

Creating and Maintaining a Valid and Accurate District Merit Badge Counselor List

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Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science

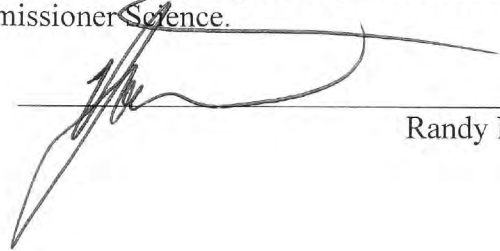
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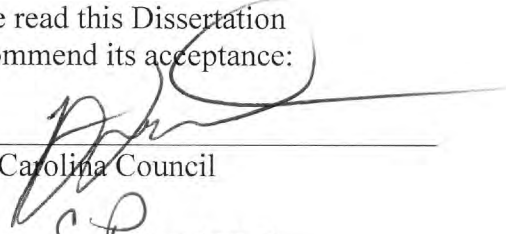
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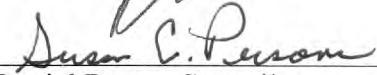


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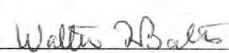
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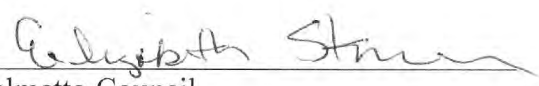
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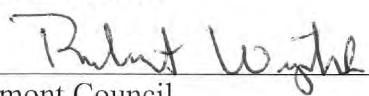
Daniel Boone Council



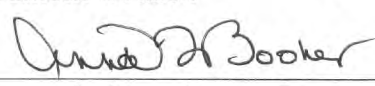
Great Smoky Mountain Council



Palmetto Council

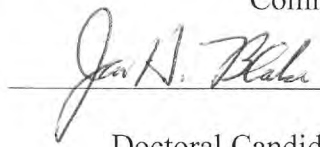


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ABSTRACT

There is currently not a defined process for the annual renewal of the merit badge counselors. As a result, there is no one good source of a list that is available to the troops. The troops end up typically creating their own method to keep track of their merit badge counselors. Due to having to keep local lists, most troops end up using counselors within their troops. One advantage of the merit badge counselor program is to allow the Scouts the opportunities to interact with adults that they don't know or see regularly. Not having a good annual renewal process also leads to having people on the list that may not still be willing to be counselors or that have expired Youth Protection certification.

Currently, there is no automated method to deliver a list of registered counselors to the unit leaders. There is a way to create an Excel file download from the ScoutNet system but the format of that file is not user friendly for unit leaders. For the current list in Etiwan District, I am creating a google sheet that lists all the counselors in the district and the merit badges they have signed up to teach. Creating this list also works as a good check and balance against the official council list.

Boys Scouts of America has now acquired the Scoutbook advancement system. This system has the ability to track merit badge counselors within it. BSA is now working toward having the Scoutbook system automatically synchronize with the ScoutNet system to provide a real time and up-to-date list of merit badge counselors.

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is important to note first that merit badge counselors are a registered adult position within Scouting. This means that all merit badge counselors are subject to the same rules as any registered leader. Primarily, they need current Youth Protection certification. It is also of note that these positions are actually registered with the district or council and are not part of the registered leadership of any particular unit. Because of these items, there needs to be an annual review of the merit badge counselors registered within a district. Merit badge counselors will not show up on unit recharter or unit Youth Protection status reports unless they happen to also be registered in another adult position within that unit.

Since there is not always a formal recharter that is done for each district, there has not been a process for the annual review of merit badge counselors. This lack of review has historically resulted in having people on the list of counselors who have expired Youth Protection and/or do not still have the desire to serve as a merit badge counselor.

In order to address these issues and provide an accurate and up-to-date list of counselors, an interim process was developed. It is hoped that the difficulty required to maintain this list will be addressed in future advancements that BSA is planning for the Scoutbook application.

CHAPTER II

EXPECTATIONS FOR MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR REGISTRATION

Initial registration as a merit badge counselor requires three documents to be submitted. The first of these is the BSA adult application. The most current version of this document is found at <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>. When filling out this application, the counselor should fill this out for position code “42 - Merit Badge Counselor”. Even if the person is already registered, it is important to have them fill out the release for background check on the back side of the first page. Since the merit badge counselor position is actually a district or council level position, this application does not need any signatures from the counselor’s home unit. The approval for this application will be done at the district level.

Second, the counselor needs to submit a copy of a current certificate that they have completed their Youth Protection Training. If this person is already registered with a unit, they should already have this certificate available. If they are not, they will need to create a my.scouting.org account to take the training. It is important to follow up after their membership is processed to have them link their BSA member ID to their my.scouting.org account. This way they will show up on future YPT reports.

