

Surveying Merit Badge



More than 850 Boy Scouts enjoyed a beautiful January New England day and participated in a Merit Badge College held at Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island on January 23, 2010. Members from the Rhode Island Society of Professional Land Surveyors joined with many other groups and organizations to share their skills and time. The RISPLS instructed the Surveying Merit Badge, which was created in 1911 and is one of the original Merit Badges of the Boy Scouts of America.

Two dozen young men between the ages of 12 and 18 participated in the Surveying Merit Badge.

Five members of RISPLS were on hand to help the scouts. Chris Palmer and David D. Gardner, PLS of David D. Gardner & Associates, Inc. R. Scott Engelhardt, PLS of DGT Survey Group, Stephen Kubiak and Michael Darveau, PLS of Darveau & Associates, Inc. instructed the scouts.

The RISPLS members explained what surveying is, what types of surveys are typically performed, and gave a brief history lesson about the art of surveying and the equipment used by surveyors.

After a brief video explaining the different career options in surveying, the scouts were given the task of working in a typical survey office. Two projects were performed by the scouts; a survey of a courtyard area at Rhode Island College was needed to determine its potential for a parking lot and a deed needed to be plotted to determine if the parcel was large enough to place a house on the site.



The scouts were broken into groups; each group rotating between field work and office work. Scott Engelhardt, PLS, Steve Kubiak, and Chris Palmer took the scouts to the courtyard for some hands on field learning. The young men learned the basics of setting up a total station, participated in collecting points and performed some GPS observations that would later be used to create an existing conditions plan.



Inside, David D. Gardner, PLS directed the scouts in plotting a deed and in determining the topographic conditions of a site.

After all the groups of Scouts had collected the field data, the scouts were instructed on how the collected data is downloaded and processed. A series of previously prepared AutoCAD plans were shown to the students at various stages of creation, including a final plan.