

Scouts BSA STEM FAQ's

What is Scouts BSA STEM? STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The STEM initiative was begun back in 2010 as an effort by the Boy Scouts of America to enhance interest in STEM fields.

What is a Nova Award? The Nova Awards are an exploration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. They integrate many of the existing advancements and include other related activities. There are ten Nova awards for Scouts BSA youth—Shoot!, Let It Grow!, Splash!, Mendel's Minions, Start Your Engines, Hello World, Whoosh!, Up and Away, Next Big Thing, and Designed to Crunch. Don't let the names fool you, though. Each award/activity has its own challenges. The Nova awards take the form of a patch that can be worn on the right-hand pocket with additional pins for every subsequent award.

What is a Supernova Award? The Supernova awards build from the Nova awards. They seek to challenge the youth who have a greater interest in STEM fields to experiment, understand the outcomes of the experiments, and present their findings. There are three levels of Supernova for Scouts BSA youth—the Dr. Bernard Harris medal (Bronze), the Thomas Alva Edison medal (Silver), and the Dr. Albert Einstein medal (Gold).

Why earn a Nova Award or Supernova Award? The country is in need of the next generation of inventors, scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and technologists and the Boy Scouts of America is trying to do its part in developing that next generation. Right now, many of the merit badges the Scouts earn do relate to STEM. The Nova and Supernova awards are an additional recognition for interest and effort the Scouts already demonstrate in the STEM fields.

What will we be doing at "Got Water?" The Scouts will tour the Big Break Regional Shoreline and talk with a Naturalist to see how water plays a central role the lives of the plants and animals of the delta. We will explore the chemistry and structure of water. Along the way, there will be discussions with a Nova Counselor about the videos or reading they did, about the merit badge they earned, and discussions about the importance of water. Don't let the name "Splash!" fool you, this is serious subject, plus there are a lot of cool things water does that no other chemical can do.

Are there any pre-requisites that Scouts need to complete prior to the upcoming February 25th, 2023, Nova Award event? Yes, for the Splash! Nova award, the Scouts need to have earned any one of the following merit badges—Chemistry, Energy, Engineering, Environmental Science, Fish & Wildlife Management, Fishing, Fly-Fishing, Forestry, Geology, Nature, Oceanography, Public Health, Soil & Water Conservation, Sustainability, or Weather. (If you have already earned a Nova Award, the merit badge

must be different from the one already used for the previous Nova Award.) The Scouts will also have watched or read for 3 hours educational materials on one of the most important chemicals on earth-water. Possible ideas are the hydrologic cycle, primary users and sources of water, health impacts, water pollution, or water treatment. If you need more ideas, just let us know. In addition to watching or reading about water, the Scouts must come up with a list of 5 questions for each item worked on that they will then discuss with the Nova Counselors. The Scouts also need to be prepared to discuss how water affects everyday life (Requirement #5).

What is provided at the upcoming event? There will be Nova Counselors to guide the Scouts in completing the Splash! Nova Award. We will have all the supplies needed for the demonstrations and we will be working with a Naturalist at Big Break Regional Shoreline. At the end the session, a Scout completing all the requirements will receive their Nova Award patch or pin.

What is the cost of the event? The event costs \$25 and covers the Nova Award patch or pin, the space fee, and all the materials for the demonstrations.

How do Scouts register for the event? Registration will be online through the Council website as soon as possible. At this time, registration is limited to the first 30 Scouts. For any questions, please contact Tracy Peters at pacificflyer1@gmail.com.