The third document is the Merit Badge Counselor Information Form. This is the document that the counselors will use to select which merit badges they wish to counsel. When filling out this form it is important to clarify if they are willing to counsel for Scouts in either the

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

district or council. It is good to encourage them to do this in order to have the largest possible access to counselors for the Scouts in the district. They should list individually each merit badge they wish to have listed as well as some justification of their experience or qualifications on that specific topic. Note that certain merit badges do require that the person signing off on some requirements have some form of official certification. This is true for badges like Shotgun and Rifle Shooting. The complete list of these items can be found at <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/TheMeritBadgeProgram.aspx>. The Merit Badge Counselor Information Form can be found at <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>.

BSA does offer a formal “Merit Badge Counselor Orientation” course. While this training session is not a requirement for merit badge counselors, it should be strongly encouraged for all individuals signing up for this important position. There are always a lot of myths and misunderstandings about the merit badge process and this orientation class is the best way to get all the counselors on the same page. This orientation class is usually offered either by a particular unit looking to increase their number of counselors, a district training event or a council University of Scouting event.

CHAPTER III

JOB ROLES OF PEOPLE INVOLVED

There are three main job roles involved in creating and maintaining the district list of merit badge counselors. The first role involved is the Council Registrar. The registrar is the main person responsible for getting the new counselors properly entered and registered with BSA. The registrar needs to ensure that all the submitted paperwork is properly filled out and has all the information needed for proper entry into the system. The registrar is also responsible for the annual renewal of the counselors. It is up to the counselors to correct the list of approved badges in the official BSA system. The information for the changes that are needed in the annual process will come from the district designee as discussed below. The registrar is also the person that can provide the official list of counselors and their associated registered badges in the ScoutNet system. Other members of the council staff may be able to also generate reports of the lists but it is up to the registrar to officially maintain the data.

The second role involved in the process is a person designated by the district to manage the merit badge counselor list and process. This person is initially responsible for checking the initial application for the merit badge counselor. This is primarily to ensure that the applicant does have any required certifications or expertise. This designee is also responsible for contacting the counselors annually to validate the list of merit badges and to ensure that all merit badge counselors are up-to-date on their Youth Protection certificate. This district person should be able to use the tools in my.scouting.org to run contact lists for the merit badge counselors and

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training reports to validate Youth Protection status. Because the contact information contained in the BSA system is not always correct or complete, it is important that the district maintain a separate contact list for the counselors. This list should be validated as part of the annual review process. The district designee can be anyone from the district committee but will ideally be associated with the district advancement committee.

The third role is the merit badge counselor themselves. They are initially responsible for getting their application, merit badge counselor information form, and youth protection properly completed and turned in. It is then important for the counselor to fully understand the role for which they are signing up. While there is an orientation course available, it is not required. If it is not taken, the new counselor should spend some time reading the guidelines of the role on the official BSA website. These guidelines can be found at <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx>. The merit badge counselor will also be asked annually by the district representative to validate their list of badges. Any additions or deletions should be noted on a new Merit Badge Counselor Information Form. The merit badge counselor is also responsible for ensuring that their Youth Protection training is up-to-date. This training is good for two years. The counselor will be dropped from the approved list if they let their Youth Protection training expire.

CHAPTER IV

MAINTAINING A DISTRICT LIST OF COUNSELORS

Currently, there is no good, single source for creating a merit badge counselor list that can be easily distributed and used by the units. The ScoutNet system can generate a paper report sorted either by counselor or by merit badge. While this paper version is a complete list, it is not the easiest to distribute and sort. One issue with the list is that merit badge counselors are registered as working with either their troop, the district or the council. If someone selects to work with the council, then they do not show up on a list for just the district. Therefore, the council generated list can not create a comprehensive list of counselors only within a district.

In order to create a consolidated list for the district, a Google spreadsheet has been created to list all the merit badge counselors and their associated merit badges as shown in Figure 1 below. While maintaining this document is duplicate work, it provides several advantages to help ensure an accurate list of counselors. One such item is that the list created by ScoutNet does not contain the troop that the counselor is associated with. This list is also beneficial for managing accurate contact information for all the counselors. The Google spreadsheet is also a good way to track the annual re-evaluations of the counselor list. It is used to track responses from counselors and to keep a list specifically of any additions or deletions of badges each year.

A key advantage to a list like this is that it can easily be sorted by person, unit or merit badge. Also, this same sheet can be used to cross reference against a list of counselors downloaded from the my.scouting.org system. This is done by generating a list directly from

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

my.scouting.org as shown below in Figure 2. Once you have that list, the above file does a lookup against the my.scouting.org list to ensure that each person’s name is in the my.scouting.org database. This is shown in the column labelled “MyScouting” in Figure 1 and is accomplished using a VLOOKUP formula.

