



The Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program



Outdoor 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 significance, but thousands of such instances seriously degrade the outdoor experience for all. 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 enhanced their awareness of the natural world around them, becoming aware of the community of life that pervades every inch of the land and learning to survive in that world while minimizing 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. Tread Lightly! principles provide guidelines for the car or truck trip to the trailhead or for motorized recreation activities such as motorboating. And for those Scouts with a deep interest in the outdoors, nature, and the environment, Scouting's outdoor ethics will give you an ever-deeper appreciation of the richness of the land and how we fit into it. You will feel the growth of the 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?” 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.

The Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns, or flagging.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow.
- 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.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in provided facilities. If there are none, use catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

4. Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: Examine, but do not touch or take cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

6. Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Leave No Trace Trainer Courses and the Troop Leave No Trace Trainer

Leave No Trace Trainer courses are two-day (16-hour) trainings taught by Leave No Trace Master Educators in the outdoors. Trainer courses are designed to help participants better understand and teach Leave No Trace skills and ethics. Boy Scouts at least 14 years of age who successfully complete a Leave No Trace Trainer course

may be appointed to the Leave No Trace Trainer position of responsibility in his troop. Interested Scouts and Scouters should contact their council outdoor ethics advocate or council service center for more information on Leave No Trace Trainer course availability.

Motorized Recreation and Tread Lightly!

Motorized recreation, such as motorboating and similar activities, imposes even greater stress and impact on the environment than does traveling by foot. Some of these same impacts arise while traveling to the trail or camp by car or truck. Tread Lightly! provides a series of principles that help minimize the impact of motorized recreation activities approved for Boy Scout use in the outdoors:

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 the Boy Scouts, the land ethic encapsulates what the Outdoor Code and Scouting’s commitment to conservation has sought to achieve: a Scout who is aware of the land and his impacts on it, and is willing to take responsibility to minimize that impact and restore the health of the environment for future generations!

Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award

Boy Scouts and Scouters interested in learning more about outdoor ethics and Leave No Trace should explore the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award. The requirements are as follows:

1. Recite from memory and explain the meaning of the Outdoor Code.
2. Watch the National Park Service (NPS) Leave No Trace program video. Find the link at www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx.
3. Complete the Leave No Trace online course and print the certificate. Find the link at

[www.scouting.org/
OutdoorProgram/
OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/OutdoorEthics/Awards.aspx).

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



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:

Boy Scout Action Award Requirements

- Do the following:
 - Unless already completed, earn the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award.
 - Complete the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course.
 - Explain how each of the four points of the Outdoor Code guides your actions when outdoors.
- Do the following:
 - Read Chapter 7 of the *Boy Scout Handbook* on Leave No Trace.
 - Teach a skill related to the Outdoor Code or Leave No Trace to another Scout in your troop or another Scouting unit.
- Complete one of the following:
 - Successfully complete a term as your troop Leave No Trace Trainer.
 - Participate in an outing that emphasizes the complete set of Leave No Trace or relevant Tread Lightly! principles. All members of the troop participating in the outing should use the outdoor ethics and the specific skills needed to minimize impacts from their use of the outdoors.
- Follow the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly! principles on three outings. Write a paragraph on each outing explaining how you followed the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly! Share it with your unit leader or an individual who has completed the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course.
- On a troop outing, help your troop on a service activity that addresses recreational impacts related to the type of outing. The project should be approved in advance by the landowner or land manager and lead to permanent or long-term improvements.
- Participate in a report at a court of honor or similar family event on the service activity in Requirement 5.



Recognition name tag can be personalized.

Scouter Action Award Requirements

- Do the following:
 - Earn the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award.
 - Complete the BSA outdoor ethics orientation course.
 - Discuss with your troop how each of the four points of the Outdoor Code guides your actions when outdoors.
- Read the *North American Skills & Ethics* booklet to learn about the principles of Leave No Trace available online at <http://Int.org/>. Review the principles of Tread Lightly! at <http://treadlightly.org/>. Review Chapter 7 of the *Boy Scout Handbook* and chapters about Leave No Trace, using stoves and campfires, hygiene and waste disposal, and traveling and camping in special environments in the *Fieldbook*.
- Facilitate your troop's leadership in planning and leading an outing that emphasizes the complete set of Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly! principles. All members of the troop participating in the outing should use outdoor ethics and the specific skills to minimize impacts from their use of the outdoors.
- Help plan and participate in at least three outings where your troop can follow the Outdoor Code and practice the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! Facilitate a discussion at the end of the outings.
- Assist your unit in arranging for a service project emphasizing outdoor ethics with a local landowner or land manager. The project must be approved by the landowner or land manager in advance. Participate in that project. The project should lead to permanent or long-term improvements.
- Make, or facilitate youth in making, a presentation at a roundtable or similar gathering about what your troop did for Requirement 4.
- Help at least three Boy Scouts earn the youth Outdoor Ethics Action Award.

Boy Scouts

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Award Application

Name: _____

Council: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Boy Scout troop: _____

Award Earned

- Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award
- Outdoor Ethics Action Award
- Scouter Outdoor Ethics Action Award

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____

Unit approval: _____

Date: _____

Submit this application to your local council service center.

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430-063
2013 Printing