



# Soil and Water Conservation

## Merit Badge Workbook



This workbook can help you but you still need to read the merit badge pamphlet.

This Workbook can help you organize your thoughts as you prepare to meet with your merit badge counselor.

You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information. You should use the work space provided for each requirement to keep track of which requirements have been completed, and to make notes for discussing the item with your counselor, not for providing full and complete answers.

If a requirement says that you must take an action using words such as "discuss", "show", "tell", "explain", "demonstrate", "identify", etc, that is what you must do.

**Merit Badge Counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbooks.**

No one may add or subtract from the official requirements found in Boy Scout Requirements (Pub. 33216 – SKU 621535).

The requirements were last issued or revised in 2005 • This workbook was updated in October 2016.

Scout's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor's Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

<http://www.USScouts.Org> • <http://www.MeritBadge.Org>

Please submit errors, omissions, comments or suggestions about this **workbook** to: [Workbooks@USScouts.Org](mailto:Workbooks@USScouts.Org)  
Comments or suggestions for changes to the **requirements** for the **merit badge** should be sent to: [Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org](mailto:Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org)

1. Do the following:

a. Tell what soil is.


Tell how it is formed.


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b. Describe three kinds of soil. Tell how they are different.

1.	
2.	
3.	

c. Describe the three main plant nutrients in fertile soil.

1.	
2.	
3.	

Tell how they can be put back when used up.


2. Do the following:

a. Define soil erosion.


b. Tell why it is important.


Tell how it affects you.


c. Name three kinds of soil erosion. Describe each.

1.	
2.	
3.	

d. Take pictures or draw two kinds of soil erosion.

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3. Do the following:

a. Tell what is meant by conservation practices.


b. Describe the effect of three kinds of erosion-control practices.

1.	
2.	
3.	

c. Take pictures or draw three kinds of erosion-control practices.


4. Do the following:

a. Explain what a watershed is.


- b. Outline the smallest watershed that you can find on a contour map.
- c. Then outline on your map, as far as possible, the next larger watershed which also has the smallest in it.
- d. Explain what a river basin is. Tell why people living in it should be concerned about land and water use in it.


- e. Explain what an aquifer is and why it can be important to communities.


5. Do the following:

- a. Make a drawing to show the hydrologic cycle.

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- b. Show by demonstration at least two of the following actions of water in relation to soil: percolation, capillary action, precipitation, evaporation, and transpiration.

- c. Explain how removal of vegetation will affect the way water runs off a watershed.


- d. Tell how uses of forest, range, and farm land affect usable water supply.


- e. Explain how industrial use affects water supply.


- 6. Do the following:

- a. Tell what is meant by water pollution.


b. Describe common sources of water pollution and explain the effects.

Water Pollution Source	Effects

c. Tell what is meant by "primary water treatment," "secondary waste treatment," and "biochemical oxygen demand."

Primary  
water  
treatment




secondary  
waste  
treatment


biochemical  
oxygen  
demand


d. Make a drawing showing the principles of complete waste treatment.



7. Do TWO of the following:

- a. Make a trip to two of the following places. Write a report of more than 500 words about the soil and water and energy conservation practices you saw.
  - 1. An agricultural experiment.
  - 2. A managed forest or woodlot, range, or pasture.
  - 3. A wildlife refuge or a fish or game management area.
  - 4. A conservation-managed farm or ranch.
  - 5. A managed watershed.
  - 6. A waste-treatment plant.
  - 7. A public drinking water treatment plant.
  - 8. Industry water use installation.
  - 9. Desalinization plant
- b. Plant 100 trees, bushes and/or vines for a good purpose.
- c. Seed an area of at least 1/5 acre for some worthwhile conservation purpose, using suitable grasses or legumes alone or in a mixture.
- d. Study a soil survey report. Describe the things in it. On tracing paper over any of the soil maps, outline an area with three or more different kinds of soil. List each kind of soil by full name and map symbol.


- e. Make a list of places in your neighborhood, camps, school ground, or park that have erosion, sedimentation, or pollution problems. Describe how these could be corrected through individual or group action.


- f. Carry out any other soil and water conservation project approved by your merit badge counselor.

**Requirement resources can be found here:**  
[http://www.meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Soil and Water Conservation#Requirement resources](http://www.meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Soil_and_Water_Conservation#Requirement_resources)

## **Important excerpts from the Guide To Advancement - 2015, No. 33088 (SKU-620573)**

### **[1.0.0.0] — Introduction**

The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs: Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. It replaces any previous BSA advancement manuals and previous editions of the *Guide to Advancement*.

### **[Page 2, and 5.0.1.4] — Policy on Unauthorized Changes to Advancement Program**

**No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements.** There are limited exceptions relating only to youth members with special needs. For details see section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs".

### **[Page 2] — The "Guide to Safe Scouting" Applies**

Policies and procedures outlined in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416, apply to all BSA activities, including those related to advancement and Eagle Scout service projects.