Last Name	First Name	Troop	Merit Badge	Troop/District/Council	Email	Comments	Entered into syst	MyScouting	2017 Verify	Keep/Drop/Add
Blyth	Denis	20	Fishing	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	Yes	Blyth	Yes	Keep
Blyth	Denis	20	Game Design	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	No	Blyth	Yes	Add
Blyth	Denis	20	Motorboating	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	Yes	Blyth	Yes	Keep
Blyth	Denis	20	Programming	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	Yes	Blyth	Yes	Keep
Blyth	Denis	20	Small-Boat Sailing	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	Yes	Blyth	Yes	Keep
Blyth	Denis	20	Water Sports	- Troop	- dblyth@bcmstech.com	new email	Yes	Blyth	Yes	Keep
Boyles	Elizabeth	20	Collections	- Troop	- lizboyles@bellsouth.net		Yes	Boyles	No	Drop
Boyles	Elizabeth	20	Cooking	- Troop	- lizboyles@bellsouth.net		Yes	Boyles	No	Drop
Boyles	Elizabeth	20	Family Life	- Troop	- lizboyles@bellsouth.net		Yes	Boyles	No	Drop
Boyles	Elizabeth	20	Genealogy	- Troop	- lizboyles@bellsouth.net		Yes	Boyles	No	Drop

Figure 1. Google Sheet used in Etiwan district for MBC tracking

First	Middle	Last	Member Id	Street	City	State	ZipCode	Email Address	In my File	My email	Zip Code Check	District/Council	Unit
Louis	Charles	Aquilina	132058819	3128 Treadwell St	Mt Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29466		Aquilina	laquilina2112@yahoo.com	29466	District	
Kevin	Michael	Avery	126377763	1168 Marsh Harbor Ln	Charleston	SOUTH CAROLIN	29492	kevin@suburbanmouse.com	Avery	kevin@suburbanmouse.com	29492	District	
Bryan	Jay	Bain	127253947	132 Royal Assembly Dr	Daniel Island	SOUTH CAROLIN	29492	bryanb426@gmail.com	Bain	bryanb426@gmail.com	29492	Council	
Robert	Morgan	Baldwin	9145609	557 Heron Point Blvd	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	rbaldwin@baldwincpa.com	Baldwin	rbaldwin@baldwincpa.com	29464	Council	None
William	Thomas	Basco	115454749	1554 Fiddlers Den Ct	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	basco@musc.edu	Basco	basco1966@gmail.com	29464	District	
Benjamin	Oliver	Beall	120669723	370 Sugar Cane Way	Mt Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	diver864@gmail.com	Beall	diver864@gmail.com	29464	District	
Mary		Beall	131455706	370 Sugar Cane Way	Mt Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464		Beall	diver864@gmail.com	29464	District	
Denis	Michael	Blyth	115773656	610 Pelzer Dr	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	dblyth@comcast.net	Blyth	dblyth@bcmstech.com	29464	District	
Elizabeth		Boyles	130416560	601 Coral St	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	lizboyles@bellsouth.net	Boyles	lizboyles@bellsouth.net	29464	District	
Robert	Harville	Boyles	119480984	601 Coral St	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	boylesr@dnr.sc.gov	Boyles	lizboyles@bellsouth.net	29464	Council	
Timothy	Roger	Brennan	122732893	2678 Egrets Landing Court	Mount Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29464	trbrennan@me.com	Brennan	tim@chessav.com	29464	District	
John	Paul	Bride	131876327	2700 Rush Haven Dr	Mt Pleasant	SOUTH CAROLIN	29466		Bride	jpride@comcast.net	29466	District	

Figure 2. Download from My.Scouting.org database

You will also notice in Figure 1 that this file is also used for annual re-registration of the counselors. I email each of the counselors and record their responses here. If someone wishes to be dropped it will be indicated by putting a “No” in the “2017 Verify” column. The last column is the “Keep/Drop/Add” list. This is used to communicate to the registrar each specific merit badge by each counselor. If a counselor wishes to add a new badge the word “Add” will be in this column and likely to “Drop” a specific badge. Once I have confirmed the status of all the merit badge counselors I communicate this list to the registrar to update the official BSA system.

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

When new merit badge counselor forms are turned in to council, the registrar keeps a copy of the forms. On a regular basis, these forms are checked against the Google Sheet and any new counselors are added at that time. In this way, the Google Sheet is used to double check the official list as they are entered into the ScoutNet system. The Google Sheet tracks the names, units, email addresses, merit badges and if the person is willing to work with just their troop or any Scouts in the district or council.

