



2020 Cub Scout Backyard Challenge



Outdoor Ethics

Category: Scout Skills

Difficulty: Advanced

Description:

As one of the largest users of the great outdoors, members of the BSA can have the single largest impact, either negatively or positively, on our natural resources. While we cannot control what everyone else is or is not doing in the outdoors, we can make a difference with our personal actions regarding outdoor ethics. We all know that a great way to connect with our kids is to get them disconnected from all their electronics, and that Scouts in particular love a good adventure into the woods. The Aims of Scouting are character development, leadership development, citizenship training, and personal fitness; all of which can be achieved in the great outdoors.

It is no surprise, then, that conservation is the foundation on which the Boy Scouts of America built itself all the way back in the year 1910. It is a Scout's obligation to conserve the wilderness, wildlife, soil, water, and even energy. When you think of what it means to **Do Your Best**, consider the way you are treating your environment. Are you doing your best to be conservation-minded? Are you doing your best to set a good example on how to be a good steward of Earth's resources?

Pulling all of this together is the BSA Outdoor Ethics Program. Outdoor Ethics is not a set of rules, but rather a framework of guidelines for improving outdoor ethics decision-making skills to help prevent avoidable impacts and to minimize unavoidable impacts as we participate in outdoor activities. The program is comprised of four parts:

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The Outdoor Code:

From a Cub Scout's first hike in a local park to the thrill of our High Adventure bases, from our backyard to the backcountry, our outdoor ethics guide us to be responsible outdoor citizens — protecting our natural world for generations to come and being considerate of other visitors. Scouting has a long, proud tradition of conservation service to the nation. How do we maintain our outdoor ethics and preserve that tradition?

We start by heeding the challenge in the Outdoor Code:

The 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, and
Be Conservation-minded.

Note the underlined C's. This is an important part of helping Scouts learn the Outdoor Code. When **teaching the Outdoor Code**, have your Scout say those four words several times. Clean. Careful. Considerate. Conservation. In fact, the fifth point of the Scout law is "courteous," and if you think about it, "considerate" is its synonym. That word is used in both the Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace Principles.

Make a game of it! Can your Scout say the four c words in order correctly? Does your Scout notice that every other line includes the word "outdoor"? [Print the Outdoor Code Emoji Worksheet](#) and have your Scout fill in the blanks.

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Leave No Trace:

The Leave No Trace Principles for Kids (LNT) are a series of seven points that were developed to stick in those wild young minds. It dovetails perfectly with the Outdoor Code, so it's no wonder why Scouts are encouraged to learn and live by the LNT Principles.

LEAVE NO TRACE *Principles for Kids*

Know Before You Go
Choose the Right Path
Trash Your Trash
Leave What You Find
Be Careful with Fire
Respect Wildlife
Be Kind to Other Visitors



Here are three great Leave No Trace activities:

<https://lnt.org/3-leave-no-trace-activities-to-play-with-your-kids-this-weekend/>

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics site is chock full of great tips and tricks for learning all seven of the LNT Principles. Check out the article linker below.

A new article entitled "[**The Easiest Way to Learn the Leave No Trace Seven Principles for Kids**](#)", published on October 4, 2019, talks all about the easiest way to teach and learn the seven principles through hand signs.

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Tread Lightly!:

Tread Lightly! helps us understand how to protect and enhance recreation access and opportunities by promoting outdoor ethics to heighten individuals' sense of good stewardship. Tread Lightly! Fills in some of the blanks that Leave No Trace does not cover



There are fun ways to teach young scouts Tread Lightly at: <http://tlkids.org/for-kids/>

Like the Outdoor Code, the best way to learn the Leave No Trace Principles and T.R.E.A.D. Lightly is to recite and talk about them often. Reference them on your adventures, discuss how you used them on those adventures during your wrap-up, and acknowledge it when you see Scouts performing them in the outdoors.





The Land Ethic:

(Read through this first and then go outside, sit on the porch, and have a discussion with your Scout about how he or she is a global neighbor to all life on Earth. Discuss how our individual actions impact our community and all the life it contains.)

What are Ethics?

Fundamentally grounded in values, ethics are a moral sense of right and wrong. Ethics are demonstrated by the way people live their lives: When a person cares about someone or something, their actions convey that care and respect, and invite the same in return.

What is a Land Ethic?

Ethics direct all members of a community to treat one another with respect for the mutual benefit of all. A land ethic expands the definition of “community” to include not only humans, but all of the other parts of the Earth, as well: soils, waters, plants, fungi and animals, or what Aldo Leopold called “the land.”

Published in 1949 as the finale to *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold’s “Land Ethic” essay is a call for moral responsibility to the natural world. At its core, the idea of a land ethic is simply caring about people, about land, and about strengthening the relationships between them.

The Land Ethic is mainly an attitude that brings humans back into the Web of Nature. Humans tend to view the world we live on as something to exploit, while forgetting that all species only have one planet to live on. We forget with whom and what we share this world. Leopold sought to change the role of humans from conquerors of the environment to citizens of it.

“It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such.” Leopold said of the land ethic. “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.”



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