Subject: Working With Scouts

Course: Ecology/Conservation

Time Frame
60 minutes

Instructional Objectives
At the end of this session, each participant will be able to

- Relate the impact of good and bad communication skills when working with Scouts.
- Describe several ways to establish credibility with Scouts.
- Explain how to use problems as teaching opportunities.
- Identify opportunities and strategies for Scouts to experience success in a camp ecology/conservation program.

Training Aids and Equipment Required

- *The Boy Scout Handbook,* No. 33105
- Flip chart and markers
- 3-by-5-inch note cards

Materials for Distribution

- National Standards for Resident Camp Accreditation kit, No. 19-108A (current year)

Methods and Overview

- Minilecture: Communication
- Group exercise, minilecture, and brainstorming: The Telephone Game
- Small-group activity and brainstorming: Addressing Common Behavior Problems
- Group activity and discussion: Building Credibility With Scouts

LESSON PLAN: Working With Scouts

Communication

Remind participants that the fact that we have only one mouth but two ears is a good way to remember that we should listen twice as much as we speak. Point out that we should listen to understand and that sometimes understanding comes by focusing "between the lines" to receive the true message and hear the deeper meaning of words.

The words of what is being said are important, but often, the feelings of the speaker are just as important. Sometimes, too, the feelings of the listener are nearly as important.

In communicating, establish credibility first by being a good listener.

Establish credibility second by "walking your talk." With Scouts, this means an adult's actions and deeds must be consistent with and reinforce what is said. Camp directors and staff member should not only mouth axioms and pass along lessons; they should live by them and set an example.

Showing genuine concern is another important element of communicating with Scout-age boys. Demonstrating concern is as important as—if not more important than—showing mastery of subjects you, as adults, hope to teach them. Intellectual abilities and goals should not overshadow personal caring.

Along with genuine concern, authenticity counts. Adult leaders should show Scouts only those tasks and teach them only those skills they as adults have genuinely mastered.

Communicating often includes elements of problem solving. Keep in mind when listening and talking to Scouts that

- Fair doesn't necessarily mean equal.
- Youth may have come to camp with hidden baggage, that is, past or ongoing troubles that may affect their behavior.
- Actions come with consequences and rewards.
- Some problems can be prevented by clearly stating expectations early and by getting Scouts to agree to those expectations.
- Camp is just one part of a troop's year-round program, and camp staff should work with and for each and every troop.

An important message to convey to Scouts who come to the ecology/conservation area is that things we earn have a way of being more valuable to us than things that are handed to us.

Keep in mind that, whenever and wherever you communicate at camp, the Scout should be at the center of your attention. The small things you do for one youth really matter.

The Telephone Game

Tell participants they are going to play the telephone game. Whisper a message into one person's ear, preferably something that is vague and easy to misunderstand, such as: "One morning I saw a young person walking by some water."

Have that person whisper it into the next person's ear. Have the group repeat this until everyone has received the message and passed it on to someone else. Have the last person share what he or she heard with the entire group.

Note that the message comes out markedly different from what was originally said about 99.9 percent of the time. Ask the group to reflect on what happened. After a couple of people have shared, discuss the wisdom of knowing why we have two ears and one mouth.

Shift the conversation to working with Scouts. Have each participant list three recommendations for ensuring effective communication with Scouts. Summarize the list and post it. As the week continues, when someone models strong communication skills, point to the list and remind the group about effective communication.

Addressing Common Behavior Problems

Break the group into pairs. Give each pair five minutes to list common Scout behavior problems. After they have written down two or three problems, ask the pairs to cite two or three causes for each potential problem. For example: A Scout cannot calm down enough to sit still during a merit badge session. Potential causes: too much sugar, feels antsy because of something that happened in his campsite, needs to go the bathroom.

Remind the group that that youth don't usually show up for Scouting already equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to deal with problems. Scouting exists, in part, so youth can see strong values modeled and have opportunities to learn by doing. As most people can relate from their own lives, growing up is sometimes accomplished by learning from mistakes. In Scouting, making mistakes is not a problem; it is an opportunity. The mistake is to miss the teachable moment so that the Scout continues to reinforce poor habits.