In order to check the accuracy of both the Google Sheet and the official ScoutNet list, a report can be generated out of my.scouting.org. However, the issue with this is that even in my.scouting.org, the counselors are separated by those that have agreed to work with any in the council versus just the district or troop level. Those that are listed as working with the council, show up in the member list at the council level and they do not show up under the district level. It is for this reason that both reports need to be run and then merged into one list. This combined list can then be compared to the Google Sheet. Since the council list does not have a record of what district the person is a part of, the list has to be compared using the zip codes associated with your district.

There is also a way the council staff can generate an Excel list of merit badge counselors directly from the ScoutNet system as shown in Figure 3 below. This list will contain all counselors within the council. This is also the only system-generated list that contains the actual list of merit badges for which the counselors are registered. This list can therefore be used to cross reference the list of merit badges contained in the Google Sheet. Any items in the Google Sheet not on the list from ScoutNet need to be verified with the counselor.

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

Council Name	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suf Address 1	Adi Badge	Troop Only	Badge	Troop Only	Badge	Ti
Coastal Carolina Council	Nathan	Lee	Abbar	124 Guildford Dr	Backpacking	N	Camping	N	Cycling	N
Coastal Carolina Council	Barbara		Addressl	5107 Seasaw Ct	First Aid	N				
Coastal Carolina Council	Craig		Alford	1005 Bakers Landing Dr	Athletics	N	Camping	N	Chemistry	N
Coastal Carolina Council	David	Huddleson	Almonite	3790 Wacca Wache Dr	Camping	N	Cooking	N	Personal Management	N
Coastal Carolina Council	Giovana	Lima	Amidon	110 Partridge Ln	Citizenship in the World	N	Cooking	N	Disabilities Awareness	N
Coastal Carolina Council	Louis	Charles	Aquilina	3128 Treadwell St	Architecture	Y	Astronomy	Y	Engineering	Y
Coastal Carolina Council	Sahayarasali		Arokiasamy	3224 Burlington Rd	Citizenship in the World	N	Disabilities Awareness	N	Entrepreneurship	N
Coastal Carolina Council	Chad	Eugene	Atwood	2802 Bamberg Hwy	First Aid	N				
Coastal Carolina Council	Kevin	Michael	Avery	1168 Marsh Harbor Ln	Computers	Y	Emergency Preparedness	Y	Geocaching	Y
Coastal Carolina Council	Steven	James	Bailey	2438 Sylvan Shores Dr	Art	N	Camping	N	Canoeing	N
Coastal Carolina Council	Bryan	Jay	Bain	132 Royal Assembly Dr	American Business	N	Computers	N	Golf	N

Figure 3. Excel file generated by council from ScoutNet system

Once a complete list is generated on the Google Sheet, it can be distributed in several ways. The sheet itself can be shared to people that have Gmail accounts and then they can manipulate it as needed. If this is done, just be sure that they have view only access. The other way I distribute this file is to generate PDF documents of the list sorted by merit badge as shown in Figure 4 and sorted by unit as shown in Figure 5.

Merit Badge	Last Name	First Name	Troop #	E-mail
American Business	Bain	Bryan	519	bryanb426@gmail.com
	Cantore	Charlie	15	ccantore@escelelevator.com
	Chave	Glenn	529	glenn@chave.us
	Cole	David	518	davidcole@davidcole.net
	Deshan	Micheal		
	Desplaces	David	15	desplacesd@cofc.edu
	Frame	Mike	502	mike.bsa502@gmail.com
	Kimner	Michael	519	mjkimner@yahoo.com
	O'Toole	Sean	529	sean.otoole@hlag.com
	OBrien	Thad	529	tmobrien76@hotmail.com
	Paquette	Valerie	20	valerie_paquette@charleston.k12.sc.us
	Plunkett	Ronald	519	ronplunkett@comcast.net
	Rae	Karyn	20	karynraetroop20@gmail.com
	Wise	Tim	20	tim.wise@advocateinsiders.com
	Young	John	519	youngjdy@aol.com
Zimmerman	Patti	529	pczim1@gmail.com	
American Cultures	O'Toole	Sean	529	sean.otoole@hlag.com
	Paquette	Valerie	20	valerie_paquette@charleston.k12.sc.us
	Verwey	Inez	20	kiverwey@gmail.com
	Zimmerman	Patti	529	pczim1@gmail.com

