



The Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

O

utdoor awareness, skills, and action may seem unimportant until you consider the combined effects of millions of outdoor visitors. One poorly located campsite or campfire may have little impact, but thousands of these instances can seriously degrade the outdoor experience for everyone. Leaving no trace is everyone's responsibility. For more than 60 years, the Boy Scouts of America has risen to this challenge.

Guided by the Outdoor Code, millions of Scouts have raised their awareness of the natural world around them, becoming aware of the community of life that is in every inch of the land and learning to survive in that world while minimizing their impact to the land. The principles of Leave No Trace provide valuable skills and tools to help Scouts achieve that goal when exploring the outdoors—whether in a local park or a remote wilderness. The Tread Lightly! program provides guidelines for the car or truck trip to the trailhead or for motorized recreation activities such as motorboating. And for those Scouts who have a deep interest in the outdoors, nature, and the environment, Scouting's outdoor ethics will give you an ever-deeper appreciation of the land and how we fit into it. You will feel the growth of a land ethic in yourself.

If you are prepared to venture down the path of really becoming aware of your surroundings, of building the skills that will allow you to leave no trace on the land, then the Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards are for you!

The Foundation: The Outdoor Code

For more than 60 years, the Outdoor Code has served as an aspirational statement of everything that a Scout seeks to achieve while in the outdoors.



As an American, I will do my best to:

Be clean in my outdoor manners.

We will clean up after ourselves using pack-it-in, pack-it-out techniques. We will avoid leaving graffiti, fire rings, camp gadgets, and other signs of our presence.

Be careful with fire.

Fire is an important tool, but one that can be devastating if it gets out of hand. We think about the need for fire, how best to use it, and how to minimize its impacts.

Be considerate in the outdoors.

We will think about others as well as ourselves and how our presence impacts them. We think about not just our impact on other humans, but also on wildlife and the environment.

Be conservation-minded.

We will think about our impacts on the environment. We take steps to correct and redress damage to the environment.

Being clean in our outdoor manners, careful with fire, and considerate means we can enjoy the outdoors in ways that do the environment no harm. For example, using the principles of Leave No Trace, you can hike and camp in an area while minimizing your impact. Tread Lightly! principles help on the trip to and from the trail. Being conservation-minded encourages the protection and thoughtful use of natural resources and doing your part through conservation service that improves the condition, and ultimately the health, of the land and environment.

Leave No Trace

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 such as, “What can we do to reduce our impact on the environment and on the experiences of other visitors?” Learn and use the Leave No Trace principles during all of your outdoor adventures. Use your judgment and experience to tailor camping and hiking practices to the environment where the outing will occur.

The Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Know Before You Go

(Plan Ahead and Prepare)

Be Prepared! Don't forget the right clothing to protect you from cold, heat, or rain. Use maps to show you where you'll be going and to avoid getting lost. Learn about the areas you will visit. Read books and talk to people before you go. The more you know, the more fun you will have. Good trip planning and preparation helps you be safe, have fun, and minimize damage to the natural environment. Plan your trip to avoid times or places that may be crowded, and check to see if you need a permit or permission to use the area for your trip.

2. Choose the Right Path

(Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces)

- Use existing camp areas and walk on the main trail to protect nature. Keep natural areas looking natural. Avoid trampling plants. Once damaged, they may not grow back. Camp at least 100 big steps from roads, trails, and water.

Concentrate Activity or Spread Out?

- In high-use areas, concentrate your activity where there are no plants. Reduce trampling of plants by staying on existing trails and campsites. Keep campsites small by setting up tents close together in areas with bare soil.
- If you visit more remote, less-traveled areas, spread out and disperse your activity. Choose the most durable surfaces available to walk on and camp on—rock, sand, gravel, compacted soil, dry grass, or snow. When hiking, take different routes to avoid creating new trails. When camping, stay just one night in any one spot, and camp and cook in different locations to avoid trampling

plants too much. If impacts are beginning to show, move your camp.

Check with property owners for any special rules.

3. Trash Your Trash

(Dispose of Waste Properly)

Pack it in, pack it out. Put all litter in trash bags, including trash left by others before you. Inspect and clean your lunch site or campsite of trash and spilled foods and carry it out.

