

BSA Outdoor Ethics

“When you leave (the camp), leave nothing but your thanks and a good name.”

Lord Baden-Powell

Today, use of designated wilderness areas has increased from 4 million people in 1964, to over 30 million users today. That's a 750 percent increase in 40 years and the aggregate total of all recreation continues to rise throughout the United States. As cities grow and populations encroach upon our wildlands and recreation areas, we must do more than just pick up the litter and extinguish campfires. We must learn how to maintain the integrity and character of the

outdoors for all living things.

Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to -

Be clean in my outdoor manners.

Be careful with fire.

Be considerate in the outdoors.

Be conservation minded.

Scouting has a long and distinguished tradition of conservation leadership and environmental protection, enshrined in the Outdoor Code, Scouting's Wilderness Policy, the William T. Hornaday Awards program, and in innumerable publications and training programs. Just as it has for decades, the Outdoor Code guides our conduct in the

outdoors, establishing our goals of a clean environment—one unaffected by our passage—and our goal of environmental stewardship in the commandment of conservation mindedness. BSA's Outdoor Ethics then uses the seven principles of Leave No Trace and the five principles of Tread Lightly! to support the Outdoor Code by providing Scouting members with a principled framework to assist them in arriving at proper, ethical decisions while recreating in the outdoors. Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly are not simply programs for camping, they are at the cutting edge of Scouting values. Learning about BSA's Outdoor Ethics begins with you and your unit.

AN OUTDOOR ETHIC FOR HIGH ADVENTURE

A good way to protect the backcountry is to remember that while you are there, you are a visitor. Trekking and camping in a manner that prevents the avoidable impacts and minimizes the unavoidable impacts are signs of an expert outdoorsman, and of a Scout or Scouter who cares for the environment.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE (Leave No Trace)

Remember to plan realistically. Match your group's goals and skills with your trip objectives.

- Enroll your group leaders in a Leave No Trace awareness seminar, a BSA Leave No Trace 101 course, Trainer course, or Master Educator course prior to your outing.
- Check with local land management agencies regarding permits, group size requirements and area-specific rules and regulations before you leave for your trip.
- A group size limit of 10 means that your group never congregates in numbers greater than 10. If your group is larger than the area's group size limit, break into smaller sub-groups to travel and camp. Do not bring the groups together.
- Avoid the most popular and congested areas, or visit them during times when they are less crowded.
- Make sure everyone has the gear they need to stay comfortable regardless of conditions. You may need to check to ensure critical pieces of equipment—raingear, sunscreen, hat, gloves or proper footwear for example—haven't been left behind.

Passport to High Adventure Boy Scouts of America

- Reduce trash by repackaging food and plan your meals so you don't have leftovers.
- Check with local land management agencies on recommended routes and suitable camping locations. If possible, scout the route yourself to find the best and most durable travel corridors, lunch sites and camping spots for your group. Bring equipment that facilitates low-impact practices: trash bags, camp stoves, trowels for digging catholes and strainers for dishwater.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Group leaders: Choose co-leaders experienced in outdoor skills. Have sufficient leadership to break the group into small, independent teams to travel and camp. Check with local land management agencies to find out what the group size limits are for

the areas you plan to visit—they vary from place to place. Train your co-leaders in Leave No Trace skills and ethics and be specific about the traveling and camping techniques you will be using. Introduce the Leave No Trace principles to the entire group before you head into the out-of-doors so everyone understands what is expected of them.



leave no trace
CENTER FOR OUTDOOR ETHICS

Leave No Trace is an educational program that combines knowledge and judgment with ethical responsibility. It is a program designed to expand the understanding of how we can enjoy the out-of-doors while protecting the natural areas and the experiences we cherish. Your group can do its part by learning more about the program and practicing Leave No Trace whenever they recreate outdoors.

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics offers a comprehensive program with educational tools and materials, training opportunities, workshops and much more. For more detailed information on specific practices or guidelines for different environments, contact the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics at 800-332-4100 or on the Internet at www.lnt.org

treadlightly![®]
ON LAND AND WATER



Tread Lightly![®] is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship. Tread Lightly!'s educational message, along with its training and restoration initiatives, are strategically designed to instill an ethic of responsibility in a wide variety of outdoor enthusiasts and the industries that serve them. Tread Lightly!'s core focus is on people that use or are affected by motorized and mechanized vehicles. The federal government officially recognizes the organization as a sole-source service provider of education and training on how to be environmentally and socially responsible while using motorized and mechanized vehicles. For more information contact Tread Lightly at 800-966-9900 or visit their website at www.treadlightly.org

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY (Tread Lightly)

Research reveals that vehicle impacts to plants and soils occur quickly but recover slowly.