Figure 4. PDF from Google Sheet sorted by badge

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Troop	Last Name	First Name	Merit Badge	Will Help	Email address
	Deshan	Micheal	American Business		
			Entrepreneurship		
			Personal Management		
			Salesmanship		
			Scholarship		
11	Grzybowski	Raymond	Aviation	Council	rayg47@comcast.net
			Citizenship in the World	Council	rayg47@comcast.net
	Myers	Kendra	Medicine	District	myerskk@att.net
			Public Health	District	myerskk@att.net
			Pulp and Paper	District	myerskk@att.net
15	Beall	Ben	Camping	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
			Cooking	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
			Cycling	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
			Hiking	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
			Orienteering	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
			Pioneering	Troop	diver864@gmail.com
	Mary	Family Life	Troop	mary@beallfamily.net	
		Horsemanship	Troop	mary@beallfamily.net	
		Small-Boat Sailing	Troop	mary@beallfamily.net	
	Cantore	Charlie	American Business	Troop	ccantore@escelevator.com

Figure 5. PDF from Google Sheet sorted by badge

CHAPTER V

METHODS USED IN OTHER DISTRICTS

Since there is not a single source solution provided by BSA for the distribution of the list of merit badge counselors, many councils and districts have found various ways to distribute the list. Shown below are some of the various solutions that have been employed. They vary wildly from some as simple as having a single point of contact to some elaborate databases that allow searching by merit badge, troop or even zip code.

The first example is for the Four Peaks District of the Grand Canyon Council (Figure 6). In this case, there is a single point of contact for the list. Anyone wishing to find a counselor will send an email to this person making the request.



Figure 6. Four Peaks District MBC list

The Garden State Council uses a static PDF document with the list of counselors (Figure 7). This list is maintained as a password protected document. The district executives are responsible for deciding to whom they give the password.



Figure 7. Garden State Council MBC list

The San Diego-Imperial Council has a database that will let you select the merit badge you are looking for and enter your zip code (see Figure 8). The report then gives you a complete list of the registered counselors near the entered zip code. The resulting report lists the names and phone numbers of the registered counselors, as shown in Figure 9. The report had a hyperlink to send that counselor an email. The list also shows their approximate distance from the entered zip code.

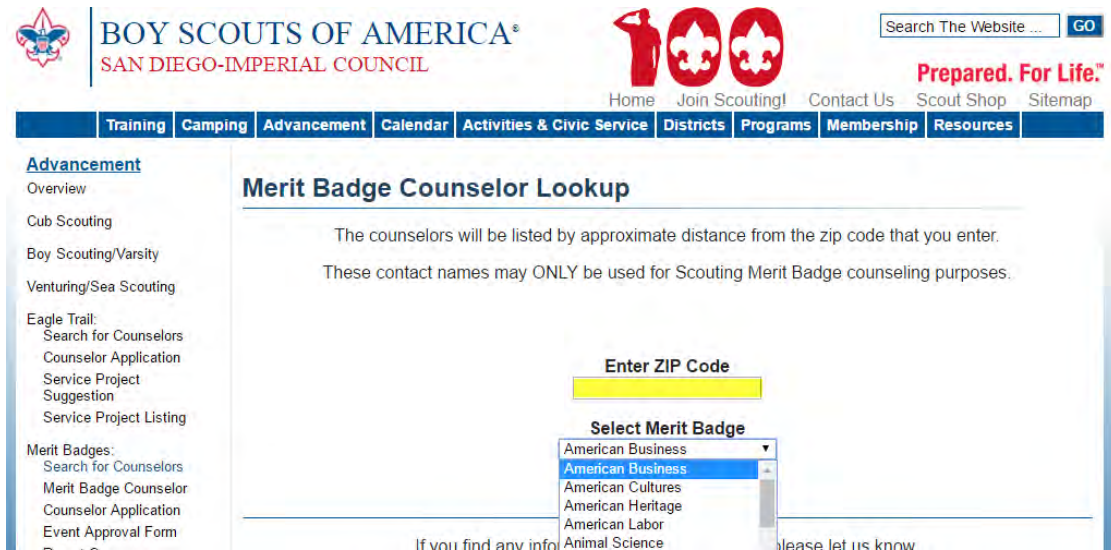


Figure 8. San Diego-Imperial Council MBC list

American Business

No ZIP Code entered. The default ZIP Code of 92103 will be used.

NOTE: Scouts need to CC their parent(s) when contacting a counselor via email.

Name	City	ZIP Code	E-mail	Phone Number	Approx. Distance From 92103
Patricia Williams	San Diego	92107	E-mail	[REDACTED]	4
Paul Frye	San Diego	92115	E-mail		6
Bruce Doole	San Diego	92120	E-mail		7
Elaine Schmidt	National City	91950	E-mail		7

Figure 9. San Diego-Imperial Council MBC list output

The most complete and usable database I found is for the Del-Mar-Va Council. Their list allows you to first select the district you are interested in, with output shown in Figure 10. From there, the search will let you create lists for all counselors for a specific badge or to create a list of all counselors for a specific troop, as shown in Figure 11.