Have a participant share a Scout behavior problem from his or her list. Have the group brainstorm how to turn that problem into a teachable moment. After the group brainstorms a few more problems, have participants make a list of the resources and people they have at their disposal to help deal with problems they feel are too big for one person to handle. Make sure the list mentions other Scouts, adult troop leaders, and other camp staff members.

In discussing solutions, go over the concept that "Fair doesn't mean equal." Participants' solutions also should include the idea of having the offending Scout decide the consequence should he repeat unacceptable behavior and the idea that the consequence be enforced every time he does.

Building Credibility With Scouts

Tell the group that after years of study with hundreds of thousands of individuals, leadership researchers found one quality above all others that determined the effectiveness of a leader. Have the group guess what that quality may have been and list the guesses on a flip chart. Tell them the answer is credibility.

Pass out several 3-by-5-inch note cards to each participant. Ask them to list—one per card—those qualities that impact the credibility of camp staff with Scouts, such as:

- Honesty
- Remembers things that are important to Scouts
- Clear communicator
- Follows through on work and promises
- Walks his talk
- Clean and well-groomed

After every person has written at least three, have participants trade cards. Then ask each participant to put the new cards in order from most to least important in building credibility with Scouts. After everyone has ranked the cards, ask someone to share the quality listed on the top card and give an example of why it is important. Repeat this several times, listing the most important quality on a flip chart each time. After several examples have been listed, poll the group to see which of these qualities they rank as No. 1.

Subject: Teaching First Class, Second Class, and Tenderfoot Ecology/Conservation Requirements

Course: Ecology/Conservation

Time Frame
90 minutes

Instructional Objectives
At the end of this session, each participant will be able to

- Explain how the Boy Scout advancement program works.
- State the current ecology/conservation-related requirements for First Class, Second Class, and Tenderfoot ranks.
- Demonstrate how to present the information that is required to pass the requirements to Scouts.

Training Aids and Equipment Required

- *The Boy Scout Handbook,* No. 33105
- Flip chart and markers
- Plaster casts of animal tracks, assorted animal signs, and posters of local birds, mammals, and plants

Materials for Distribution

- *NCS Ecology/Conservation Lesson Plan Resource Manual,* No. 20-191

Methods and Overview

- Minilecture: Introducing Scouts to Ecology/Conservation
- Minilecture: Boy Scout Advancement
- Minilecture and group discussion: What Scouts Must Know to Fulfill Requirements
- Group activity and minilecture: Take a Hike
- Minilecture: Demonstrating Skills and Knowledge

LESSON PLAN: Teaching First Class, Second Class, and Tenderfoot Ecology/Conservation Requirements

Introducing Scouts to Ecology/Conservation

The camp ecology/conservation director will have Scouts at camp who need to be introduced to ecology/conservation. The director should be prepared to meet these needs and help them complete their Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ecology/conservation requirements. It might help to draw on personal experience: What was camp like when you were there? Was there one person, maybe a camp counselor, who got you excited about our Earth and its inhabitants? Keep in mind, at least one Scout this summer will remember your name the rest of his life.

The principal purpose of advancement is personal growth and development of the Scout and his self-confidence. This is accomplished by using Scouting's five-step advancement program. The five steps are:

1. Learning by doing (the Scout learns)
2. Demonstrating skills and knowledge (the Scout is tested)
3. Reinforcing accomplishments and motivating further advancement (the Scoutmaster's conference)
4. Reviewing the Scout's progress (the board of review by the troop committee)
5. Recognition and rewarding (court of honor)

The program areas of a Scout camp are responsible for the first step in the advancement program. At times, unit leaders may want the program staff to do the second (testing) step also because they feel that their leadership lacks the knowledge to do this properly, or because they feel that the program staff is hired to serve the units in this way. Camp staff and unit leaders should agree from the start of instruction on who will do the testing and how the Scouts' accomplishments will be communicated to unit leaders.

