

# Keep America Beautiful

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The Hometown USA Award is a joint program between Keep America Beautiful Inc. (KAB) and the Boy Scouts of America. It is designed to give recognition to the outstanding efforts of Scouts in their communities in regard to citizenship and environmental improvement.

## Background

KAB was founded in 1953 as a private organization with the purpose of building and sustaining a national cleanliness ethic. The Boy Scouts of America has been affiliated with KAB for more than 30 years as a member of KAB's national advisory council, a program advisory body composed of more than 80 public service organizations and federal agencies.

Keep America Beautiful Day, which began in 1971 as "Scouting Keep America Beautiful Day," was originally cosponsored by KAB and Boy Scouts of America as a massive national cleanup and recycling program. Millions of Scouts still turn out annually to participate in similar activities during what is now called Keep America Beautiful Week.

## Purpose

- To educate Boy Scouts about citizenship in relation to conservation and to involve them in community activities relating to environmental issues
- To offer a mechanism by which Scouts can develop positive attitudes toward their environment and community while being exposed to interesting career opportunities
- To provide the opportunity to honor Boy Scouts for their significant contributions toward keeping America beautiful

## Requirements

1. **Merit badges.** Earn three merit badges from the following list of twelve: Citizenship in the Community, Communication, Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, Forestry, Gardening, Geology, Landscape Architecture, Nature, Plant Science, Public Speaking, Soil and Water Conservation.
2. **Community service project.** In addition to earning the merit badges, a Boy Scout is required to perform a community service project. The project should involve a minimum of eight hours of time, two of which must involve management planning, with the other six consisting of carrying out the project. It should help keep America beautiful and benefit the community either physically or financially. One way to do this is to plan the community service project as part of Keep America Beautiful Week or Public Lands Day.

## List of Ideas for Community Service Projects

1. Develop and help maintain a community garden.
2. Build a nature trail for use as an outdoor classroom or for community enjoyment.
3. Develop a recycling project that involves your whole troop (i.e., newspaper and/or bottle collection).
4. Conduct a survey of local storefronts. Determine areas where litter has accumulated. Work with storeowners to help improve conditions.
5. Plan and make a presentation to elementary students about the importance of conserving natural resources. Take students on a nature walk, pointing out natural resources.

6. Conduct soil and water conservation activities on a heavily used trail to prevent erosion. Record your activities.
7. Construct water facilities and plant vegetation that will provide food and shelter for wildlife in appropriate places.
8. Adopt a park, block, vacant lot, etc. Erect signs urging others not to litter or vandalize. Protect a flower bed or plant species with fencing. Remove litter and debris. Build picnic tables or fix up old ones, paint benches, etc.
9. Research which plant species are native to your area, and plant and maintain a community wildflower garden. Include descriptive and educational signs for the public.
10. Organize an antilitter poster competition among junior and senior high schoolers. Arrange for businesses to donate awards for the winners and recruit community judges. Include media coverage. Get local businesses and schools to display the posters.
11. Become involved in a local environmental/recycling issue. Attend public meetings, talk to public officials, and make a report to your troop about what you have learned. Decide how you want to become involved in resolving the issue and spend your project time educating your fellow citizens as to your viewpoint and assisting your "side" in its campaign.
12. Establish and maintain a bird sanctuary.
13. Find out which birds, animals, and fish are native to your area. Write an article on the importance of maintaining proper balance between man and nature. Take steps to maintain habitat areas for this wildlife.

## **KAB Week**

KAB Week developed from 11 consecutive years' observances of KAB Day. It originated in 1971 as "Scouting Keep America Beautiful Day." KAB Day was eventually extended to a weeklong observance (usually the fourth week of April). Millions of citizens across the nation participate each year.

## **Public Lands Day**

Public Lands Day involves citizen volunteers in cleaning and maintaining nearby public lands. This event falls annually on the Saturday following Labor Day. The purpose of Public Lands Day is to instill a sense of pride and ownership among citizens through hands-on participation in continuing education and improvement projects on public properties.

## **Getting the Patch**

Scouts must complete the Hometown U.S.A. Award application and present it to their Scoutmaster or troop advancement chairman.

In order to qualify for the award, Scouts must have successfully completed the requirements as outlined. The troop advancement chairman will know which merit badges each Scout needs in order to qualify.

It is suggested that the community service project be under the overall direction of a natural resources professional or other qualified adult supervisor. After completing the project, the adult supervisor should sign a statement that the project has been completed and meets the requirements of the project sponsor.

## Resources for Hometown U.S.A. Award


The following is a list of organizations and the free brochures that may be obtained to assist Boy Scouts in earning the required merit badges included in the Hometown U.S.A. Award.

### **American Society of Landscape Architects**

Write: American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736  
Web address: <http://www.asla.org> 

### **Keep America Beautiful Inc.**


Community Cleanup  
Tips for Preventing Litter in Your Community  
Take Care of America  
Wise Waste Handling Tips  
Fact sheets on recycling, municipal solid waste

Write: Keep America Beautiful Inc.  
1010 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, Connecticut, USA 06901  
Web address: <http://www.kab.org> 

### **National Gardening Association**


Digging Deeper: Integrating Youth Gardens Into Schools and Communities  
Sowing the Seeds of Success

The National Gardening Association also hosts a grant program that presents more than 300 grants to qualified youth gardening projects. Grant packages include approximately \$750 worth of tools, seeds, NGA manuals, and other gardening equipment and supplies. Materials about this program include National Gardening Grant Applications. The application deadline is November 1.

Write: National Gardening Association  
180 Flynn Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Phone: 800-LETSGRO (538-7476)  
Web address: <http://www.garden.org> 


## U.S. Department of Agriculture—Natural Resources Conservation Service

Backyard Conservation  
Going Wild With Soil and Water Conservation  
Conservation and the Water Cycle  
Soil Erosion by Wind  
Soil Erosion by Water  
What Is a Watershed?

Write: Conservation Communications  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, DC 20013  
Web address: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> 

## U.S. Department of the Interior—Fish and Wildlife Service

For the Birds  
Why Save Endangered Species?  
National Wildlife Refuges: A Visitor's Guide

Write: U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
Web address: <http://www.fws.gov> 

Within their local communities, Boy Scouts may contact the following with permission from their unit leader and parent:

- **Consultants**—naturalists, park rangers, refuge managers, biologists, foresters, 4-H extension agents, science teachers, librarians, policemen, KAB coordinators
- **Groups**—parks and recreation department, wildlife refuges, sanitation department, recycling center, nature or science center, state fish hatchery, soil and water conservation or natural resources district