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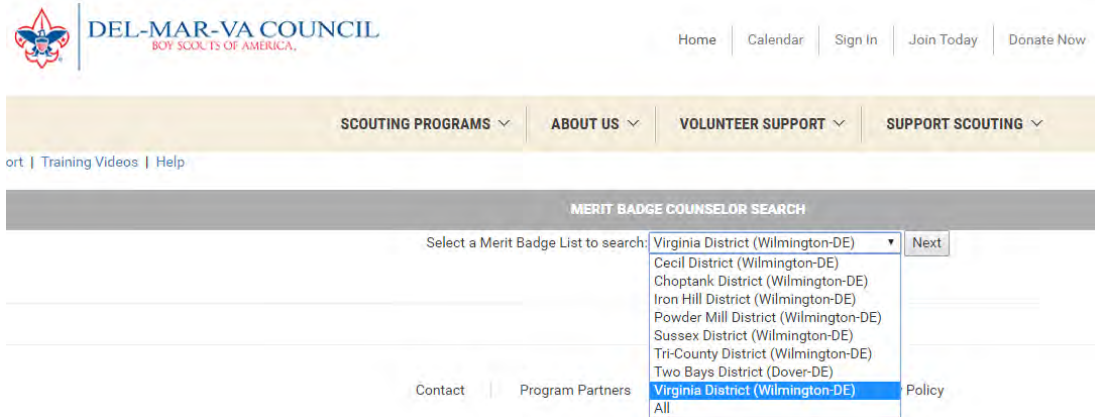


Figure 10. Del-Mar-Va Council District list selection

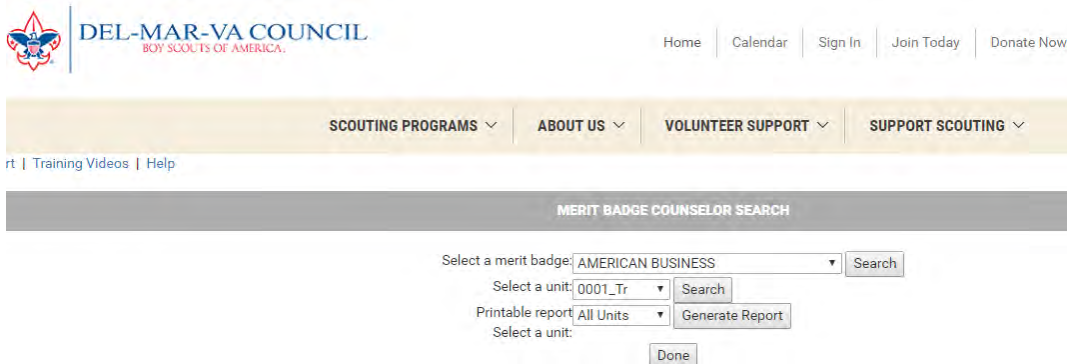


Figure 11. Del-Mar-Va Council merit badge and unit selection

The various methods employed by these districts is indicative of the need to make this a smoother process and the lack of current functionality within existing BSA systems.

CHAPTER VI

FUTURE METHOD OF MAINTAINING MBC LIST

In 2015, Boy Scouts of America acquired the software package known as Scoutbook. This application has now become the official BSA solution for electronic tracking for advancement at the Scout and unit level. As such, Scoutbook tracks progress on merit badges as well. Recently, Scoutbook added the ability for a council administrator to manage a live list of merit badge counselors in this system.

Currently, the Scoutbook application does not directly connect to ScoutNet for this list of counselors. Maintenance of the list is done by a .CSV file that needs to be downloaded from Scoutbook, edited, and then uploaded back as shown in Figure 12 below.