Low Impact Driving Practices:

Whether traveling to or from your recreation destination, or driving a vehicle, ATV, or other motorized craft as part of your outdoor experience, you can avoid or minimize resource impacts by following a few simple low impact driving practices. Most importantly, drive responsibly and stay on designated roads that are open to public use, or secure permission from private property

Passport to High Adventure Boy Scouts of America

owners. If driving off-road is acceptable and necessary, do so only when soils are dry. Minimize your traffic and stick to the most durable surfaces available. Check with local land managers to determine the best driving routes and designated safe parking locations. Avoid driving on unsurfaced roads when conditions are muddy. Use only vehicles that can safely negotiate the roadbed without having to go around mud-holes or other obstacles as this substantially increases road width and impact. Yield to the horseback riders, hikers, and mountain bikers you encounter. Check and wash your vehicle, ATV, or other motorized craft before and after trips to prevent the spread of non-native species.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES (Leave No Trace)

Durable surfaces are surfaces that show little sign of your passing. They include existing trails, established campsites, gravel, sand and dry grassy meadows. In canyon country, the best travel surface is often on slickrock or dry washes, while in the alpine zone it may be over snow or ice.

Generally speaking, the best Leave No Trace practice is to stick to trails and established campsites until they have the skills necessary to travel in pristine areas with minimal impact. Off-trail travel requires education and scrupulous attention to Leave No Trace techniques. Failure to adhere to these practices can cause lasting impacts on the environment. For these reasons, only groups skilled in Leave No Trace should venture off the beaten path.

- Stick to well-established trails when traveling and when moving around camp. Avoid faint trails and off-trail traffic to protect plants and soils. Traveling single file near the center of the trail will avoid trail widening, particularly along muddy or rutted sections.
- Choose a site large enough for your group or divide into smaller groups and use two or three smaller established or otherwise durable sites.
- Concentrate all activities on the most durable or previously disturbed surfaces and avoid trampling plants.
- Gather as a large group only on durable surfaces.
- Explain what both durable and non-durable surfaces are to your group. Help them recognize areas sensitive to human traffic such as wetlands, riparian zones, recently thawed ground, fragile plants and cryptobiotic soils.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas:

- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

In pristine areas:

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY (Leave No Trace)

Pack it in, pack it out. This is the primary rule for any group that goes into the outdoors for any reason. Groups have a responsibility to the resource and to those who come after them to leave the water and land free of trash and food scraps. These things often attract wildlife or otherwise alter their natural behavior with serious long-term effects. There is no 'acceptable' waste, not

Passport to High Adventure Boy Scouts of America

even that which is biodegradable, such as banana peels and apple cores. If your group carried it in, carry it out. If trash is found that someone else left behind, carry it out, too.

There are four primary goals behind the proper disposal of human waste in the out-of-doors:

1. Minimize the chances of water pollution
2. Minimize the chances that other people, animals or insects could come into contact with the waste and then potentially spread disease
3. Minimize any aesthetic issues associated with human waste
4. Maximize the decomposition rate

Think carefully about the maturity of your group when considering how you will dispose of human waste. You will need to be extremely diligent about instruction and compliance, and you may want to camp near toilet facilities, and potable water initially.

- A variety of commercial products are available for carrying out human waste. These products minimize odor, leakage and disposal problems. Talk to land management agencies or the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics about specific options.
- In most areas, catholes are another acceptable option for human waste disposal. Catholes should be 6-8 inches deep and located 200 feet (70 adult paces) from any water source or intermittent drainages. Instruct your group thoroughly on the appropriate use of catholes and carry trowels for digging.
- Pack out toilet paper in plastic bags. Baby wipes are useful for reducing odor and improving cleanliness.
- Strain dishwater to remove food scraps, pack these out with the rest of your trash. Strained dishwater can be scattered well away from camp.
- Wash dishes or bathe more than 200 feet from water sources and minimize use of soap.
- Inspect your campsite and lunch areas carefully for trash or food scraps before moving on.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND (Leave No Trace)

Scouts often catch a “collecting bug” and load their packs with interesting rocks, feathers, seashells, flowers, potshards and arrowheads. In the outdoors, these activities change the aesthetics of a site and generally have a lasting impact on the ecology and the cultural or historical record. Consider the cumulative impact if everyone took home a memento.

Help your group recognize the magic of unaltered nature. Keep people active so they don't get bored and start elaborate construction projects. Inspect your campsite before you leave and do your best to restore the site.

- Make sure all members of your group know the law. In many places, collecting—everything from fossils to wild plants—is illegal.
- Before you approach a cultural or historic site, sit down with your group and tell them the story of the site. Help them recognize its value and the need to leave it untouched so it can be enjoyed by others in the future.
- Supervise your group around sensitive plants, animals or cultural sites. A crushed plant or collapsed wall can happen very quickly with energetic youth, no matter how well meaning they are.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Passport to High Adventure Boy Scouts of America

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS (Leave No Trace)

Campfires have an important role in Scouting. Scouts bond by singing songs, telling stories, performing skits, or just hanging out around a campfire, but campfires have been over used in many places. It's easy to find campfire pits overflowing with charcoal and trash, damaged trees and areas stripped of wood. Use this information to reinforce the use of minimum-impact fires or to encourage your group to forgo fires altogether.

