the principles of

Leave No Trace



for outdoor adventures

for troops and teams

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

This flier can be downloaded from the BSA Web site: *http://www.scouting.org*



The Principles of Leave No Trace

The BSA is committed to Leave No Trace, is a nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness program. Its principles are guidelines to follow at all times.

The Leave No Trace principles might seem unimportant until you consider the combined effects of millions of outdoor visitors. One poorly located campsite or campfire may have little significance, but thousands of such instances seriously degrade the outdoor experience for all. Leaving no trace is everyone's responsibility.

Leave No Trace Awareness

Instilling values in young people and preparing them to make moral and ethical choices throughout their lifetime is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America. Leave No Trace helps reinforce that mission, and reminds us to respect the rights of other users of the outdoors as well as future generations. Appreciation for our natural environment and a knowledge of the interrelationships of nature bolster our respect and reverence toward the environment and nature.

Leave No Trace is an awareness and an attitude rather than a set of rules. It applies in your backyard or local park as much as in the backcountry. We should all practice Leave No Trace in our thinking and actions—wherever we go.

We learn Leave No Trace by sharing the principles and then discovering how they can be applied. Leave No Trace instills an awareness that spurs questions like "What can we do to reduce our impact on the environment and on the experiences of other visitors?" Use your judgment and experience to tailor camping and hiking practices to the environment where the outing will occur. Forest, mountain, seashore, plains, freshwater, and wetland environments all require different minimum impact practices.

Outdoor Ethics

Help protect the backcountry by remembering that while you are there, you are a visitor. When you visit a friend, you take care to leave your friend's home just as you found it. You would never think of trampling garden flowers, chopping down trees in the yard, putting soap in the drinking water, or marking your name on the living room wall. When you visit the backcountry, the same courtesies apply. Leave everything just as you found it.

Hiking and camping without a trace are signs of an expert outdoorsman, and of a Scout or Scouter who cares for the environment. Travel lightly on the land.

Leave No Trace Training

The Boy Scouts of America is committed to implementing Leave No Trace at all levels of the program. Earning the BSA Leave No Trace Achievement Award could set the stage for starting on a comprehensive Leave No Trace training continuum:

- Advanced training is available for Master Educators, the top Leave No Trace instructors.
- Master Educators teach Trainers, the second level of instructors.
- Trainers and Master Educators conduct awareness workshops, which are designed to promote Leave No Trace.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, the BSA is actively placing Master Educators in every council and Trainers in every district.

Master Educator Courses

The five-day Master Educator course is designed for people who are actively teaching outdoor skills or providing recreation information to the public. This valuable training is recognized throughout the world by the outdoors industry, land management agencies, and the outdoor recreation community. Master Educators can train others in Leave No Trace skills as well as facilitate Leave No Trace Trainer courses and awareness workshops.

Trainer Courses

Leave No Trace Trainer courses are two-day trainings taught by Master Educators in the outdoors. Trainer courses are designed to help participants better understand and teach Leave No Trace skills and ethics.

Awareness Workshops

Awareness workshops can include any type of formal Leave No Trace training that is one day or less in length. These presentations may be anything from 30-minute chats about the Leave No Trace principles to full-day workshops.

Learn More About Leave No Trace

More information about Leave No Trace can be obtained by contacting your local land manager or local office of the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the National Park Service, or the Fish and Wildlife Service. (Check the blue pages of your local telephone directory.) Or, contact the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics toll-free at 800-332-4100 or on the Internet at **http://www.lnt.org.**

For posters, plastic cards listing the Leave No Trace principles, or information on becoming a Leave No Trace sponsor, contact Leave No Trace, P.O. Box 997, Boulder, CO 80306; phone 303-442-8222.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

Proper trip planning and preparation helps hikers and campers accomplish trip goals safely and enjoyably while minimizing damage to natural and cultural resources. Campers who plan ahead can avoid unexpected situations, and minimize their impact by complying with area regulations such as observing limitations on group size. Schedule your trek to avoid times of high use. Obtain permits or permission to use the area for your trek.

Proper planning ensures

- Low-risk adventures because campers obtained information concerning geography and weather and prepared accordingly
- Properly located campsites because campers allotted enough time to reach their destination
- Appropriate campfires and minimal trash because of careful meal planning and food repackaging and proper equipment
- Comfortable and fun camping and hiking experiences because the outing matches the skill level of the participants

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces



Damage to land occurs when visitors trample vegetation or communities of organisms beyond recovery. The resulting barren areas develop into undesirable trails, campsites, and soil erosion.

Concentrate Activity, or Spread Out?

- In high-use areas, campers should concentrate their activities where vegetation is already absent. Minimize resource damage by using existing trails and selecting designated or existing campsites. Keep campsites small by arranging tents in close proximity.
- In more remote, less-traveled areas, campers should generally spread out. When hiking, take different paths to avoid creating new trails that cause erosion. When camping, disperse tents and cooking activities—and move camp daily to avoid creating permanent-looking campsites. Avoid places where impacts are just beginning to show. Always choose the most durable surfaces available: rock, gravel, sand, compacted soil, dry grasses, or snow.