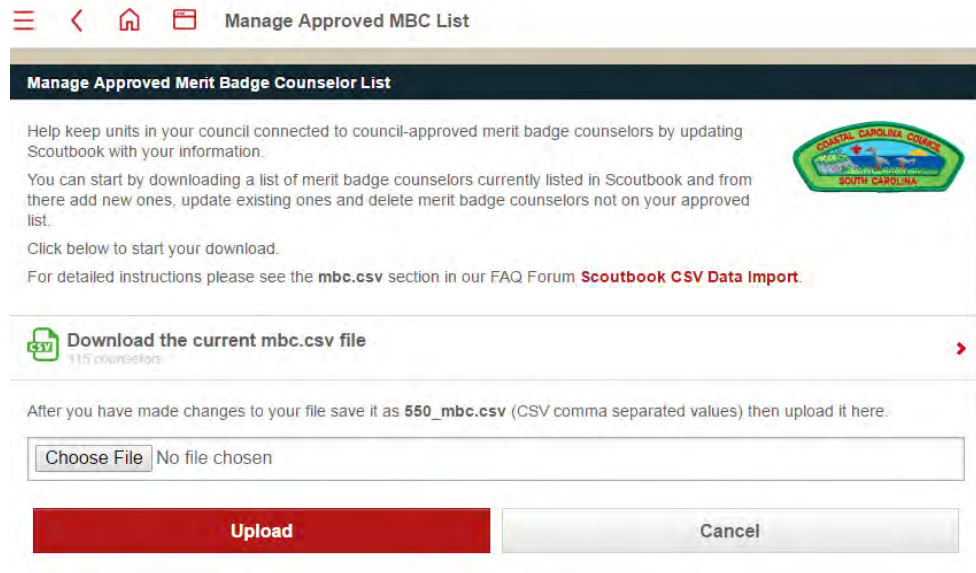


Figure 12. Download/Upload of MBC.csv in Scoutbook

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

While there are great advantages to having this list all in one place, there are still a few limitations. The format of the .csv file needed for Scoutbook is not in the same format as the file that is currently generated directly from ScoutNet. This will require that someone manually manipulate the data in Excel in order to get the formatting correct. Also, the file that is generated from Scoutbook is not in a great format for use as a standalone for people that don't have access to Scoutbook. The file downloaded from Scoutbook will need to be manipulated to a format that is usable outside of Scoutbook. As you can see in Figure 13 below, the list of badges from the Scoutbook file is a comma separated list and the list from the ScoutNet file has each badge in a different column as shown in Figure 14.

Merit Badges
Art
Athletics, Backpacking, Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Science, Family Life, First Aid, Lifesaving, Medicine, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Sports, Swimming
Art, Camping, Canoeing, Cooking, Graphic Arts, Orienteering, Pioneering, Sculpture, Swimming, Kayaking
Architecture, Camping, Communication, Crime Prevention, Fingerprinting, First Aid, Personal Management, Scholarship, Welding
Camping, Cooking, Cycling, Hiking, Orienteering, Pioneering
Backpacking, Camping, Canoeing, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Cooking, Cycling, Emergency Preparedness, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Science, First Aid, Fishing, Fly Fishing, Hiking, Personal Fitness, Photography, Plumbing, Sports, Wilderness Survival, Woodwork
Automotive Maintenance, Camping, Canoeing, Computers, Family Life, Fishing, Motorboating, Digital Technology
Collections, Cooking, Family Life, Genealogy, Reading, Scholarship, Sustainability
Automotive Maintenance, Backpacking, Camping, Canoeing, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Science, Family Life, Fish and Wildlife Management, Fishing, Fly Fishing, Forestry, Hiking, Motorboating, Music, Oceanography, Personal Fitness, Scholarship, Swimming, Wilderness Survival, Sustainability
Automotive Maintenance, Emergency Preparedness
American Business, American Cultures, American Heritage, American Labor, Animal Science, Archaeology, Archery, Architecture, Art, Astronomy, Athletics, Automotive Maintenance, Aviation, Backpacking, Basketry, Bird Study, Bugling, Camping, Canoeing, Chemistry, Moviemaking, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Climbing, Coin Collecting, Collections, Communication, Composite Materials, Computers, Cooking, Crime Prevention, Cycling, Dentistry, Disabilities Awareness, Dog Care, Drafting, Electricity, Electronics, Emergency Preparedness, Energy, Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Science, Family Life, Farm Mechanics, Fingerprinting, Fire Safety, First Aid, Fish and Wildlife Management, Fishing, Fly Fishing, Forestry, Gardening, Genealogy, Geocaching, Geology, Golf, Graphic Arts, Hiking, Home Repairs, Horsemanship, Indian Lore, Insect Study, Inventing, Journalism, Landscape Architecture, Law, Leatherwork, Lifesaving, Mammal Study, Medicine, Metalwork, Model Design and Building, Motorboating, Music, Nature, Nuclear Science, Oceanography, Orienteering, Painting, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Pets, Photography, Pioneering, Plant Science, Plumbing, Pottery, Public Health, Public Speaking, Pulp and Paper, Radio, Railroad, Reading, Reptile and Amphibian Study, Rifle Shooting, Rowing, Safety, Salesmanship, Scouting Heritage, Scholarship, Scuba Diving,