Use toilets or outhouses when available. If not, and you have to “go,” act like a cat and bury poop in a small cathole 6 to 8 inches deep at least 100 big steps from water, campsites, or trails. Bury your toilet paper deep in the hole or put it in a plastic bag to throw away later in a garbage can. Fill in and disguise the cathole. Keep water clean—do your washing and dishes more than 100 big steps from streams or lakes.

4. Leave What You Find

Allow others a sense of discovery, and preserve the past. Leave rocks, plants, animals, historical items, and other objects as you find them. Look at, draw, or photograph but do not touch cultural or historical structures and artifacts. It's illegal to damage or remove artifacts.

Minimize Site Alterations

Good campsites are found, not made. Do not dig trenches around tents or build lean-tos, tables, chairs, or new fire rings. Damaging trees with axes, saws, or knives is never a good thing for a Scout to do.

On sites, dismantle inappropriate user-built facilities such as multiple fire rings or tables.

Before leaving dispersed “pristine” sites, camouflage the area with rocks, organic litter, and branches to discourage others from reusing it.

5. Be Careful With Fire

(Minimize Campfire Impacts)

The natural feel of many areas has been harmed by overuse of campfires and firewood collection. Try cooking on a lightweight camp stove. Stoves are fast, eliminate the need for firewood, and make cleanup after meals easier.

Choose not to have a campfire in areas with limited wood. If you build a fire, use only existing campfire rings and conserve wood for others by keeping it small and burning it for a short time. Leave woods tools (axes, hatchets, and saws) at home and collect only dead and downed wood no bigger than your wrist that can be broken by hand. Do not burn trash or food, as this can attract and harm wildlife. When possible, burn all wood to ash, and be certain all wood and crushed coals are wet and dead out before cleaning the fire pit of trash and scattering the coals and ash well off-site.

6. Respect Wildlife

Watch wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed, or follow them. Human food is unhealthy for all animals, and feeding them starts bad habits. Quick movements and loud noises are stressful to animals. You are too close to an animal if it runs away or changes its normal activities. Many dogs will chase other animals, so keep them on a leash or leave them at home.

Store all food and garbage securely from animals. Durable containers with a screw-on or clamp-on lid can be used in most areas. In bear country, store it in a bear-proof container or hang your food at least 12 feet off the ground and 6 feet from the tree.

7. Be Kind to Other Visitors

(Be Considerate of Other Visitors)

Make sure the fun you have in the outdoors does not bother anyone else. Remember that other people are there to enjoy the outdoors as well. Listen to nature. Avoid making loud noises or yelling. Thoughtful campers respect other visitors and protect their experience.

- Travel and camp in small groups and obey any group size limits.
- Select campsites away from other groups to help preserve their solitude.
- Avoid “taking over” vistas, attraction features, or camping areas. Inconsiderate behaviors degrade the experiences of other visitors.
- Take breaks off the trail on durable surfaces.
- Respect private property and leave gates (open or closed) as found.

Motorized Recreation and Tread Lightly!

Traveling to the trail or camp raises its own challenges. While cars and trucks are great and let us travel to distant locations for outings, they can create their own impacts—sometimes much greater than what we do on foot or afloat. Tread Lightly! provides a series of principles that help guide motorized recreation in the backcountry.

Travel Responsibly

- Stay on designated roads, trails, and areas.
- Go over, not around, obstacles to avoid widening the trails.
- Cross streams only at designated fords.
- When possible, avoid wet, muddy trails.
- On water, stay on designated waterways and launch your watercraft in designated areas.

Respect the Rights of Others

- Leave gates as you found them.
- Yield right of way to those passing you or going uphill.
- On water, respect anglers, swimmers, skiers, boaters, divers, and those on or near shore.

Educate Yourself

- Obtain travel maps and regulations from public agencies.
- Plan for your trip.
- Take recreation skills classes.
- Know how to use and operate your equipment safely.

Avoid Sensitive Areas

- Avoid meadows, lakeshores, wetlands, and streams.
- Stay on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitat and sensitive soils from damage.
- Do not disturb historical, archaeological, or paleontological sites.
- On water, avoid operating your watercraft in shallow waters or near shorelines at high speeds.

Do Your Part

- Model appropriate behavior.
- Leave the area better than you found it.
- Properly dispose of waste.
- Minimize the use of fire.
- Avoid the spread of invasive species.
- Repair degraded areas.

The Land Ethic

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold reflected upon his interaction with the land and how it had enriched him and his concern that our society can harm the “land,” including its native plants and animals. He explained:

“All ethics evolved so far rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him to cooperate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for).