The ecology/conservation director assigns staff members to teach the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements. In many camp ecology/conservation areas, the youngest member of the ecology/conservation staff is assigned. When this happens, it is especially important that the staff member doing the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements instruction be trained during staff week to ensure that the younger Scouts receive the best program possible.

To have a successful nature hike covering a certain subject matter, the leader of the hike must know the subject matter and must know where to find examples of the material to be covered. Specific materials for these requirements depend on the part of the country where a camp is located and the background and knowledge of the instructor. There are many reference books that cover large areas of the United States (an example is the Peterson Field Guide series) and pamphlets on specific subjects published by individual states' Department of Natural Resources.

Boy Scout Advancement

Start the lesson by reviewing the purpose of and the five steps in the Boy Scout advancement program. Stress the importance of troops doing the second step (testing) using their own troop leadership, but include the idea that some unit leaders want the staff to test Scouts. If the camp staff is to do the testing, there must be an understanding about when Scouts will be tested and how Scout accomplishments will be communicated to troop leaders. Because Scouts have been present for instruction on a subject does not mean they have mastered the information. To pass a Scout only because of his presence does not help in his personal growth or confidence building.

What Scouts Must Know to Fulfill Requirements

Read the requirements related to the ecology/conservation program for the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks, as stated in the current *Boy Scout Handbook.* Discuss what Scouts must know to complete requirements.

Giving information to participants may start with showing them different plaster casts pointing out some characteristics of a specific animal track. Have other animal signs, posters, and other materials that might be found in a camp ecology/conservation museum. Inform participants what you are going to cover and what you expect them to learn.

Remember, when teaching Scouts skills and information needed to complete any requirement, the counselor should not require more or accept less than what is stated.

Take a Hike

Take participants on a short hike around the ecology/conservation area to teach the rank requirements. This section may be divided into three parts—one part each for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class—or combine all three in one hike. Depending on how well you know the participants, different parts may be assigned to different participants. The order of the material to be covered will depend on the order of the discoveries made on the hike.

Poisonous Plants

Point out that poison ivy, oak, and sumac most often come to mind when poisonous plants are mentioned. These plants are not found throughout the entire United States. Poison ivy may be found in all of the lower 48 states except California and Nevada. Western poison oak is found only in California, Oregon, and Washington. Eastern oak-leaf poison ivy, also known as eastern poison oak, is found along the Atlantic seaboard, south from New York, and west to Tennessee and eastern Texas. Poison sumac is found in Wisconsin south into Louisiana but rarely in Illinois or western Tennessee.

"Leaflets three, let it be" is a statement used to warn people to stay away from poison ivy. Two things make this statement a poor warning signal. First, a person must know what a leaflet is—a good thing to teach. Second, if everyone were to stay away from all plants with three leaflets, no one would eat wild strawberries or raspberries or ever find a four-leaf clover. Berries are produced only on female plants (remind participants that the idea that plants have a gender is one that most Scouts find surprising), so their absence is not an aid in identification.

Several plants are mistaken for poison ivy—for example, Virginia creeper vines on trees—and it is good to compare these plants with the real thing. Virginia creeper usually has five leaflets that look somewhat like those of poison ivy, but at the end of the vine, there may be leaves with only three leaflets. Some leaves of box elder have only three leaflets and may be mistaken for poison ivy after they have been picked. Wild strawberry has three leaflets but is not a woody stemmed plant. Also, strawberry leaflets have a serrated edge—not a smooth edge like poison ivy. Raspberries have stems with thorns and a serrated edge.

Tell participants that some people seem to be immune to the effects of poisonous plants, but the more exposure, the greater the risk of getting the rash.

Treatment After Exposure

Washing within a half hour to an hour with soap, powder cleanser, or other cleanser will prevent the rash. Some publications say that washing with rubbing alcohol within four hours will prevent the rash. If a rash develops, the affected person should report to the health lodge for treatment. Any clothes that have had contact with the plants should be washed to prevent repeated exposure. The fluid in the blisters will not give another person the rash, nor will this fluid increase the area of the rash on the affected person.