Figure 13. List of merit badges as shown in MBC.csv file

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

V	W	X	Y	Z	AA
Badge	Troop Only	Badge	Troop Only	Badge	Troop Only
Backpacking	N	Camping	N	Cycling	N
First Aid	N				
Athletics	N	Camping	N	Chemistry	N
Camping	N	Cooking	N	Personal Management	N
Citizenship in the World	N	Cooking	N	Disabilities Awareness	N
Architecture	Y	Astronomy	Y	Engineering	Y
Citizenship in the World	N	Disabilities Awareness	N	Entrepreneurship	N
First Aid	N				
Computers	Y	Emergency Preparedness	Y	Geocaching	Y
Art	N	Camping	N	Canoeing	N
American Business	N	Computers	N	Golf	N
Personal Management	N				
Family Life	Y	Genealogy	Y	Graphic Arts	Y
Engineering	Y				
Citizenship in the Community	Y	Citizenship in the Nation	Y	Citizenship in the World	Y

Figure 14. List of merit badges in ScoutNet generated list

The Scoutbook merit badge system provides an easy tool for searching for a merit badge counselor. As shown in in Figure 15 below, you can search by distance or for a specific merit badge. Since the Scoutbook system connects directly to other BSA systems for things such as training, the merit badge counselor list includes their YPT status. Only counselors with current YPT will show up in the results and their expiration date will be displayed in the results screen as shown in Figure 16 below.

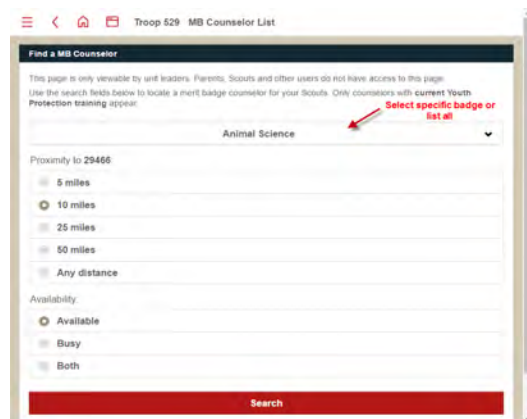


Figure 15. MB counselor search screen in Scoutbook

Maintain a District Merit Badge Counselor List

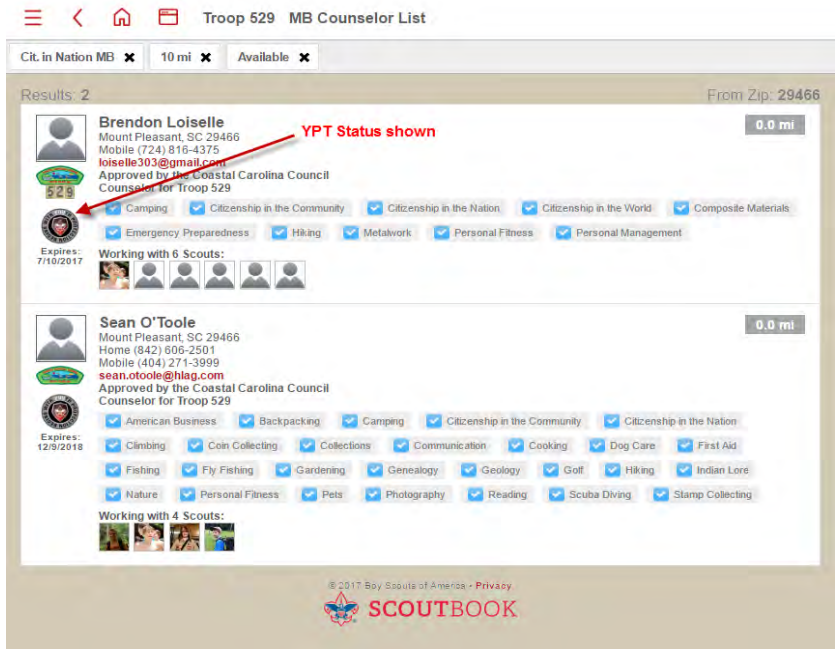


Figure 16. Output from MBC search in Scoutbook

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list of merit badge counselors is critical to being able to provide a good advancement experience to the Scouts. The Guide to Advancement directs that the council advancement committee should coordinate an annual re-registration of counselors. There is currently no single system in place within BSA that allows an easy way to handle this reregistration requirement. There is also not a single user friendly method for updating and distributing the current list of merit badge counselors.

As seen by the various methods that other districts have used to maintain these lists, there is a definite need within BSA to standardize the management of merit badge counselors. There is currently work underway to enable Scoutbook to handle some integration of the approved counselors. While this approach will be nice for those using Scoutbook, it does not solve the issue for those that are not. There will still need to be a list of some type maintained for distribution. It is still possible to generate and distribute a paper list directly from the ScoutNet system, however, in today's technology environment, people want an online and "real time" approach.

I have created an approach using a Google Sheet that works for me and my needs but it does require significant manual work to keep in sync with the official BSA systems. This is certainly an area of opportunity for future BSA systems. Between the solutions that have been implemented at other councils and districts and the work being done in Scoutbook I feel a workable solution should be easily identified.

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