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: **the land.**”

Leopold described that the land, ecologically understood, is like an energy circuit where the soils, plants, and animals share energy and create a circuit. He said:

“This thumbnail sketch of the land as an energy circuit conveys three basic ideas:

- (1) That land is not merely soil;
- (2) That the native plants and animals kept the energy circuit open; others may or may not;

- (3) That man-made changes are of a different order than evolutionary changes, and have effects more comprehensive than intended or foreseen.

These ideas, collectively, raise two issues: Can the land adjust itself to the new order? Can the desired alterations be accomplished with less violence?” Leopold’s “violence” is what we now term “impact” or the “trace” addressed by Leave No Trace. Leopold summed up his thoughts with the following observation:

“A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.”

For Cub Scouts, the land ethic challenges us to become a Scout who is aware of the land and his impacts on it, as well as a Scout willing to take responsibility to minimize those impacts and restore the health of the land for future generations.

Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award

Cub Scouts and their leaders interested in learning more about outdoor ethics and Leave No Trace should begin by exploring the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award. The requirements are as follows:

1. Describe what the Outdoor Code means to you.
2. Complete the Leave No Trace online course and print the certificate. Find the link at www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx.

3. Complete the Tread Lightly! TL! Kids Outdoor Quiz and print the certificate. Find the link at www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx.
4. Participate in an outdoor ethics activity facilitated by a person who has completed the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course or is a BSA outdoor ethics trainer or master.

Cub Scouts earn this award by working with their families to complete these activities.



Outdoor Ethics Action Award

The Outdoor Ethics Action Award challenges Scouts and Scouters to take affirmative steps to improve their outdoor skills. The requirements for the Outdoor Ethics Action Award are as follows:

Cub Scout Action Award Requirements

- Do the following:
 - Earn the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award.
 - Describe to your den leader or parent/guardian what the Leave No Trace frontcountry guidelines mean to you.
- Boys in a Tiger Cub den complete the activities for Achievement 5, "Let's Go Outdoors"; boys in a Wolf den complete Requirement 7, "Your Living World"; boys in a Bear den complete Requirement 12, "Family Outdoor Adventures"; boys in a Webelos den earn the Outdoorsman activity badge.
- Complete one of the following:
 - With your family, put on a short activity (such as a skit or demonstration) at an outdoor events or den meeting on a principle of Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly!
 - With your den, put on a short activity (such as a skit or demonstration) at an outdoor event or pack meeting on a principle of Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly!
- Follow the Leave No Trace principles or frontcountry guidelines on three outings. Explain to your unit leader or an individual who has completed the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course one thing you did on each outdoor activity to Leave No Trace.
- On a pack or den outing, participate in a service project that reduces impact from our use of the outdoors. Examples might be collecting litter, cleaning fire rings or grills, or other activities approved by the landowner or land manager.
- With your family or den, make a poster about the skill you learned in Requirement 3 or the project you did in Requirement 4 and display it at your pack meeting.



Recognition name tag can be personalized.

Adult Leader Action Award Requirements

- Do the following:
 - Earn the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award.
 - Complete the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course.
 - Show the NPS Leave No Trace video to your den or pack. Find the link at www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx.
- Read about the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! on www.LNT.org and www.treadlightly.org. Facilitate your Cub Scouts' learning about a principle.
- Facilitate or participate with a family or den when they put on their activity (such as a skit or demonstration) at a den or pack meeting or outing about a principle of Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly!
- Help plan and participate in three activities that your pack or den can complete while following Leave No Trace principles or the frontcountry guidelines.
- Contact a local landowner or land manager to arrange the pack or den service project that reduces impact from our use of the outdoors. The project must be approved by the landowner or land manager in advance. Examples might be collecting litter, cleaning fire rings or grills, or other steps suggested by the landowner or land manager.
- Make or assist in a presentation at a roundtable or similar gathering about what your pack or den did for Requirement 4.
- Help your Cub Scout or another Cub Scout earn the youth Outdoor Ethics Action Award.

Cub Scouts

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Award Application

Name: _____

Council: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Cub Scout pack: _____

Award Earned

- Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award
- Outdoor Ethics Action Award
- Adult Leader Outdoor Ethics Action Award

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____

Unit approval: _____

Date: _____

Submit this application to your local council service center.

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