- Carry and use stoves.
- Substitute candle lanterns for campfires or enjoy the nighttime without any artificial lighting.
- Make sure your fire site is durable, especially if it's to serve as a gathering area.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Collect only dead and downed wood that can be broken by hand.
- Keep campfires small and burn them for a short time to conserve wood.
- Tend fires to ensure they don't get out of control.
- Burn all wood and charcoal completely to ash before putting the fire out.

RESPECT WILDLIFE (Leave No Trace)

Helping wildlife stay wild is an important Leave No Trace concept. Wildlife around the world face threats from loss and fragmentation of habitat, invasive species, pollution, over-exploitation, poaching and disease. Protected lands offer a refuge from some, but not all, of these problems. Consequently, wildlife need recreationists who will promote their survival rather than add to the difficulties they already face.

- Investigate wildlife concerns prior to your trip. Carry the equipment you need to store your food out of reach of animals. This may require bear canisters, ropes for hanging food, or simple plastic food containers to keep rodents away.
- Don't disturb animals, especially during mating or birthing season. If you see their behavior change due to your presence, you are too close. Change your travel path, move away and lower your voice.
- Observe animals from a distance. Carry binoculars, a telephoto camera lens or a spotting scope to enhance your viewing.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Pick up all food scraps, even tiny crumbs, and pack them out with your garbage so animals don't come to associate humans with food.
- Supervise Scouts around wildlife. Educate them about the rationale for not chasing, disturbing, feeding or getting too close to animals. Get the group excited about observing animals without disturbing them.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS (Leave No Trace)

One of the primary arguments land managers use for limiting group size is that large groups have profound social impacts on other visitors. This impact can be mitigated by behavior. A courteous, well-behaved group can do wonders to minimize the potential negative issues associated with large groups.

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Passport to High Adventure Boy Scouts of America

- Be aware and considerate of others. Move off the trail to a durable surface for breaks or to allow faster travelers to pass. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Break into smaller groups for travel. Camp and meet in larger groups only in locations out-of-sight and earshot from other visitors. Avoid camping in large groups near shelters and other popular camping spots. Save those areas for individuals, pairs or smaller groups.
- Remember, a group size limit of 10 means that your group never congregates in numbers greater than 10. If your group is larger than the area's group size limit, break into smaller sub-groups to travel and camp.
- Visit and enjoy, but don't monopolize, water sources, viewpoints or other areas of interest.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Advise group members that voices carry long distances and that many visitors attach great importance to finding solitude.

DO YOUR PART (Tread Lightly) by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it. Do all you can to help preserve the beauty and inspiring attributes of our lands and waters for yourself and future generations. Become a steward of the land. Join or volunteer to serve your conservation and preservation organizations. Plan for a day of service for the area you visit before, during, or after your trip.

It is our sincere hope that through your commitment to the outdoor ethics principles of the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly, all wilderness areas will always remain beautiful, clean, and natural for future generations to enjoy outdoor adventures. Your dedication to the fulfillment of this goal is crucial.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."
— Aldo Leopold

Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

All privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wildernesses are included in the term “wilderness areas” in this policy. The BSA’s Outdoor Code and the principles of Leave No Trace apply to outdoor behavior generally, but for treks into wilderness areas, minimum-impact camping methods must be used. Within the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America, there are many different camping-skill levels. Camping practices that are appropriate for day outings, long-term Scout camp, or short-term unit camping might not apply to wilderness areas. Wherever they go, Scouts need to adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that respect the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors. In wilderness areas, it is crucial to minimize human impact, particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mountains, lakes and streams, deserts, and seashores. Because our impact varies from one season of the year to the next, it becomes important for us to adjust to these changing conditions to avoid damaging the environment. The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes these practices for all troops, teams, and crews planning to use wilderness areas:

- Contact the landowner or land-managing agency (USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and private agencies, etc.) well before an outing to learn the regulations for that area, including group size limits, to obtain required permits and current maps, and to discuss ways Scouts can fulfill the expectations of property owners or land managers.
- Obtain a tour permit (available through local council service centers), meet all of its conditions, and carry it during the trip.
- Review the appropriate BSA safety literature relating to planned activities. (See Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely.) Also see the Guide to Safe Scouting on the BSA Web site at www.scouting.org for more information on current BSA policies and procedures for ensuring safe activities, as well as the Fieldbook Web site at www.bsafieldbook.org.
- Match the ruggedness of high-adventure experiences to the skills, physical ability, and maturity of those taking part. Save rugged treks for older unit members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.
- Conduct pretrip training for your group that stresses proper wilderness behavior, rules, and skills for all of the conditions that may be encountered, including lightning, missing person, wildfire, high winds, flooding, and emergency medical situations.
- Participate in training in how to apply the principles of Leave No Trace, and be proficient and experienced in the leadership and skills required for treks into wilderness areas.
- Adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace.