



### Session Objectives

- **Explain** the purpose of conservation and the available local, regional and national conservation issues and resources
- **Demonstrate** the steps required to plan a conservation project using the available local, regional and national resources
- **Guide** participants to develop a plan for a conservation project using local, regional, and national resources
- **Enable** participants to use the local, regional and national conservation resources in a conservation project

**Session Length:** 50 Minutes

### Appendix Resources

- Supplemental materials to be displayed or handed out during the session (i.e. PowerPoint, Handouts, video clip)
- *ArrowCorps* Souvenir Video
- US Forest Service Four Threats - <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/four-threats>
- Training Session Evaluation Form
- BSA Conservation Resources - <https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/conservation-and-environment/conservation-resources/>
- Council Conservation Committee Guidebook - <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-022.pdf>

### Required Materials

- Flipchart / Easel & Markers
- Pens/Pencils & Scrap Paper
- *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> Highlight DVD (optional)
- DVD Player and TV or Computer with digital projector (optional)
- Small prizes for participation (optional)
- Handouts and evaluation forms
- Trail Tools for Display (optional)

### Trainer Preparation

This session was designed to provide conclave participants with background and information about the importance of conservation service in the Order of the Arrow and the Boy Scouts of America. The trainer for this session ideally will have experience in planning and leading conservation projects at the local, regional or national level. Completion of the Conservation USA Project Leader Course is not required but highly desired.



**Session Narrative****Introduction:****5 Minutes**

*Trainer Instructions:* 10 minutes before the session begins and where possible play the 15-minute compilation overview video on the ArrowCorps5 Souvenir DVD.

In the absence of necessary AV equipment, you should have photos and paraphernalia from Order of the Arrow conservation projects available for the participants to view prior to the start of the session.

Throughout the summer of 2008, the Order of the Arrow conducted the largest youth-led service project in the history of the United States of America. Roughly five-thousand Arrowmen, Scouts and volunteers from public and private agencies contributed over two-hundred and fifty thousand service hours and \$2 million of actual and in-kind donations across five states.

This project tackled a variety of conservation issues from grassland restoration and invasive species control to fuel reduction and construction of over one hundred miles of new multi-use trail. Partnerships with several government agencies and local clubs and organizations such as the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Pacific-Crest Trail Association, Backcountry Horsemen of America, and the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) helped make *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> a major success. The national Order of the Arrow committee spent five years working with all its partners, planning each detail for logistic support and overall project management.

However, as massive as *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> was, we need to understand that a lodge or section can effectively plan and execute similar conservation initiatives on a local level that are just as impressive in terms of their impact and visibility. And they can even be conducted over the course of several weekends. With the proper understanding of conservation theory and techniques you can ensure that the right plan is in place to provide a legacy of Service.

**Defining and Understanding Conservation:****7 Minutes**

To understand how to effectively plan initiatives we first need to recognize the purpose of conservation.

Conservation is defined as:

“the careful preservation and protection of something; especially planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.”

You might consider it defined as the management of resources so as to eliminate waste or maximize efficiency of its use.





There is a difference however between the idea of *conservation* and *preservation*. A nature **pre**serve is a protected area of importance for wildlife, flora, fauna or features of geological or other special interest, which generally restricts human interaction. A good example of this would be the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

When we work towards the conservation of a natural resource, we deliberately provide a means of limited impact and human interaction so that we minimize the potential damage. Examples would include the construction of hiking trails and campsites. These both provide a mechanism through which people can enjoy the outdoors, and yet we can ensure their existence for future generations.

Preservation = No Use

Conservation = Wise Use

You may have heard the phrase “all politics is local.” Well the same is true, and even more-so, for conservation. Although *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> may have been a national program the ultimate emphasis on the project planning element was local. The national committee in recognizing this need appointed five youth incident commanders each with an adult adviser to develop the most appropriate plan for their specific environment.

In *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> in the Mark Twain National Forest, many people reacted negatively to the idea of removing over one hundred acres of trees. After all, trees are good for the environment, right? Well that’s not necessarily true. In fact, there are no true cedars that are native to North America; the term *cedar* is the common name for three or four species of large trees native to mountainous areas of North Africa and Asia. Although this fragrant, durable, red-colored wood is important in construction and cabinetry, it is generally considered an invasive species in the eastern United States, which destroys natural habitats of other plants and mammals.