Some consider jewelweed (touch-me-not) a natural treatment for the rash. If the plant is rubbed on soon after exposure, the rash does not develop. If it is rubbed on after the rash develops, the itch is reduced. (If you are able to locate jewelweed, Scouts as well as NCS participants delight in holding it under water and seeing the reflection from the leaf.)

Animal Tracks and Signs

Note that this requirement includes all vertebrate animals and mollusks but not insects. Make sure that participants know what a mollusk is. On the hike, look for signs of different animals. (It is best to familiarize yourself with the area and have already located several of these signs before the hike.) Remind participants to familiarize themselves with animal tracks and signs in their home camps during staff week. Along lakeshores, they should look for animal tracks in the sand, fish beds, different types of mollusks shells, frogs, turtles, and snakes. Tell them to stop at times, be quiet, and listen. They should try to identify specific birds and frogs by their sounds. (Making the ears bigger by putting the hands behind them increases the volume of the sounds—an old Indian trick.) Tell them to look for burrows and nests and try to identify the animals using them. Turtle eggs that have been uncovered are signs of both the turtle and the animal—usually a raccoon or skunk—that has eaten them. Participants should know the animals that made the signs.

Plant Identification

Remind participants that, to meet requirements, Scouts must identify plants as well as trees. Their instruction should include aids in identification as well as specific identifications. Identification aids discussed on this hike depend on where the hike takes place. Some ideas might include how the needles of pine trees are attached differently than other evergreen trees. How are leaves of the white oak group different from leaves of the red (black) oak group? What is a weed, an herb? What plants are good for using as fire starters? How did a specific plant get its name? For instance, dandelion is derived from the French *dent de lion,* which means "teeth of the lion" and describes the spiked petals of this plant's flower.

Ask participants why the leaves of the quaking aspen "quake," that is, move as they do in a slight breeze. (Look at the stem of the leaf and note its shape.) Have them smell the root of a wild carrot (Queen Anne's lace) before someone names the plant, and have them identify the odor. Taste the leaf of the mint.

Participants will have a lot of knowledge that they will delight in sharing. Tell them the same is true with Scouts and leaders. The hike should be informative, exciting, and fun. Encourage participants to make discoveries and ask questions. Tell them to engage all their senses. Explain that the more hikes they take and the more opportunities they give Scouts to share knowledge, the more Scouts will feel part of a group and the more they, as instructors, will learn, too. Note that, though they inevitably will be asked questions they will not be able to answer, this should not trouble them—as long as they make it a habit to record the questions and answers later. Meanwhile, they should enjoy the outdoors and their Scouts.

Demonstrating Skills and Knowledge

If a troop leader wants a Scout to demonstrate his skills and knowledge (the second step in the advancement program) to the ecology/conservation staff, a separate session should be scheduled. The ideal situation for testing is in a one-on-one or two-on-one environment. If more than four Scouts are present at a time, individual Scouts do not receive a quality experience, and Scouts who are not qualified may be given credit for skills and knowledge that they do not possess.

Testing should be done on a hike (preferably in a different area than the one used for instruction), with the Scouts giving information to the staff member. If more than one Scout is involved, the staff member should keep a record of the accomplishments of each Scout. This should be a positive experience for both the Scout and the staff member. If a Scout does not have the knowledge or skills to pass the requirements, additional coaching and information should be provided. If the Scout passes the requirement, then his accomplishments should be recorded and the information passed on to the unit leader. If the staff member does the testing, he or she should sign the Scout's handbook.

At the end of the lesson, critique the skills testing experience with participants.

Subject: Individual Development

Course: Ecology/Conservation

Time Frame
11 hours, including preparation

Instructional Objectives
At the end of this session, each participant will be able to

- Conduct a 15-minute period of instruction on a nature-related topic of his or her choosing (assigned earlier in the week).
- Demonstrate confidence in using at least two training techniques (flip chart, thought-directed questioning, discussion, buzz group problem solving, role-playing, processing, demonstration).

Training Aids and Equipment Required

- Flip chart and markers

Materials for Distribution
None

Methods and Overview

- Minilecture: Techniques for Teaching Ecology/Conservation

LESSON PLAN: Individual Development

It is important that participants be informed and understand (preferably on Day One), that NCS seeks to teach not only ecology/conservation and how it relates to a Scout camp but also some training techniques and methods for the ecology/conservation program director or counselor. To do this and allow participants to feel comfortable in their role as a trainer (which may be a first for some), this block of instruction provides several hours of time during the week to decide upon a topic, prepare it, present it, and critique it.

It is also important that the NCS ecology/conservation director track the progress of each participant during the time that is allotted to this training to ensure that each will be successful when presenting his or her 15-minute period of peer instruction. Thus, it is recommended that the NCS ecology/conservation director provide some time during the 11 hours for a practice session for each participant.

Participants should keep in mind that the training should be oriented toward youths, not toward adults. This may be hard for some participants to achieve. They should also keep in mind that this training need not be indoor training. Participants should plan how they will conduct it. Will it be classroom lecture, outside activity, nature hike, a demonstration? Because this exercise is evaluated, they should not choose to play a game. Be prepared for inclement weather or other conditions that may adversely affect this learning experience.

Following the activity, each participant should conduct a self-assessment and then ask his or her classmates to comment:

- What went well?
- What could have been improved?
- Is this activity suited for use at camp this summer?

Techniques for Teaching Ecology/Conservation

Review the following points, which are taken from the introductory material for this syllabus:

1. A Scout camp is filled with action, so learning about the environment should also be active and exciting.
2. The best thing to do with a lectern is burn it! Good trainers never put anything between themselves and their audience. Even the best speaker tends to hide behind the lectern. Use a small table at the front of room and place your notes on a front corner.
3. Use a yellow highlighter to accentuate key words. If you have difficulty reading the notes from tabletop height, use a clipboard. Some trainers transfer their notes to 3-by-5-inch or 4-by-6-inch cards. Be careful not to drop these, however. (It might be wise to number each card.)
4. The flip chart has all of the advantages of the chalkboard except size. It can be used to collect responses from the group, then the sheet can be torn off and posted for future reference. Print rather than write, and make letters at least four fingers high.
5. Questions directed to a group can cause good thinking to take place. Avoid questions with simple answers. "What kind of knot is this?" "Square knot." "What's a square knot used for?" "Tie two ropes together." These are not good questions. "If you want to tie two ropes together, what knots could you use?" This is a good question because there are many answers: "Square knot, sheet bend, carrick bend, fisherman's knot, linked bowlines." This now leads to the subject of selecting a knot for a particular joining purpose.

   A question from a participant to the instructor also can open up thinking. Try to avoid the direct answer, but don't carry this to an extreme. Involve the group if possible. When the question involves a problem, the person may have already decided on an answer and only want confirmation. If you sense this, ask the person what, after careful consideration, can be done. Then let the group validate his decision or offer new ideas.
6. When the entire group is involved in talking about a problem or situation, you have a discussion. Careful control is needed to stay on track, avoid dispute, and arrive at some sort of consensus. Some people will seek to dominate a discussion; others will never utter a word. However, the silent listener may be getting more out of the discussion than the vocal participant. Discussion must always be resolved with a summary statement. Differences of opinion should be recognized.
7. Processing is the technique whereby the instructor selects, clarifies, and directs participant contributions toward the teaching points that are to be made. For example, when asking group members to suggest the elements of a good campfire, their recommendations should closely reflect the lesson plan. Thus the instructor may paraphrase a suggestion, combine suggestions, or dig for a point that has not been suggested. It is vital to accept *all* suggestions as worthy but still process them into a form that will meet objectives. Look out for the point never before considered. Don't process it away, but add it to a list. It may be a real gem.
8. A demonstration is the best way to create interest in a skill. If the skill is complex, break it into simpler steps. The instructor can then demonstrate the skill while the participants follow the steps. Before moving to the next step, check carefully to see that everyone is successful. You need patience to teach by demonstration. Something that seems easy for the instructor may be complicated for the learner. Never criticize. Instead, praise every attempt. Demonstration teaching works best one-on-one or in small groups.

Subject: Individual Interviews and Concurrent Training

Course: Ecology/Conservation

Time Frame
2 hours

Instructional Objectives
At the end of this session, each participant will be able to

- Identify his or her strengths and weaknesses in the role of camp ecology/conservation director.
- Plan those actions and activities he or she will need to undertake prior to arriving at camp to conduct a successful summer camp ecology/conservation program.
- Use additional BSA program materials to supplement summer programs.

Training Aids and Equipment Required

- *NCS Ecology/Conservation Lesson Plan Resource Manual,* No. 20-191

Materials for Distribution

- Conservation Good Turn, No. 21-386
- The Principles of Leave No Trace, No. 21-105
- Leave No Trace Training Outline, No. 20-113
- William T. Hornaday Awards application, No. 21-107
- Earn the William T. Hornaday Awards flier, No. 21-398
- Boy Scout World Conservation Award application, No. 21-156
- Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America
- Outdoor Code pocket certificate, No. 33428A

Methods and Overview

- Individual assessments: The Final Interview
- Group Activities: Concurrent Training

LESSON PLAN: Individual Interviews and Concurrent Training

During this time, the NCS ecology/conservation director will conduct individual interviews with participants, while other NCS staff conduct training in the Conservation Good Turn, the Principles of Leave No Trace, the Hornaday Award, the BSA Wilderness Use Policy, and the Outdoor Code. Students should also take the self-examination and discuss their responses together in groups. There is no answer key.

The Final Interview

Upon completing the classroom and outdoor participation requirements of the NCS curriculum in ecology/conservation and prior to graduation, the NCS ecology/conservation director will conduct individual interviews with each participant. It is expected that each interview will not exceed 15 minutes, and therefore, the time allotted for this activity is to be adjusted accordingly.

Directors are encouraged to conduct a frank, positive assessment of the participant's strengths and weaknesses as demonstrated during the six days of NCS training. To this end, the director should have kept written notes on each participant over the course of the six days to assist him or her in encapsulating and summarizing his or her views of each individual. Such notes should be destroyed following the interview.

What to Cover in the Interview

A good start to the interview process may be to ask the participant to come to the interview having answered a set of questions about himself or herself that may generate some thought about the summer ahead. Notify the participants midweek that they should consider the following questions and that you will discuss them with each person at the concluding interviews:

1. What am I good at?
2. What do I like doing?
3. What do I need to improve to be sure that every Scout gets the most out of the ecology/conservation program at my camp this summer?
4. What do I need to improve before camp?
5. Is there something new that I learned about myself this week? If so, how can I use it to benefit the Scouts who will come to my ecology/conservation program?
6. Will I feel comfortable asking other camp staff members for their feedback on my ecology/conservation program?
7. Will I respond in a positive manner to criticisms, either positive or negative, from the program director or camp director? What about from a Scoutmaster or parent?

Note the generally positive nature of these questions. Feel free to substitute your own questions, keeping in mind that the objective during the interview is to solidify the participant's positive view about himself or herself regarding the summer ahead. If you have doubts about the ability of the individual to fully function as an NCS trained camp staff member, this is not the time to resolve your concern.

Concurrent Training

Now the question comes: What is everyone else doing while I am conducting personal interviews? This may take two or three hours!

The answer is training. This is a good time for your assistants to acquaint participants with some other conservation activities in the BSA: Conservation Good Turn, the Principles of Leave No Trace, the William T. Hornaday Award, the Wilderness Use Policy of the BSA, and the Outdoor Code.

Of course, to do this, they will need to review these programs early in the week by studying them in the *Resource Manual.*