### **[7.0.3.1] — The Buddy System and Certifying Completion**

A youth member must not meet one-on-one with an adult. Sessions with counselors must take place where others can view the interaction, or the Scout must have a buddy: a friend, parent, guardian, brother, sister, or other relative—or better yet, another Scout working on the same badge—along with him attending the session. If merit badge counseling or instruction includes any Web-based interaction, it must be conducted in accordance with the BSA Social Media Guidelines (<http://www.scouting.org/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia>). For example, always copy one or more authorized adults on email messages between counselors and Scouts.

When the Scout meets with the counselor, he should bring any required projects. If these cannot be transported, he should present evidence, such as photographs or adult verification. His unit leader, for example, might state that a satisfactory bridge or tower has been built for the Pioneering merit badge, or that meals were prepared for Cooking. If there are questions that requirements were met, a counselor may confirm with adults involved. Once satisfied, the counselor signs the blue card using the date upon which the Scout completed the requirements, or in the case of partials, initials the individual requirements passed.

Note that from time to time, it may be appropriate for a requirement that has been met for one badge to also count for another. See "Fulfilling More Than One Requirement With a Single Activity," 4.2.3.6.

### **[7.0.3.2] — Group Instruction**

It is acceptable—and sometimes desirable—for merit badges to be taught in group settings. This often occurs at camp and merit badge midways, fairs, clinics, or similar events. Interactive group discussions can support learning. The method can also be attractive to "guest experts" assisting registered and approved counselors. Slide shows, skits, demonstrations, panels, and various other techniques can also be employed, but as any teacher can attest, not everyone will learn all the material.

There must be attention to each individual's projects and his fulfillment of *all* requirements. We must know that every Scout—actually and *personally*—completed them. If, for example, a requirement uses words like "show," "demonstrate," or "discuss," then every Scout must do that. It is unacceptable to award badges on the basis of sitting in classrooms *watching* demonstrations, or remaining silent during discussions.

It is sometimes reported that Scouts who have received merit badges through group instructional settings have not fulfilled all the requirements. To offer a quality merit badge program, council and district advancement committees should ensure the following are in place for all group instructional events.

- A culture is established for merit badge group instructional events that partial completions are acceptable expected results.
- A guide or information sheet is distributed in advance of events that promotes the acceptability of partials, explains how merit badges can be finished after events, lists merit badge prerequisites, and provides other helpful information that will establish realistic expectations for the number of merit badges that can be earned at an event.
- Merit badge counselors are known to be registered and approved.
- Any guest experts or guest speakers, or others assisting who are not registered and approved as merit badge counselors, do not accept the responsibilities of, or behave as, merit badge counselors, either at a group instructional event or at any other time. Their service is temporary, not ongoing.
- Counselors agree to sign off only requirements that Scouts have actually and personally completed.
- Counselors agree not to assume prerequisites have been completed without some level of evidence that the work has been done. Pictures and letters from other merit badge counselors or unit leaders are the best form of prerequisite documentation when the actual work done cannot be brought to the camp or site of the merit badge event.
- There is a mechanism for unit leaders or others to report concerns to a council advancement committee on summer camp merit badge programs, group instructional events, and any other merit badge counseling issues—especially in instances where it is believed BSA procedures are not followed. See "Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns," 11.1.0.0.
- There must be attention to each individual's projects and his fulfillment of all requirements. We must know that every Scout—actually and personally—completed them.

It is permissible for guest speakers, guest experts, or others who are not merit badge counselors to assist in the counseling process. Those providing such assistance must be under the direction of a registered and approved counselor who is readily available onsite, and provides personal supervision to assure all applicable BSA policies and procedures—including those related to BSA Youth Protection—are in place and followed.

### **[7.0.3.3] — Partial Completions**

A Scout need not pass all the requirements of one merit badge with the same counselor. It may be that due to timing or location issues, etc., he must meet with a different counselor to finish the badge. The Application for Merit Badge has a place to record what has been finished—a "partial." In the center section on the reverse of the blue card, the counselor initials for each requirement passed. In the case of a partial completion, the counselor does not retain his or her portion of the card. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be rare. A Scout, if he believes he is being treated unfairly, may work with his unit leader to find another counselor. An example for the use of a signed partial would be to take it to camp as proof of prerequisites. Partial completions have no expiration except the Scout's 18th birthday. Units, districts, or councils shall not establish other expiration dates for partial merit badges.

### **[7.0.4.8] — Unofficial Worksheets and Learning Aids**

Worksheets and other materials that may be of assistance in earning merit badges are available from a variety of places including unofficial sources on the Internet and even troop libraries. Use of these aids is permissible as long as the materials can be correlated with the current requirements that Scouts must fulfill. Completing "worksheets" may suffice where a requirement calls for something in writing, but this would not work for a requirement where the Scout must discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate, etc. Note that Scouts shall not be required to use these learning aids in order to complete a merit badge.