - Availability of special facilities
  - Availability of “expert” personnel
  - Availability of counselors may be limited
- Group Instruction should provide for individual attention
- Testing should be done for the individual not the group as a whole



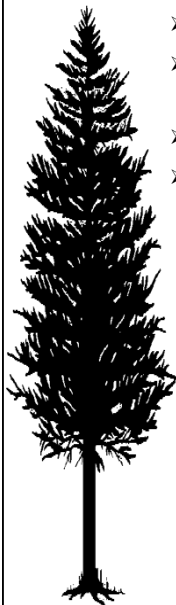
## Counselor's Role and Duties



- Interview the Scout to Determine
  - Preparedness
  - Knowledge
  - Interest
  - Goals
  - Follow-up
- Evaluate Progress
- Offer Assistance
- Follow Youth Protection Policy
- Teach the required skills
- Provide opportunities for practice
- Show a genuine interest in the subject and the students
- Show enthusiasm
- Follow the most recent requirements in the current issue of the Boy Scout Requirements Book



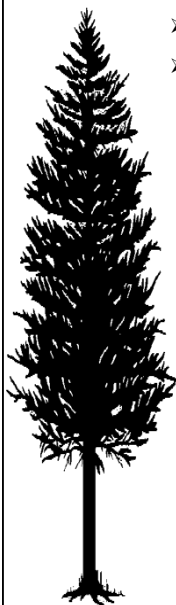
## Counselor's Roles and Duties



- Respond to Scout's requests promptly
- Teach to the requirements of the merit badge
  - "No more – No Less"
- Retain completion records
- Help the Scout succeed.



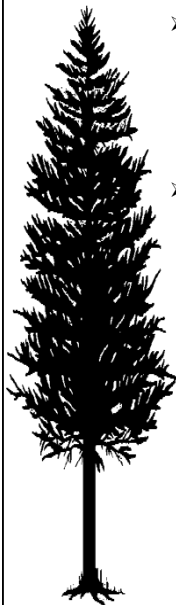
## District's Duties



- Maintain a up-to-date list of Counselors
- Approve and Remove Counselors
  - If a Merit Badge Counselor is found to not be living up to his/her duties, it is the responsibility of the District to remove that counselor.



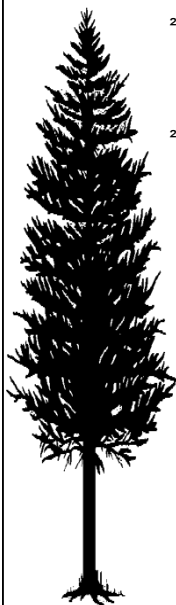
## More Information



- BSA Pamphlets
  - A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling
    - <https://beascout.scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx>
  - Merit Badge Counselor Orientation
- Helpful Web Sites
  - Official BSA site
    - <https://beascout.scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx>
  - MeritBadge.org (unofficial)
    - Use with caution: unknown update status
    - Contains helpful guides, workbooks, resources, and lesson plans for many MBs.



## More Information



- ² BSA Pamphlets:
  - ⁂ A Guide For Merit Badge Counseling
  - ⁂ Merit Badge Counselor Orientation
- ² Web Sites (Official):
  - ⁂ Official BSA National Council Web Site:
    - ⁂ [www.bsa.scouting.org](http://www.bsa.scouting.org)