What the OA worked with in the Mark Twain National Forest is the *Eastern Red-Cedar* and, although technically a *juniper* and an important timber tree along with the Eastern and Western White-Cedar, it was outcompeting the native forest and fauna. The removal of this tree was important to restoring the natural habitat.

Whereas in southern Missouri this tree is considered invasive, in the western United States, the Rocky Mountain Juniper, a closely related western species, is a welcome addition to the regional habitat.

This is just one example of why we need to understand the local nature of our environments.

What *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup> did in the Mark Twain National Forest and throughout all the project sites was to execute a very specific set of natural resource management plans based on the needs of the habitat. The Order of the Arrow, while varied in its membership and expertise, sought out the advice of local forest managers to not only to understand what needed to be done, but also to understand what the best practices were for accomplishing our goal.

#### **Conservation Issues and Resources:**

**20 Minutes**

Resource management professionals currently lack adequate time and manpower to fully manage and protect our country's natural places. The need to understand and act on the current conservation





issues facing various federal, state, and local resource managers is the building block to establishing a service- based ethic for volunteers at every level of society.

As an organization that thrives on the education of our membership through outdoor experiences, we have a duty to provide these resource managers with qualified expertise and manpower to assist them in their mission.

We can positively influence each volunteer's knowledge of the value of our natural resources by examining the threats to the outdoors, both on a local and national level.

Healthy forests make for a healthy nation. Former US Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth recently compiled a document outlining four major threats to the nation's forests and grasslands and how to approach them.

They are:

- fires and fuels
- invasive species
- loss of open space
- unmanaged recreation

*Trainer Instructions:* Review the document “Four Threats to the Health of the Nation’s Forests and Grasslands” listed in the Appendix Resources on Page 1, and lead the participants through a **brief** discussion of how these threats affect our nation’s forests.

After this discussion, move on to the group activity next about local conservation issues.

Now that we know what conservation issues we face as a nation, let’s take a moment to look at the local problems we can address in conservation efforts.

*Trainer Instructions:* Break the class into four or five-person groups. For each group, assign a person to take notes and provide that person with a pen/pencil and note paper. Let the group know that they have five (5) minutes to identify a conservation-related issue that is local to one of the members of the group and then to devise project ideas that small groups could perform to help solve the issue. Remind them of the four major threats identified by the USFS (fires and fuels, loss of open space, invasive species, and unmanaged recreation) to keep the groups on the same thought process.

After five minutes, bring all the groups together and ask each group to present their problem issue and the results of their project solution brainstorming session. Write down the conservation issue and the solution the group came up with on the flipchart for the rest of the group to see. If a member has said something intriguing or provided a very short answer, PROBE by asking, “Can you give me an example?” or simply ask, “Say a bit more about that?”

Ask the groups to identify any potential challenges to the solutions presented. Try to relate the results found in each group to identify a common theme of service and leadership. Emphasize that even though there were different types of issues and solutions presented, conservation is an important focus of Scouting.





In *ArrowCorps*<sup>5</sup>, the national Order of the Arrow committee sought the advice of the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other conservation-based organizations, we too should look to local and regional conservation specialists in planning our own conservation programs.

Here is a small list of national organizations with which any lodge can partner for information about local environmental issues and possible projects. There are many groups that already run annual conservation initiatives and one of the easiest ways to begin a program in your area is to work with these organizations.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Forest Service
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Geological Survey
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### **Conservation Project Planning:**

**10 Minutes**

Conservation project planning with outside organizations is considerably different in terms of style from what we as an organization might be used to. What are a few things to consider when we begin to plan a project on Forest Service property in comparison to working at a Boy Scout camp?

*Trainer Instructions:* Lead the participants through a discussion about the difficulties when working with outside organizations

Some examples include:

- We need to establish strong lines of communication and build a relationship of trust.
- We need to learn and understand different terminology (e.g. Incident Command System).
- We need to understand management issues and “red-tape” when working on public lands.
- We need to understand the resource manager’s ultimate goals.
- We need to demonstrate commitment to the project.

Write the answers given on the flipchart and PROBE the group for other issues to consider.



When we plan a conservation project internal to the Boy Scouts of America at a Scout camp, we have an advantage because we all share common goals, experiences, and values through the Scout Oath and Law, Motto, and the OA Obligation. We all understand the leadership structure and we have common terminology. When working with external groups, we need to be much more flexible and prudent in the process of project planning. Undertaking projects such as these need to follow a five-step planning process.