These guidelines apply to most alpine settings and may be different for other areas, such as deserts. Learn the Leave No Trace techniques for your crew's specific activity or destination. Check with land managers to be sure of the proper technique.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly (Pack It In, Pack It Out)



This simple yet effective saying motivates backcountry visitors to take their trash home with them. It makes sense to carry out of the backcountry the extra materials taken there by your group or others. Inspect your campsite for trash or spilled foods. Accept the challenge of packing out all trash, leftover food, and litter.

Sanitation

Backcountry users create body waste and wastewater that require proper disposal.

Wastewater. Help prevent contamination of natural water sources: After straining food particles, properly dispose of dishwater by dispersing at least 200 feet (about 80 to 100 strides for a youth) from springs, streams, and lakes. Use biodegradable soap 200 feet or more from any water source.

Human Waste. Proper human waste disposal helps prevent the spread of disease and exposure to others. Catholes 6 to 8 inches deep in humus and 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites are often the easiest and most practical way to dispose of feces.

4. Leave What You Find



Allow others a sense of discovery, and preserve the past. Leave rocks, plants, animals, archaeological artifacts, and other objects as you find them. Examine but do not touch cultural or historical structures and artifacts. It may be illegal to remove artifacts.

Minimize Site Alterations

Do not dig tent trenches or build lean-tos, tables, or chairs. Never hammer nails into trees, hack at trees with hatchets or saws, or damage bark and roots by tying horses to trees for extended periods. Replace surface rocks or twigs that you cleared from the campsite. On high-impact sites, clean the area and dismantle inappropriate user-built facilities such as multiple fire rings and log seats or tables.

Good campsites are found, not made. Avoid altering a site, digging trenches, or building structures.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts



Some people would not think of camping without a campfire. Yet the naturalness of many areas has been degraded by overuse of fires and increasing demand for firewood.

Lightweight camp stoves make low-impact camping possible by encouraging a shift away from fires. Stoves are fast, eliminate the need for firewood, and make cleanup after meals easier. After dinner, enjoy a candle lantern instead of a fire.

If you build a fire, the most important consideration is the potential for resource damage. Whenever possible, use an existing campfire ring in a well-placed campsite. Choose not to have a fire in areas where wood is scarce—at higher elevations, in heavily used areas with a limited wood supply, or in desert settings.

True Leave No Trace fires are small. Use dead and downed wood that can be broken easily by hand. When possible, burn all wood to ash and remove all unburned trash and food from the fire ring. If a site has two or more fire rings, you may dismantle all but one and scatter the materials in the surrounding area. Be certain all wood and campfire debris is dead out.

6. Respect Wildlife



Quick movements and loud noises are stressful to animals. Considerate campers practice these safety methods:

- Observe wildlife from afar to avoid disturbing them.
- Give animals a wide berth, especially during breeding, nesting, and birthing seasons.
- Store food securely and keep garbage and food scraps away from animals so they will not acquire bad habits. Never feed wildlife. Help keep wildlife wild.

You are too close if an animal alters its normal activities.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors



Thoughtful campers respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

- Travel and camp in small groups (no more than the group size prescribed by land managers).
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Keep the noise down and leave radios, tape players, and pets at home.
- Select campsites away from other groups to help preserve their solitude.
- Always travel and camp quietly to avoid disturbing other visitors.
- Make sure the colors of clothing and gear blend with the environment.
- Respect private property and leave gates (open or closed) as found.

Be considerate of other campers and respect their privacy.

APPLICATION FOR

Leave No Trace Achievement Award

(Submit this application to your local council service center.)

Local council name _____ Headquarters city/state _____

Unit type and No. _____
Troop or team

Number of awards: Youth _____ Adult _____

Unit leader's name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Names of Scouts

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Names of leaders

_____ _____

_____ _____

The Scouts and leaders indicated above have fulfilled the requirements for the Leave No Trace Achievement Award patch, No. 8630.

Unit leader's signature _____ Date _____

SCOUT REQUIREMENTS

1. Recite and explain in your own words the principles of Leave No Trace, and discuss how an ethical guideline differs from a rule.
2. On three separate camping trips with your troop or team, demonstrate and practice the Leave No Trace skills appropriate to the trip.
3. Earn the Camping and Environmental Science merit badges.
4. Participate in a Leave No Trace–related service project that reduces or rehabilitates recreational impacts. Discuss with your troop or team which recreational impacts were involved with the project.
5. Give a 10-minute presentation on a Leave No Trace topic approved by your unit leader to a Scouting unit or other interested group.
6. Teach a Leave No Trace–related skill to a Scouting unit or other interested group.

ADULT LEADER REQUIREMENTS

1. Recite and explain in your own words the principles of Leave No Trace, and discuss how an ethical guideline differs from a rule.
2. On each of the three camping trips in Scout requirement 2, discuss with your troop or team the impact problems encountered and the methods the unit used to eliminate or at least minimize those impacts.
3. Read chapters 7 through 10 (Leaving No Trace), chapter 27 (Understanding Nature), and chapter 34 (Being Good Stewards of Our Resources) in the BSA *Fieldbook*. Share with another adult leader what you learned.
4. Actively assist (train, advise, and supervise) a Scout in planning, organizing, and leading a Leave No Trace service project that reduces or rehabilitates recreational impacts.
5. Assist at least three Scouts in earning the Leave No Trace Achievement Award.
6. Teach a Leave No Trace–related skill to a Scouting unit or other interested group.

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