1. Assess: Understand the Conservation Need

The youth incident commander and adult adviser begin to work with the local resource managers to determine the priority projects and goals of the local natural resource management plan. This includes an assessment and critical analysis of what projects both the resource management professionals and our membership can successfully support and complete.

In the planning process they need to keep in mind what potential roadblocks exist in terms of determining and achieving the need for capital goods (e.g. tools, machinery), financial requirements (e.g. fundraising needs, government budgets), support facilities (e.g. schools, camping areas), physical & technical competencies (e.g. knowledge of trail construction, certifications to operate chain saws), time constraints (e.g. hours per work day, seasonality) and marketing & recruitment (e.g. local PR, participation).

Ultimately, the chosen projects need to reflect what our organizations can complete given the established baseline scenario. This assumption is critical in the initial planning stages – it can be summed up with the question “What resources and limiters do we expect given what we know about ourselves and our ultimate project goals?”

2. Mobilize: Gather Necessary Resources

After initially determining the project expectations and goals of each organization, the project leadership teams begin to assemble the resources necessary to meet the established baseline scenario. Both fundraising and tool requirements are critical in the process of conservation project planning.

Most importantly, the initial plans in the baseline scenario are replaced during this phase of development as resources are determined to be accessible or unavailable.

3. Deliver: Develop and Execute a Conservation Plan

As all available resources are identified, including the number of participants per project site, the project leadership teams develop their ultimate plan. This includes finalizing the available capital goods and support facilities based on real data.

This includes the process of developing a detailed calendar and timeline for the project, incorporating details for each task that must be completed prior to and after the actual arrival and departure of participants.





Additional revisions are made to the conservation project plan as new resources and constraints become apparent. This step ultimately answers the questions “What resources are actually available and how do we adapt our project goals given the real situation?”

#### 4. Review: Measure the Overall Conservation Impact

Essential to all conservation projects is the ability to conduct an effective evaluation of what the ultimate impact was in comparison to the original project goals and objectives. Each project leadership team develops metrics, or measurable outcomes, that are monitored prior to, during and after the conclusion of each project site.

These metrics are comprised of tangible numbers such as: feet of trail, yards of fencing, number of acres. They also include intangible ideas such as how the participants felt about their work. This phase of a conservation project answers the question “What actually happened and how does it compare to the goals of the natural resource management plan?”

#### 5. Report: Pass along the Results

Whenever you perform projects for outside organizations, it is important to supply them with a formal evaluation of the work completed. This final step in conservation project planning is important so that local, regional, and national stakeholders understand how the conservation plan was carried out, what the impact was, how to perform similar projects better, and what the future conservation needs are.

### **What’s next?**

**5 Minutes**

It is impossible in this fifty-minute session to communicate all the competencies required to develop and run a lodge-level conservation initiative. While working with outside organizations to partner on projects is a great way to begin a council-based conservation program, the national Order of the Arrow committee ultimately wants to build the internal competencies necessary to manage and develop our own conservation initiatives at the local and regional-level.

At the 2009 NOAC, the national committee announced the Arrowmen Conservation School (ACS). ACS was designed to provide lodge and section-level youth officers with the knowledge and training required to develop and execute a localized ArrowCorps project. ACS also provides adult advisers with support-related training to assist youth in mobilizing the necessary resources in project planning and execution. ACS was most recently part of the training at the 2018 NOAC.

Available day-to-day is BSA’s Conservation and Environment website. The site hosts information about Scouting’s conservation program emphasis; conservation awards and recognitions; conservation resources for Scouting youth, units, and local councils; and training opportunities in conservation, ecology, and the environment. On that site, you can find the Council Conservation Committee Guidebook and a template for building a Conservation Plan.





## Conclusion

3 Minutes

What we hope you take away from this session is an understanding and enthusiasm for beginning to lead your lodge with conservation-minded intentions. *ArrowCorps*<sup>3</sup> was a monumental project in its scope and overall impact, and was guided by the planning process that we outlined. However, remember that even a small project can use the same guiding principles and can be a very effective tool in the conservation of our many natural resources and places.

Completing multiple small projects to create a larger impact on a resource is an example of an effective tool in resource management. Without work done at the micro-level, the larger environmental situation will not be positively affected. Even the smallest project can have a much larger impact on the overall environment.

Your willingness to lead a conservation initiative, no matter the size, can have a multiplier effect. And as people participate in these projects their attitudes will change about the area where the project work was performed or the resource that was conserved.

*“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”* – unknown

